

LESSON TEXT: Romans 1:1-32

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The apostle Paul wrote Romans nearly 2000 years ago. The church in Rome (a city of 1-2 million) was surrounded by a society more perverse and carnal than 21st century America. Tiberius was a pedophile, Caligula practiced incest, Nero engaged in homosexual behavior. Bestiality, adultery, abortion, infanticide, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, gambling--the Romans indulged in every vice known and invented new ones Rom. 1:30! You may read about it in Suetonius's *Lives of The Twelve Caesars*.

Today, some 14 million Americans have either syphilis or gonorrhea. Venereal disease in the U.S. is at the pandemic stage says the American Social Health Association. "Pandemic" means an epidemic of unusual extent and severity over a wide geographical area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population. Some 1,000,000 Americans are estimated to have AIDS, most of whom practice homosexual behavior---nearly 100,000 of them in San Francisco, CA, alone. The estimated number of homosexual practitioners in the U.S. is between 10 and 20 million.

Even now when AIDS, so lethal and terminal, is infecting innocent children and adults through birth, blood transfusions, vaccinations, and drug abuse, "gay rights" advocates are still insisting that it is the "straight" majority that needs changing. They say those who believe that homosexual practice is both unnatural and immoral need to free themselves of "homophobia" and allow practicing homosexuals free access to every institution of our society--even to teach such a Biblically abominable practice in our public schools.

Surely, Romans 1:1-32 is being fulfilled before our 21st century eyes! But there is **redemption**--not in medicine or legislation, but in the **Gospel of Christ** (Rom. 1:16-17). Make it your commitment to be in Bible School every Sunday to study this redemptive Word of God called **Romans**.

"When in Rome, do not as the Romans do...but preach the Gospel..." PTB

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there in faith to obey? Why was that Paul's mission? 1:5
2. Why was Paul under obligation to preach the gospel? 1:14. Is obligation a proper motive for being a preacher or missionary?
3. Where is the power in the gospel? What is salvation? 1:16-17
4. What is the righteousness of God? 1:17
5. How is the wrath of God revealed from heaven against ungodliness? 1:18
6. What is there about God that can be plainly known to wicked men? 1:19
7. Where has God shown this to them? 1:20
8. Why are they without excuse? 1:21
9. Why does God give people up? How? What happens? 1:24,26,28
10. Is homosexuality a sin? Can it be helped? What is the answer? 1:24-27 (see also Gen. 19:5; Deut. 12:18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 12:7; 1 Cor. 6:10-11; Lev. 18:22, 20:13, etc.).
11. Does refusal to acknowledge God really produce the kind of society characterized in Romans 1:28-32?

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."
--Edmund Burke, British statesman

LESSON TEXT: Romans 2:1-19

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

From the Woodstock, Ontario, Canada, *Sentinel-Review* comes this news story: "Our American visitors are normally welcome here, but occasionally they reveal some odd notions about our country. Charged with driving at 74 mph, a Michigan man gave a captivating explanation. He thought that since the Canadian gallon is bigger than the U.S. gallon, miles might be longer north of the border! To cover 60 Canadian miles in an hour, he felt his speedometer should show at least 70 mph. The magistrate clarified the error and fined him in Canadian dollars, which are smaller than U.S. Dollars."

In New Zealand a woman who drove for 25 years without a license explained to the judge who fined her: "I only drive on roads that have very little traffic. And none of those roads lead to an office where I could apply for a driver's license."

Aren't we all like this--unless we constantly guard against it? This inordinate passion of people to excuse themselves for disobeying what they know is right is what Romans 2 is all about. The Jews tried to take advantage of their "chosen" status by presumptuously expecting God to overlook their disobedience. Since the Gentiles had no divinely revealed law they presumed to free themselves of guilt by making up their own ethics laws. The apostle Paul condemns both Jew and Gentile to be guilty of sinning against the truth in they knew. All human beings will be judged by God according to the response they make to the truth they have known. Paul declares that *everyone* has sinned against whatever "law" he knows or makes up and against his own conscience.

There is a way to purify one's conscience! Make a firm commitment now to be in Bible School every Lord's Day to study Romans and learn how to be cleansed of a guilty conscience and justified before God Almighty

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the "O, man" Paul addresses in 2:1 (see 2:17).
2. How did this man presume upon the riches of God's kindness? 2:4
3. What is the kindness of God supposed to lead people to do? 2:4
4. If God shows no partiality, should we? Do we? Where? Why? 2:11
5. Will God hold people guilty for sinning when they have never read the Bible? Why? 2:14. How will they ever find forgiveness? Rom. 10:1-21
6. What requirements of the law are written on the human conscience? 2:15
7. Why was the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles? 2:24. Could the same be true of Christians today? How?
8. How could an uncircumcised (Gentile) person ever keep the law? 2:25-27
9. What is inward Jewishness? 2:29. Do you have it? How do you know? (See Gal. 3:23-29; 6:14-16; Rom. 4:11-12; 4:16-17; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11-13).
- 10.

"Much of life is a moral and spiritual journey, and it makes no sense to send young people forth on such a journey having offered them only some timid, vacillating opinions about proper conduct. We must give our children better equipment than that. We must offer them unequivocal, reliable standards of right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust. We must treat life as a moral endeavor."
---William J. Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education

LESSON TEXT: Romans 3:1-31

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Remember the 1985 Baseball World Series when the St. Louis Cardinals's pitcher, Andujar, vociferously blamed the umpire for his own inability to pitch in the strike-zone? It wasn't the umpire's fault, as could be plainly seen--the pitcher just could not hit the mark. But rather than admit it to himself, the pitcher questioned the accuracy and integrity of the umpire. Paul says, hypothetically, this is what the Jews were doing (Rom. 3) when they accused God of being unfaithful in his promises to them because he was holding them responsible for their sin. If God should condemn a Jew, then God is to blame for breaking his promises, they said. NOT SO, says Paul. God is true, although every man be a liar.

In Romans 3, Paul is saying, Nobody bats 1.000! There are all levels of hitting performance: there are .180 hitters, .275 hitters, and stars like George Brett and Ted Williams who hit near the .400 mark---BUT NOBODY BATS 1.000--THAT IS PERFECTION! God looks at humans and sees them stepping up to the plate, grounding out, striking out, time and time again, even though once in a while they manage to get a bloop-single. Even for the best of us, it's a pretty poor performance we make in the game of life. NOBODY HITS 1.000! Everyone flubs, fouls out, or drops the ball---and for most of us that is quite often.

The good news is God makes it possible by his grace for everyone who trusts Him to hit 1.000. Even though "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," we are told in Rom. 3 how to become a 1.000 hitter---TRUST IN CHRIST'S VICARIOUS ATONEMENT AND COMMIT ONESELF TO COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IN HIM.

Did you know that the exact middle chapter of the whole Bible is Psalms 117 which reads: "Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord."

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would a Jew think God's condemnation of their unfaithfulness proves God breaks his promises? 3:1-3
2. Isn't it reasonable, then, that if sin gives God an opportunity to show his righteousness, sin helps God be God? 3:4-8
3. Where are the passages found in the O.T. from which Paul is quoting in 3:10-18? Why does he quote from them?
4. How does the law stop every mouth? 3:19-20
5. What righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law? 3:21-22? Where?
6. If you died and went before God today, and God said, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would be your answer? 3:24-25
7. What does Paul mean by...in his (God's) forbearance he had passed over former sins? 3:25
8. How did God prove that he is righteous, and that he justifies the man who has faith in Jesus? 3:26
9. What do you have to boast of before God? 3:27. Why? How is the law upheld by faith? 3:28-31

"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."
---Daniel Webster, U.S. statesman

LESSON TEXT: Romans 4:1-25

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

One day in 1860 a huge crowd was watching the famous tightrope walker, Blondin, cross Niagara Falls. He crossed it numerous times---a 1000 foot trip, 160 feet above the raging waters. He asked the crowd if they believed he could take one person across. Everyone in the crowd replied, "Yes!" Then Blondin approached one man and asked him to get on his back and go with him. The man refused. Mental assent or even verbal assent is not real faith. Real faith must be demonstrated in obedience (see Heb. 11:8-12).

A lady once asked John Wesley to suppose it became known to him that he would die at 12:00 midnight tomorrow "how would he spend the intervening time." His reply--"Why madam, just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five tomorrow morning; after that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I would then go to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, talk and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at 10 o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in Glory."

Both of these stories illustrate what faith is. Abraham's relationship to God was one of faith-ful-ness. Every aspect of his life was wrapped up in faith. Abraham's decisions and actions seem awesome---he left his homeland; became a wanderer in a foreign land; believed against reason that God would give him a son; and then prepared to slay his son as a sacrifice. Whatever God told Abraham to do, even if it seemed impossible, Abraham did it! Romans 4 tells us we are heirs of the promise God made to Abraham if we believe and obey Christ.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why bring up Abraham? 4:1-2C see Lk. 3:7-9; Jn. 8:39-59; Gal. 3:1-29; James 2:21-24
2. Just how much did Abraham believe God? 4:3 (see Gen. 15:6; 22:12; Heb. 11:8ff). How did God know Abraham trusted him?
3. What is meant in the statement, his faith is *reckoned* as righteousness? 4:3-5. How does the word *reckon* apply to a believer's sin? 4:6-8
4. Why did God justify Abraham before Abraham was circumcised? 4:9-10
5. At what point in time was the life of Abraham to become an example for the circumcised (the Jew) to imitate? 4:12
6. If the promise to Abraham's descendants was to be through faith, 4:13-15, why did God give the law to Moses?
7. Should the Jews have understood that God's promises to Abraham were to belong to the Gentiles also? Why? 4:16-18
8. Which promises of God might you be tempted to weaken in faith? 4:19
9. What does giving glory to God have to do with growing strong in faith? 4:20-22
10. What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with our justification? 4:23-25

June 8, 1845, moments before his death, Andrew Jackson called his family and servants to his bedside and told them: "My dear children, do not grieve for me; it is true, I am going to leave you; I am well aware of my situation. I have suffered much bodily pain, but my sufferings are but as nothing compared with that which our blessed Redeemer endured upon the accursed Cross, that all might be saved who put their trust in Him--God will take care of you for me. I am my God's. I belong to Him. I go but a short time before you, and...I hope and trust to meet you all in Heaven, both black and white."

LESSON TEXT: Romans 5:1-21

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

There was a young musician in the Royal band of Hanover near the year 1757. He was a remarkable lad for his age, and his superior playing won for him much praise. He liked to discourse upon martial music at the head of the troops, but when war came on and he had to lie in the trenches all night, he deserted and fled to England. Now for a soldier to desert in war-time the penalty is death but this deserter eluded being caught. He became a great organist, but his heart was "in the stars" and so he became an expert astronomer. With infinite pains he constructed a telescope, and then he scanned the heavens night after night until one night he actually discovered a new planet (Uranus). He verified the discovery, and then received the applause of the whole world. He was sent for by the King of England and went to Windsor Castle. The king was George II, a German from the Hanover family. King George knew this deserter-become-astronomer. Before the King would see him he was requested to open an envelope containing a royal communication. He did so, wondering what the King was going to do with him. He was nearly stunned with wonder that the communication was his *pardon* for desertion. "Now," said King George, "we can talk, and you shall come up and live at Windsor and be Sir William Herschel." You may read of Sir William Herschel's accomplishments in any standard encyclopedia.

From gallows to glory! That is the story of every Christian! God not only forgives sinners through the free gift of Jesus's atonement, but he honors sinners in giving them the glory of Christ as well. That is the essence of our lesson in Romans 5--FROM GALLOWS TO GLORY! "While we were *enemies* we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." 5:10

Forgiveness from God is like a canceled note--
torn up and burned up--and will never again
be held against the debtor.

QUESTIONS:

1. What if we were not justified by God? What would we have? Couldn't we still have peace with God? 5:1 (see James 4:4).
2. How do we get justified? What is our access to obtain justification? 5:1-2
3. What do you envision as the experience called, sharing the glory of God? 5:2
4. Do YOU *rejoice* in your sufferings? Are we really supposed to? Why? 5:3-5
5. How is being saved much more than be justified? 5:8-10
6. How did death spread to all men because of one man's sin? 5:12
7. Why isn't sin counted where there is no law? 5:13
8. In what way(s) is the free gift not like the trespass? 5:15-16
9. In what way do those who receive the free gift of righteousness reign in life? 5:17
10. How can another person's obedience (Jesus's) make you and me righteous? 5:18-21

"Who can doubt that God created us to be happy, and thereto made us to love one another?

It is plainly written as the Gospel.

The heart is sometimes so embittered that nothing but Divine love can sweeten it, so enraged that devotion can only becalm it, and so broken down that it takes all the forces of heavenly hope to raise it. In short, the religion of Jesus Christ is the only sure and controlling power over sin."

Maj. Gen. Francis Marion ("The Swamp Fox") 1732-1795, hero of the American War for Independence in South Carolina

LESSON TEXT: Romans 6:1-23

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, American evangelist, once asked Gen. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, his secret of success. With tears rolling down his cheeks, Gen. Booth replied, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there is of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there is. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has had all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influences of my life."

In like manner when someone asked George Muller (famous founder of orphanages) his secret of service, George said, "There was a day when I died, utterly died," and as he spoke he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor, "died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will--died to the world, its approval or censure--died to the approval of blame even of my brethren and friends--and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

This is the thrust of Romans 6. These are the great paradoxes of the Christian commitment which the world cannot understand; dying in order to have life; surrendering in order to win; becoming enslaved in order to be freed. We're going to be studying the very essence of our relationship to God--BE IN BIBLE SCHOOL SUNDAY!

"All that I think, all that I hope, all that I write, all that I live for, is based upon the divinity of Jesus Christ the central joy of my poor wayward life."

--William E. Gladstone, one of the worlds greatest jurists

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would Paul have to remind Christians that it is wrong to advocate continuing in sin so that grace might abound? 6:1
2. What is being dead to sin? How do I accomplish it? 6:2-4
3. Is being immersed in water necessary to dying to sin? 6:5-8
4. How do we consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God? 6:9-11
5. What is letting sin reign in one's body? 6:12
6. Are people able to keep from yielding their bodies to sin as instruments of wickedness? 6:13-14. How?
7. In what way does obedience lead to righteousness? 6:15-16
8. What is the standard of teaching to which Christians become obedient? 6:17
9. Is righteousness slavery? 6:18-19
10. How does a person become convinced that the wages of sin is death? 6:20-23

"Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17:3 and therefore to lay Jesus Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seeke it of him Prov. 2:3."
---Rule #2 of *Rules and Precepts* that were observed at Harvard University, September 26, 1842

LESSON TEXT: Romans 7:1-25

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

In the early 1930s Louisiana State University had a 6' 5" heavyweight boxer, named C.D. Blaylock, who had an extremely long arm-reach. In one match he was fighting a stocky opponent from Mississippi State University. During the second round, Blaylock wound up with a roundhouse right that was labeled knockout if it landed. To avoid the blow, the Mississippi State heavyweight stepped in close, and his head hit Blaylock's right elbow. This acted as a lever and added power to the fist, which completely circled the shorter man's head, ending up on Blaylock's own jaw. Stunned by his own blow, the fighter grasped the rope and staggered groggily around the ring, then collapsed. Blaylock had knocked himself out!

It was lunch-time. The worker opened his lunch box, looked in and growled, "Cheese sandwiches! Cheese sandwiches! Always it's cheese sandwiches!" A fellow worker overheard and said, "Why don't you ask your wife to make some other kind?" "Wife?" replied the complainer--Who's married? I make these myself!

Just a touch of humor. But the fact that we can't seem to get out of the rut of spiritual failure, or the times we knock ourselves out spiritually, are not funny! It is a daily struggle! It's a war "in there!" Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other to prevent you from doing what you would." Gal. 5:17.

There is some consolation in realizing that perhaps the greatest servant of Christ ever to live, the apostle Paul, struggled with this same "inner warfare." He wrote the Christians in Rome, "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." Rom. 7:18-19. Does this same weakness torment you? Be in Bible School class next Lord's Day and learn how to win "the war within."

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the point of the allegory in 7:1-3 about a married woman being bound to her husband as long as he lives?
2. Why does the law arouse sinful passions? 7:5. Is God's law a bad thing?
3. If we are discharged from the law of God why can't we do as we please? 7:6 (see also 7:3).
4. How did sin find opportunity in the commandment to deceive? 7:8,11
5. Do you have difficulty understanding your own actions? 7:15. Why?
6. How does your doing what you do not WANT show that you agree that the law of God is good? 7:16.
7. Why would Paul say there is nothing good in the flesh? 7:18.
8. Is it possible for sin to dwell within an apostle? WITHIN YOU? 7:20
9. IF A PERSON DELIGHTS IN THE LAW OF GOD, in his inmost self, why doesn't he DO the law? 7:21
10. How can Paul talk of being delivered and then say he serves the law of sin with his flesh? 7:24-25

"The scriptures are especially designed to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus--to reveal to us the mercy of the Lord in him; to form our minds after the likeness of God our Savior; to build up our souls in wisdom and faith, in love and holiness; to make us thoroughly furnished unto good works, enabling us to glorify God on earth; and, to lead us to an imperishable inheritance among the spirits of just men made perfect, and finally to be glorified with Christ in heaven."

--William Holmes McGuffey (1800-1873) Pres. of Ohio University; in his *Electic Third Reader*, published in 1837

LESSON TEXT: Romans 8:1-39

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), famous American editor and preacher, once wrote, "The voyage of life should be across the deep ocean of faith whose waters never shrink, and where the keel never rubs the bottom. But most men are afraid to venture, so they stay close to the coasts, and venture only to explore the backwaters, or swing at anchor in sheltered bays. Some men put their keel into riches, some into sensuous pleasure, some into friendship, but all these are too shallow for anything that draws as deep as the human soul does. God's work in each age, indicated by the great movements of His providence, is the only thing deep enough for the heart. We ought to begin life as if we were beginning to set sail at the source of a river, growing deeper every mile to the sea; but, in fact, thousands are like men who enter the mouths of the rivers and sail upwards; finding less and less water every day....and at the end of their lives, they lie shrunken and rotting, having run aground and never having known the adventure of sailing the seas of faith and hope."

Adventure is what makes life worth living. Romans 8 announces that life in union with Christ by faith brings adventure---exhilarating, fulfilling and exciting ADVENTURE. To be in Christ is to find the whole purpose of life to be a great quest to discover and capture the nature of God. Life becomes a vital, pulsating involvement in the discovery of goodness, truth, beauty, holiness and love. Life in Christ is an intoxicating journey into reality! Join in! Be in Bible School class for Romans, chapter 8.

"No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just and if the intention is purely for his holy Service. The working out of all things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to his sovereign will even though he gives advice. He lacks nothing that is in the power of men to give him. Oh, what a gracious Lord, who desires that people should perform for him those things for which he holds himself responsible! Day and night, moment by moment, everyone should express to him their most devoted gratitude."

--Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) in his *Book of Prophecies*

QUESTIONS:

1. Is there a law of the Spirit for those in Christ? Where is it codified? 8:1-2 (see also John 13:34; 14:15,23; 15:12; 2 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 1:25; 2:8).
2. How does one walk or live according to the Spirit? 8:3-4
3. Why is it impossible for the mind that is set on the flesh to submit to God's law? 8:7
4. How do we know we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us? 8:13-16. (Hint: We don't know it by *feeling!* 1 Jn. 2:24; 3:24; Jn. 6:63).
5. Why did God subject the creation to futility? 8:18-23 (Gen. 1:17-19).
6. Who is this Spirit that intercedes for us? 8:26,27,34. Why?
7. Does God really work good in everything with those who love him? 8:28. What about loneliness, sickness, poverty, temptation, riches, fame?
8. Are we predestined to be saved? Or lost? 8:29-30. How?
9. If God will give humanity his own Son, what else will God give us? 8:32
10. What more are Christians to be than conquerors? 8:37

"I know there is an objection among many people to teaching children doctrines of any kind....But let us not be wiser than our Maker. If moral precepts alone could have reformed mankind, the mission of the Son of God into all the world would have been unnecessary. The perfect morality of the Gospel rests upon the doctrine which, though often controverted has never been refuted: I mean the vicarious life and death of the Son of God."
---Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813) signatory of the American Declaration of Independence, "father of public schools," Surgeon General of the Continental Army, Treasurer of the U.S. Mint.

LESSON TEXT: Romans 9:1-33

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

It is said that on the eve of Napoleon's departure for his Russian campaign, he detailed his strategy to a lady of the French nobility with such arrogance that she tried to caution him, saying, "Sir, man proposes; but God disposes." Napoleon curtly replied, "Madam, I too propose and dispose." A few months later, Napoleon had suffered disastrous defeat in the freezing Russian winter, the loss of his army, his crown, and found himself exiled--and the lady's warning about the sovereignty of God vindicated!

Dr. John Baillie made it a practice to open his course on the doctrine of God at Edinburgh University with these words: "Gentlemen, we must remember that in discussing God we cannot talk about Him without His hearing every word we say. We may be able to talk to our fellows, as it were, behind their backs, but God is everywhere, yes, even in this classroom. Therefore, in all of our discussions we must be aware of His infinite presence and talk about Him, as it were, before His face."

Many Jews arrogantly supposed since *they* had chosen God they could propose and dispose of God's justice and/or mercy as *they* saw fit. Paul uses three chapters (nearly 20%) of the book of Romans (chs. 9-10-11) emphasizing that the program of man's redemption was planned, accomplished, and proffered to lost humanity by, and according to, the sovereign will of Almighty God. The Jews did not initiate or dictate the plan of salvation, nor did they merit their election as "chosen people." God, by omniscient sovereign grace, chose them as the instrument through whom he would deliver redemption to the whole human race. Chapter 9 is the opening salvo in the apostle's "bombardment" of election by Divine grace.

QUESTIONS:

1. Would you be willing to be accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of your unsaved friends or family? 9:1-3. Would it save them?
2. Does God intend to save all Jews because they are his chosen? 9:4-5
3. If not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants, then who are Abraham's children? 9:6-8
4. Isn't such discrimination by God unjust, unfaithful, and unfair? 9:9-13
5. If God has mercy upon whom he will, and hardens the heart of whomever he will, what's the use in believing, obeying, or praying? 9:14-18
6. Who can resist the will of God? 9:19-21
7. How did God's enduring with much patience the vessels of wrath make known the riches of his glory? 9:22-23.
8. If God predicted his mercy upon the Gentiles in 730 B.C. by the prophet Hosea, how come the Jews had such a problem accepting it? 9:24-25
9. How could Gentiles attain righteousness without pursuing it? 9:30-32
10. What does Isaiah 28:16 have to do with this discussion by Paul? 9:33

"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection....that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine author of our, blessed religion and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation."

---George Washington, June 8, 1783, at the conclusion of the American War for Independence, written to each of the Governors of the newly freed States of America.

LESSON TEXT: Romans 10:1-21

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Six zealous players of the Livermore Falls, Maine, High School basketball team, feeling that school spirit was low, dribbled a couple of basketballs the 22 miles between their town and Farmington, Maine, where the team was to play. In freezing rain it was no easy job. Weary, wet, chilled and full of zeal the six arrived at the Farmington gymnasium, to learn that the game had been postponed because of adverse traveling conditions! Zeal without knowledge equals zero!

In the first volume of his autobiography, Bertrand Russell, famous for his hostility toward Christianity, sought to enumerate the passions which ruled his life: "Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life; the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the sufferings of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair." Zeal without knowledge of God equals zero!

If you were God, how would you make redemption and salvation available to man? Would it be offered on the basis of human zeal...the level of a person's sincerity? Paul, not the least among them at one time, said of his Jewish brethren, "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2; Acts 22:3-5; 22:19-20; 26:9-11; Phil. 3:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:13). The Jews were indeed zealous! But it was a zeal for self-righteousness. God arbitrarily decrees that he will covenant with man unto redemption only through the righteousness that is given by grace and accessed by faith in a Perfect, vicarious, atonement. God revealed this to the patriarchs, and in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and finally actualized it in Jesus Christ, his Anointed (Messiah).

There is only one source from which finite man may know a sovereign decree from an Infinite and Omnipotent God---that source is divine revelation. Man must leave off telling God how he is going to

be saved and let God tell him! God tells us nowhere else but in his Bible! Zeal without a knowledge of the Bible won't get it!! In Bible School you learn God's revelation!

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the focus of the unenlightened Jewish zeal? 10:1-3
2. How is Christ the end of the law? 10:4
3. What is the contrast Paul is making in 10:5-8 between the law of Moses and the righteousness which is based on faith?
4. If all we have to do to be saved is confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, 10:9-10, why does our church insist on people being immersed in water?
5. What is involved in calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved? 10:11-13. (See Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; compare Acts 2:21 with Acts 2:37-38).
6. How important is preaching the Gospel? 10:14
7. Who is supposed to send preachers? Where? How? 10:15. (See Matt. 18:18-20). Is our congregation doing all it can?
8. How do people get faith in Christ? 10:17. Is this the only way? (10:14-15). (See also Gal. 3:2,5; Jn. 17:20; 1 Thess. 1:13-15).
9. Paul quoted Psa. 19:4--why? He quoted Deut. 32:21--why? And he quoted Isa. 65:1--why?

"I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead. Remember...what you received and heard; keep that."
Revelation 3:1-2

"Zeal without knowledge is like expedition (haste) to a man in the dark."
---John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace."

LESSON TEXT: Romans 11:1-36

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Surveys show that the religious faith of the vast majority of Jews living in Palestine (and throughout the world) today bears little resemblance to the Bible. Few Jews today look to God to literally fulfill Old Testament prophecies. A survey in Tel Aviv of religious practices and attitudes in Israel revealed that only 8% of those questioned considered themselves “unreservedly religious,” or attend a synagogue daily--13% said they visit a synagogue only once a year, and 26% said they never enter a synagogue.

In Romans 11, Paul brings his theological treatise on justification by grace through faith to a climactic peak by asking, “For if their (Jews) rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their (Jews) acceptance mean but life from the dead?” (Rom. 11:15). Essentially Romans 11 is Paul’s plea to the Gentiles to try to comprehend how intense God’s love is for the Jews! Paul is saying that God longs to save the Jews through the faithfulness of the Gentiles....God has not given up on the Jews. And, as the apostle says, can you imagine what a tremendous power would be put into God’s redemptive program if the Jews became obedient to Christ? Remember, however, God will offer salvation to the Jews in no other way but the Gospel preached and accepted (Rom. 10:1-17). The book of Hebrews makes it explicitly clear that God will never revert to the Old Covenant to save anyone---not even a Jew! When the Gospel dispensation ends, everything ends except heaven!

Yes! We can imagine what would happen at the conversion of millions of Jews when we consider what happened with the conversion of a few in the 1st century like Peter, James, John, Saul of Tarsus (Paul), Timothy and others. The Jew and You! That is the theme of Romans 11. You, Mr. Gentile Christian, have an obligation to the Jew. Are you fulfilling it? Be in Bible School class for this important lesson.

QUESTIONS:

1. If God has not rejected the Jews, why aren’t they all Christians? 11:1-4
2. What is a remnant? 11:5. Who is the remnant chosen by grace?
3. What is the full inclusion of the Jews? 11:12. What would it mean?
4. Does Paul expect that all Jews will be saved? 11:14
5. Why does Paul warn Gentiles? 11:17-24. What is his warning?
6. What is the full number of the Gentiles? 11:25. When will it come?
7. When will all Israel be saved? 11:26. How many Israelites will that be?
8. What is Paul telling us when he says, For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable? 11:29
9. Upon whom does God want to have mercy? 11:32. Will he?
10. Does Paul mean we can’t or shouldn’t give gifts to God? 11:34-36. See 1 Chronicles 24:14-19.
- 11.

The world’s Jewish population was 14.3 million in 1978. The U.S. led with 5.8 million; Israel was next with 3.5 million; Russia was 3rd with 2.6 million. These 3 countries together had 79% of the world’s total Jewish population. A CBS 60 Minutes program a few years ago documented that more Jews were migrating to the U.S. than were migrating to Israel.

“We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation, without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. Where we have been the truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts, we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity.”
--Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1935 radio broadcast

LESSON TEXT: Romans 12:1-21

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The late Dr. Rufus M. Jones believed in the important place of the intellect in preaching. But one of his congregation objected to his emphasis and wrote to him to complain, "Whenever I go to church," said his critic, "I feel like unscrewing my head and placing it under the seat, because in a religious meeting I never have any use for anything above my collar button."

This certainly is not the Biblical view of the mind. According to God's word, Christians are expected to THINK! The use of logic is plainly commanded by the apostle Paul in the text we study today. Paul actually uses the Greek word *logiken* in Rom. 12:1 (translated "reasonable" in KJV) to describe the nature of our "service" to God. The transformation that takes place in the human being to change him from a sinner to a Christian takes place primarily in the mind (see Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:23; 2 Pet. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1-2; Heb. 5:11; 6:3; Eph. 1:17-19; 3:14-19; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-10).

Dr. Lloyd-Jones says in his book, *Studies in the Sermon On the Mount*, "Faith according to our Lord's teaching in this paragraph (Matt. 6:30), is primarily thinking; and the whole trouble with a man of little faith is that he does not think...We must spend more time in studying our Lord's lessons in observation and deduction. The Bible is full of logic, and we must never think of faith as something purely mystical...Christian faith is essentially thinking." Unbiased Biblical knowledge, and the logical deductions from that knowledge is the first secret of a righteous life, says John Stott in his book, *The Mind Matters*.

The battle of spirituality is fundamentally carried on in the mind. It is by the renewal of our minds that our character and behavior become transformed. Self-control is primarily mind-control. What we sow in our minds we reap in our actions. And that is precisely what Romans 12 is about!

QUESTIONS:

1. Upon what basis does Paul appeal for the transformation of the mind? 12:1
2. What has the transformation of the mind to do with presenting one's body as a living sacrifice? 12:1-2
3. What is transformation? 12:2
4. What is sober judgment? Do you think with sober judgment? 12:3.
5. Do you have a gift? 12:4-6. How are you to use your gift?
6. Isn't all love genuine? 12:9. How do we know when love is genuine?
7. What are the needs of the saints? 12:13. Do saints need hospitality?
8. How may a Christian live in harmony with others? 12:16
9. How far is a Christian to go to live peaceably with all? 12:18
10. When may we expect God's wrath to avenge the evils done to us? 12:19

"All wish to possess knowledge, but few comparatively speaking, are willing to pay the price."
---Juvenal (A.D. 60-140), Roman satirist and moralist

"I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew)
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who."
---Rudyard Kipling

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LESSON TEXT: Romans 13:1-14

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Abraham Lincoln wrote an address to the nation during the Civil War that was at least as important as the Gettysburg Address. It was his proclamation for a national fast-day, by which he designated and set apart Thursday, the 30th of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer.

Lincoln wrote: "It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. The awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity---too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

There is an inscription in the dome of our Capitol in Washington D.C. which few people know about. It says: "One far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves." A visitor saw this inscription and asked the guide what it meant. He said: "I think it refers to the second coming of Christ." When the dome of our Capitol was erected, some God-fearing official ordered that inscription to be etched in the dome of our seat of government, believing that its truth was vital to the concern of our nation. Be in Bible School class and study this lesson on "Christian Civil Conscience."

"The government of God is the only government which will hold society, against depravity within and temptation without; and this it must do by the force of its own law written upon the heart...There is no safety for republics but in self-government, under the influence of a holy heart, swayed by the government of God."

---Lyman Beecher (1775-1863), father of Harriet Beecher Stowe

LESSON TEXT: Romans 14:1-23

QUESTIONS:

1. Who should be subject to the governing authorities? 13:1. When
2. Have all governing authorities been instituted by God? 13:1. Even in Cuba and North Korea?
3. If any nation goes to war to defend another or itself against aggression and passes laws to draft people into military service, may a Christian please God by being a conscientious objector? 13:2,5
4. For what purpose are human governments ordained by God? 13:3-4
5. What does Paul mean by saying, for he (the government authority) does not bear the sword in vain? 13:4
6. Can a Christian be a servant of God and be a policeman, a soldier, a judge? What about a Christian judge and divorce cases? 13:5-6
7. To whom are taxes due? 13:6-7. How much? What if government officials do not administer your taxes as you believe they should?
8. If Christians are to owe no man anything what about home mortgages, automobile loans, credit cards? 13:8-10
9. What has "make no provision for the flesh" to do with civil conscience? 13:11-14.

"It is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier---God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both."

---John Witherspoon (1723-1794), signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Pres. of Princeton University.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Ward Patterson says in his book, *The Morality Maze---What is right, and Why?* "As Christians we must deal with some areas (of morality) where the Bible is apparently silent. Some people argue that silences are virtually prohibitions, while others argue that silences indicate areas of free choice. This underscores the dubious nature of arguments from silence. We must search the Scriptures for principles that will apply to new situations as they arise, but we also must be careful not to presume to speak with Biblical authority in areas where the Bible is silent. Further, we should beware of the cultist who capitalizes on the ambiguities and silences of Scripture to construct his own idiosyncratic system to unlock the Bible."

There are specific commandments in the Bible but it does not lay down minute rules and regulations for every conceivable situation that can possibly arise in human behavior. Such a book would be hopelessly technical, impossibly large, and incredibly boring. By giving general, overall principles that can be applied in many different situations and in many different cultures, the Bible remains constantly up-to-date, absolutely practical, and challenging. In a sense the Bible is like the U.S. Constitution---sketching out large areas of responsibility and freedom; but necessitating interpretation as situations arise.

This is what we shall be studying in Romans 14. The title of our lesson is "Taboo or Not Taboo?" Some things and actions are clearly always right, and some are always wrong. God has specified those things in the Bible so that there can be no doubt about them. But there are many things and actions which are, in some circumstances right, and in others, wrong. How are we to decide on *adiaphorous* (morally neutral) matters? Paul tells us in Romans 14. You'll want to be in Bible School class for this important lesson.

"When you are so devoted to doing what is right that you press straight on to that and disregard what men are saying about you, there is triumph of moral courage. ---Megiddo Message

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the weak brother? 14:1. How is he to be received by the strong?
2. What is an opinion? 14:2-4. Who has opinions?
3. Does being fully convinced in your own mind about an opinion make it necessarily morally valid? 14:5-6
4. Why does Paul say none of us lives...or dies to himself? 14:7-9
5. Could one person's opinion become a stumbling block to another? 14:13. What is the right action if that is a possibility?
6. Is it really true that nothing is unclean in itself? 14:14. How could something become unclean merely by thinking it was unclean?
7. What is the imperative issue in the kingdom of God for which a Christian must be willing to forego any area of his own freedom? 14:19
8. How does one keep the faith he has between himself and God? 14:22
9. How is doubting NOT acting from faith? 14:23
10. What faith is Paul speaking of in 14:23?

While there is but one faith,
there may be ten thousand opinions;
...if Christians are ever to be one,
they must be one in faith,
and not in opinion.

Elder "Raccoon" John Smith, one of the 19th century leaders in the "Restoration Movement" (i.e., the Christian Churches/ Churches of Christ)

LESSON TEXT: Romans 15:1-33

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The famous, ancient story-teller, Aesop, tells us that there were four bulls which were great friends. They went everywhere together, fed together, lay down to rest together, and always kept so close to each other than if any danger were near they could all face it at once. Now there was a lion which had determined to have them, but he could never get at them singly. He was a match for any one of them alone, but not for all four at once. However, he kept watching for his opportunity, and, when one lagged the least bit behind the others as they grazed, he would slink up and whisper that the other bulls had been saying unkind things about him. The lion did this so often that at last the four friends became paranoid. Each thought the other three were plotting against him. Finally, there was no trust among them and they went off by themselves---their friendship broken. This was exactly what the lion had planned. One by one he killed them, and made four good meals for himself.

In the Christian congregation in the first century Rome, there were both Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, and Christians of varying scruples (opinions). Paul's purpose in the closing words of this great epistle is to plead and insist that Christians "live in such harmony with one another" that they might "with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5).

Paul gives the Holy-Spirit-inspired outline as to how this harmony may be accomplished. It is here, in Romans 15! Harmony (unity) within the Lord's church is a most relevant issue of our day! Be in Bible School class and find the secret!

QUESTIONS:

1. Who are the strong? Are you one of them? Should you be? How? 15:1
2. What is the strong to do for the weak? How does that effect harmony? 15:2
3. Why does Paul suddenly refer (15:4) to the scriptures in this context?
4. How does God fill a person with all joy and peace? 15:7-13. What has this to do with harmony?
5. Is a congregation's being filled with all knowledge and ability to instruct one another essential to harmony? 15:14-21. Why? What else is essential?
6. Did Paul expect the church at Rome to support him in the work he anticipated doing in Spain? 15:22-24. Is this connected with harmony?
7. How does giving to help brethren in foreign countries instill in you a sense of unity with them? Would more giving increase unity? 15:25-29
8. Will praying for one another unite us? 15:30
9. Should ministers and missionaries be concerned that their service is accepted to the saints? 15:31. What if it isn't?

A Chinese Proverb: Said the feet to the mouth,
--"You are the luckiest thing on earth. You are forever getting the best of me. Here I am, running around all day, wearing myself out. And all for the sake of your eating."
Retorted the mouth, "Don't accuse me. How would you like it if I stopped eating so that you could stop running around?"
---now read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

LESSON TEXT: Romans 16:1-27

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

In 1765 John Fawcett was called to preach at a very small congregation at Wainsgate, England. He labored there diligently for seven years, but his salary was so meager that he and his wife could scarcely obtain the necessities of life. Though the people were poor, they compensated for this lack by their faithfulness and warm fellowship. Then Dr. Fawcett received a call from a much larger church in London, and after lengthy consideration decided to accept the invitation. As his few possessions were being placed in a wagon for moving, many of the church members came to say goodbye. Once again they pleaded with him to reconsider. Touched by this great outpouring of love, he and his wife began to weep. Finally, Mrs. Fawcett exclaimed, "O John, I just can't bear this. They need us so badly here." "God has spoken to my heart, too!" he said. "Tell them to unload the wagon! We cannot break these wonderful ties of fellowship." This experience inspired Fawcett to write a hymn. It goes like this: "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love! The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above."

Chapter 16 of Romans centers on Christian fellowship. Fellowship involves much more than getting together and visiting. Christian fellowship is nurtured only when each member of a congregation shares in the work of the church, when each member zealously guards the unity of the church, and when each member takes none of the credit but gives all glory to Christ. Why don't you nurture Christian fellowship---make your contribution to it by being in Bible School class each Lord's Day.

The poet-professor at Oxford, and philanthropist, John Ruskin (1819-1900) once said that when we fail to praise someone that deserves the praise, two sad things happen ---we run a chance of driving him from the right road for want of encouragement, and we deprive ourselves of the happiest privilege of being rewarder to him who deserves reward

QUESTIONS:

1. Was the deaconess Phoebe on the church board at Rome? 16:1. Just what is the role of women in the church?
2. What does Paul mean for the church at Rome to do by telling them to greet certain people?
3. Why did Priscilla and Aquila have a church in their house? 16:4-5
4. Is Christianity work? 16:6,9,12. What kind of work is it?
5. Was it in keeping with Christ's standards for Paul to praise some Christian workers as people of note or prominent? 16:7
6. What is all this holy kissing being advocated among church members? 16:16 (cf. 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14).
7. How are we supposed to mark those who are divisive? 16:17
8. Why would an apostle of Christ tell Christians to avoid anyone? 16:17
9. What is the mystery God kept secret? 16:25. Is it still a mystery?
10. For what purpose was this mystery disclosed? 16:26. Is it being accomplished?

"We can never unite in non-essentials...and it would not be worth much if we did. That is just the line we draw. In essentials---in that which is plainly taught and ordained as the will of God, we must be one, in non-essentials ---in all that Christ has not taught and enjoined---we must be left free, guided only by that law of love which will ever lead us to seek the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

—Isaac Errett, former editor of the *Christian Standard*, in the book *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, p. 333 reproduced by Old Paths Book Club, 1955