

# Renewing Our Minds

---

*A Daily Study of the Book of Romans*  
*January 4 - 29, 2021*

---

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*Romans 12:1-2*

---

*Cornerstone Assembly of God*  
*10551 Chalkley Rd., N. Chesterfield, VA 23237*

## How to use this study:

The year 2020 has pressured us to think and worry like “the pattern of this world” like never before. Many of us have been conformed to the world more than we realize. We need to take the beginning of 2021 and turn off the voice of the world and turn up the Word of God like never before. There, in His Word and in His Spirit, our minds will be renewed and our lives transformed.

That is why we are doing this in-depth study on the Book of Romans as a church. Through personal study and prayer, God will renew your mind with a Kingdom way to think and look at the world around you. It will cause you to understand the feelings in you as well. Most of all, it will help you recognize God’s voice and His glory in your everyday life. This is how we grow in our walk with God as He calls us to apply, by faith and by The Spirit, what He shows us as we read.

This study is divided into 20 days that you do Monday through Friday. You can use Saturday to catch up or reflect on all God has spoken to you. Each day contains the full NIV text of the Scripture passage along with **Study Questions** and a verse-by-verse **Commentary**. The commentary provides insights and answers to the study questions so you can process and learn.

Four sections of Romans were skipped in order to complete the study by the end of January. Those sections will be added as an appendix in the back at the end of the 4 weeks for you to study if you wish.

As we start 2021, our hope cannot be in a new year, but in a new way to think and know Jesus in deeper ways. I know King Jesus will bless you in ways beyond your expectations as you and your household walk with Him in this study every day!

Looking forward to Following Jesus Together in 2021!

Pastor Shawn

**15 Days Of Prayer**  
**Sunday, Jan 3 to Sunday, Jan. 17**

The first week of this Bible study also within our **15 Days Of Prayer**. We will use the study in Romans to direct our prayer focus Monday-Friday. You will see that in the **Prayer Point** section of each day. Feel free to join in prayer each morning on Zoom from 8am to 8:30am. Just go to the website home page ([cornerstone.ag](http://cornerstone.ag)) and click on the link for “Morning Prayer.”.

We will also have a  
**“Every Household Prayer Meeting” on**  
**Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 12p and 7p.**

## **Being a Servant of Jesus**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God –  
<sup>2</sup>the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures <sup>3</sup>regarding  
his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, <sup>4</sup>and who through the Spirit<sup>a</sup>  
of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead:  
Jesus Christ our Lord. <sup>5</sup>Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and  
apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.  
<sup>6</sup>And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup>To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from  
God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

<sup>a</sup>4 Or who as to his spirit of holiness

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Key words are those which, because of emphasis or repetition, stand out as being central to the message of the passage. What are some key words or phrases in this passage?
2. (a) What do you think of when you hear the word “servant”?  
  
(b) What is Jesus’ attitude toward being a servant? (Mark 10:43-45; Luke 22:24-27)  
  
(c) How do the attitudes of Paul (v. 1) and Jesus toward servanthood differ from those of most people?
3. What can you learn about the gospel (literally, “good news”) from this passage? (vv. 2-3)
4. What does Jesus’ resurrection reveal about him? (v. 4; see Acts 2:22-36)

## ★ PRAYER POINT ★

### BECOMING A MORE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF JESUS

- Do you think of yourself as a servant of Christ? Of other people?
- How does your life reflect this attitude, or lack of it?

## COMMENTARY

**v.1 “a servant of Christ Jesus”** . . . The word translated “servant” here, *doulos*, is also used of a literal slave (see Eph. 6:5-9). For the people of Paul’s time, freedom and independence were highly prized; it would be unusual for someone to willingly refer to himself as a servant or slave. But Paul has a different attitude, as reflected also in 1 Cor. 9:19 and 2 Cor. 4:5.

**“called to be an apostle”** . . . The basic meaning of apostle is that of a messenger or representative, one who is sent out with a purpose. Paul here stresses that he was not a self-appointed apostle, nor one appointed by men, but rather by God (see also the account of his call in Acts 9:1-19 and Galatians 1:11-24). At times, he felt it necessary to defend his apostleship, as in 2 Cor. 12:11-12 and Galatians 1:1.

**“set apart for the gospel of God”** . . . We typically think of being “set apart” as negative being separated from something. But Paul uses it here in a positive sense, to be separated to the gospel. This separation includes his work of preaching the gospel, but also refers to the fact that his whole life is influenced and controlled by the “good news”.

**v. 2 “the gospel he promised beforehand”** . . . Paul here emphasizes that the gospel is part of God’s eternal purpose. The fact that it is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy shows that God can be trusted, because He keeps His promises, and also that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, because it comes from the same God whose acts in history are recorded in the Old Testament (see Luke 24:25-27; Acts 26:22-23).

**v. 3 “regarding his Son”** . . . The gospel is essentially concerned with the person and works of Jesus Christ, especially his death and resurrection.

**“who as to his human nature was a descendant of David”** . . . Jesus was qualified to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, or “anointed one,” because he was from the royal line of Israel’s King David. The phrase “as to his human nature” carries the implication that He was more than merely human.

**v. 4 “was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection”**..... Jesus’ resurrection from the dead demonstrated once and for all that He is both the Son of God and our Lord, as Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost expresses (Acts 2:22-36).

**v. 5 “we received grace and apostleship”** . . . Paul tells us several things about his ministry of apostleship (“we” is probably an editorial “we,” referring to Paul only): (a) it comes from Christ; (b) it was granted for Christ’s glory, or his “name’s sake”; (c) it was received by grace; in other words, it was not earned or deserved in any way; (d) it was given for a purpose, “to call people” from all the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) . . . Paul’s special area of ministry was to the Gentiles, just as the apostle Peter’s was to the Jews (Gal. 2:7).

**“obedience which comes from faith”** . . . Paul’s mention of obedience as the goal of his ministry fits well with his reference to himself as a servant, since a servant or slave owes his master complete obedience. The order, however, is essential. The faith produces the obedience, not vice versa.

**v. 6 “And you also are among those who are called”** . . . Paul reminds his readers that it is not only apostles who are called by God, but all believers.

**v. 7 “saints”** . . . Another term for “Christians,” having the basic meaning of being set apart or separated. This word in the New Testament is always plural, referring to a group of believers, not an individual. It does not refer primarily to moral behavior, or “saintliness,” but rather to the fact that believers belong to God and are set apart to Him.

## **The Power of the Gospel**

<sup>8</sup>First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. <sup>9</sup>God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you <sup>10</sup>in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

<sup>11</sup>I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong--<sup>12</sup>that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. <sup>13</sup>I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

<sup>14</sup>I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. <sup>15</sup>That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

<sup>16</sup>I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>17</sup>For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,<sup>a</sup> just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."<sup>b</sup>

---

<sup>a</sup>17 or is from faith to faith; <sup>b</sup>17 Hab. 2:4



## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel (vv. 16-17)? Why might he feel a need to state this? (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-25)
2. In what sense is the gospel powerful? (v. 16) How is that power demonstrated?
3. What else can we learn about the gospel from verses 9 and 16-17?
4. Topical study - the gospel.
  - (a) What does 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 tell us about the content of the gospel message?
  - (b) Look up John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. What do these verses tell us about the gospel? How does this relate to Romans 1:16?
5. What is the significance of the fact that the righteousness revealed in the gospel is “from God” and is “by faith from first to last”? (v. 17; see 3:20-21 and Galatians 2:16).

## ★ PRAYER POINT ★

### RECEIVING A FRESH REVELATION OF THE GOSPEL & URGENCY TO SHARE IT

- How much does the Gospel impact how you think of everything?
- Have you ever felt ashamed of the Gospel?
- How should you change the way you live because of the Gospel?

## COMMENTARY

vv. 8-15 In this section, Paul assures the Roman Christians that, although he has never met them, they are constantly in his prayers as he gives thanks for them and intercedes before God on their behalf. Not only that, he eagerly looks forward to visiting them so that he may minister to them in person (a desire which was never fulfilled).

**v. 8 “I thank my God through Jesus Christ” . . .** The fact that all human access to God is mediated through Jesus Christ is one of the central themes of Romans; Paul has alluded to this once already, in 1:5. See also 1 Tim. 2:5 and Heb. 13:15.

**“because your faith is being reported” . . .** Paul is not commenting here on the quality of their faith; rather, he gives thanks simply that there are believers at Rome.

**v. 9 “whom I serve with my whole heart” . . .** literally, “serve in my spirit”. Paul emphasizes the depth of his commitment to serving God. His service is not for the sake of appearances or to gain men’s approval; rather, it comes from the core of his being.

**v. 10 “now at last by God’s will” . . .** Even though he strongly desires to see them, Paul recognizes that as a servant (1:1) his plans are subject to God’s overruling. It is God’s will, not his own, which must determine whether his desire is fulfilled. This is not merely an acceptance of “fate”, but a trusting reliance on the One who controls the future. See James 4:15.

**v. 12 “that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” . . .** Paul graciously and humbly clarifies his meaning. It is not as though the blessing would all be in one direction; rather, both Paul and the Romans would be encouraged by one another’s faith as they ministered to one another. As Paul’s example shows, even the most gifted leaders need to allow themselves to receive encouragement and ministry from others.

**v. 13 “I have planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now)” . . .** Paul emphasizes that the absence of a visit so far is not from indifference: he had actually made plans to see them, but was unable to carry them out. He desires to have a harvest among them. This phrase translated literally means “get some fruit”. Paul refers to “fruit” in other places to describe the changes in the life of the believer brought about by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Col. 1:10). Here he seems to be referring generally to the anticipated beneficial effects of his ministry among them, including salvation (vs. 16).

**v. 16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel” . . .** Paul states that he is not ashamed of the gospel; perhaps he was concerned that the Romans would interpret his lack of a visit as indicating he was ashamed of his message. Paul certainly knew that the simplicity of the gospel was looked down on by those who considered themselves wise; see 1 Cor. 1:18-25 and 2:14. Jesus also warned about this in Mark 8:38.

**“it is the power of God” . . .** The word translated “power” is *dunamis*, from which we get words like “dynamic” and “dynamite”. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not merely advice to people about how to live better, it is power, the power of God.

**“for salvation”** . . . The power of God which operates in the gospel is not random or purposeless; instead, it has a specific goal and result – salvation.

**“of everyone who believes”** . . . The gospel is both universal and limited. It is universal in that the same good news is for every people-group, every “tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). It is limited in that it is only effective for those who believe (see Heb. 4:2).

**v. 17 “a righteousness from God” . . . “that is by faith”** . . . The way to have a right standing before God is not through personal achievement, nor through good deeds, but through receiving in faith what God offers us. Righteousness is not something which comes from ourselves, but from God.

**“is revealed”** . . . the gospel is not something that could have been discovered by man. Who would have ever thought that God, in order to bring man into fellowship with Himself, would send His own Son to suffer and die in our place? It could only have been known to us if God revealed it.

**“It is by faith from first to last”** . . . by faith through and through. Righteousness does not come from intellectual agreement with the facts of Jesus’ life, or from attempting to live according to the principles Jesus taught. It comes from recognizing our own inability to live up to God’s standards, and trusting in God’s offer to credit Christ’s righteousness to our account.

**“the righteous will live by faith”** . . . This could mean the person who becomes righteous by faith will have eternal life. It might also mean the righteous person will live according to their faith or faithfulness. It likely includes both.

## **Man's Sin and God's Justice**

<sup>18</sup>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup>since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

<sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup>They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

<sup>26</sup>Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup>In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

<sup>28</sup>Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup>they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup>Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What has God revealed to mankind about Himself? How has He done this? (v. 20; see Ps. 19:1-6)
2. How should people respond to God as a result of this “natural revelation” (v. 21)
3. What is the result of their failure to respond as they ought? (v. 22)
4. What is God’s response to the evil acts listed in this passage? (vv. 24, 26, 28) How is this an expression of wrath? (v. 18)
5. What is mankind’s general attitude toward the truth about God? (vv. 18,25)
6. As an illustration of how total mankind’s rebellion against God is, compare the description of human behavior found in this week’s passage with the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21). How well does man live up to God’s standard?

## ★ PRAYER POINT ★

### REPENTANCE TOWARD SIN & REJECTING GOD’S TRUTH

- How has your thinking and standards become conformed to the world’s standards?

## COMMENTARY

In this section, Paul explains why it is that we need the salvation which he refers to in 1:16-17, why it is that we need a righteousness that comes from God rather than ourselves. For it is only as we recognize our sinfulness that we can truly accept and appreciate the forgiveness God offers us in Christ. It is only as we understand that God hates and punishes sin that we will see a need to be forgiven and saved from our sin.

**v. 18 “the wrath of God is being revealed” . . .** One of the key ideas in Romans is that God does not simply ignore or overlook sin. There will be a future “day of God’s wrath” when those who do not repent will be punished (2:5-8); those who know Christ will be saved from this wrath (5:9). But not only will God judge sin in the future, He is actively engaged in opposing sin now. His wrath is being revealed (present tense).

**“of God . . . from heaven” . . .** Both of these phrases emphasize that God’s wrath is personal. The consequences of sin are not merely the result of an impersonal process of cause and effect in a moral universe. They also are God’s response to those who suppress his truth by their wickedness.

**“who suppress the truth” . . .** Men do not merely ignore the truth, they do everything they can to actively hinder it (although this opposition may be subtle or disguised rather than open).

**vv. 19-20 “God has made it plain to them” . . .** Paul makes it clear that men do not sin out of ignorance. God has plainly revealed Himself to them, even to those who have never heard the gospel. The created universe speaks eloquently of God’s power and divinity (see Psalm 19:1-4). Therefore, all who die apart from Christ will be condemned, not because they never heard the gospel, but because they failed to respond to God’s revelation of Himself in nature.

**vv. 21-22 “although they knew God” . . .** Paul repeats that all men have a knowledge of God. Not only that, they are accountable to Him: they are responsible to worship and give thanks to Him. But instead they reject Him in favor of foolishness.

**“their thinking became futile” . . .** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools . . . Those who reject God often think themselves to be wise, sophisticated and enlightened. In contrast, they view Christians as naive, superstitious simpletons. But exactly the opposite is true (see 1 Cor. 1:20-27; 3:18-20, Psalm 111:10, and Isaiah 55:8-9).

**“their foolish hearts were darkened” . . .** The word “heart” is a comprehensive term for a person’s whole inner life; the mind, emotions, and will. When a person rejects God, every aspect of his or her being is affected.

**v. 23 “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles” . . .** One example of the foolishness and darkness of men’s hearts apart from God is that they choose to worship things which are far inferior to Him. Instead of worshipping the God who is immortal and incorruptible, they choose to worship pictures and statues of things which die and decay (see Isaiah 44:9-20).

**v. 24 “God gave them over”** . . . This phrase is repeated in verses 26 and 28, and emphasizes the fact that God is personally involved in opposing sin. Because men reject Him, God allows them to wallow in their sin and to degrade themselves. In effect, their punishment is to be allowed to continue sinning, to be permitted to fully express the “sinful desires of their hearts”. However, God’s purpose in this is merciful; He desires that in experiencing the full consequences of their sin, they will see their error and repent (see 11:32).

**vv. 26-27** Paul further expands on the effects of rejecting God.

**v. 28 “since they did not think it worthwhile”** . . . Men do not lack knowledge of God because they lack opportunity; rather they deliberately choose not to know Him because they do not think it “worthwhile”. They prefer other things to God. As a result, they lose the ability to discern between right and wrong; their minds and their consciences become defiled (see Titus 1:15-16).

**v. 32 “although they know...that those who do such things deserve death”** . . . Again, men do not sin out of ignorance. With full knowledge that what they are doing is wrong, and that the penalty of sin is death, they continue to choose sin.

## **God's Righteous Judgement**

<sup>1</sup>You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. <sup>2</sup>Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. <sup>3</sup>So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? <sup>4</sup>Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

<sup>5</sup>But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup>God "will give to each person according to what he has done."<sup>a</sup> <sup>7</sup>To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. <sup>8</sup>But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. <sup>9</sup>There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; <sup>10</sup>but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <sup>11</sup>For God does not show favoritism.

<sup>12</sup>All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. <sup>14</sup>(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, <sup>15</sup>since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) <sup>16</sup>This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

---

<sup>a</sup>6 Psalm 62:12; Prov. 24:12



## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why are those who pass judgment on others actually condemning themselves? What do they not understand about sin and judgment? (Rom. 2:1-4, Matthew 7:1-5 & Romans 14:4)

2. Topical Study: Judgment. In this passage Paul refers to “the day” of God’s judgment twice (vv. 5, 16), and uses the word “judgment” or “judge” eight times. The purpose of this topical study is to gain a deeper understanding of God’s judgment by examining other passages which discuss it.

Who will be the judge? (Romans 2:6 & John 5:22-27)

Who will be judged? (Rom. 2:6, 14:10-12, 2 Cor. 5:9-10)

What will be judged? (Rom. 2:6-10, Mat. 12:36, 25:31-46, 1 Cor. 4:5)

What will be the outcome for believers? (Rom. 2:7, 10, John 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:8; Eph. 6:8)

What will be the outcome for unbelievers?  
(Rom. 2:8-9, Mat. 13:40-43, 25:41,46)

3. Will those who have never heard of the Ten Commandments be condemned for breaking them? Why or why not? (vv. 14-16)

## ★ PRAYER POINT ★

WELCOMING THE CONVICTION & GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Did any of the passages listed under question 1 hit home – make you go “ouch”?

- Let us praise God for the mercy and sacrifice of Jesus knowing we are spared when God will judge men’s “secrets”!

## COMMENTARY

Whereas Paul in the previous section was describing non-Jews, here he speaks directly to Jews. The Jews prided themselves on being morally superior to Gentiles, due mainly to the fact that they possessed God's Law. But Paul here tells them that merely possessing the Law is not enough; what God requires is obedience.

**v. 1 “have no excuse” . . .** By using the same phrase to describe Jews which he used to describe people in general (vs. 1:20), Paul emphasizes that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God.

**“you who pass judgment” . . .** By condemning others for failing to obey God's law, the Jew was admitting that those who disobey the law ought to be condemned. And this sealed his own doom, because the Jew did not obey the Law perfectly himself.

**v. 2 “God's judgment . . . is based on truth” . . .** God's judgment is not based on the face we present to the world, or on the opinion that others have of us. Although we may be able to deceive other people, we cannot deceive God. He knows our hearts and our hidden sins (see vs. 16; also Luke 12:2-3).

**v. 4 “do you show contempt” . . .** Those who judge others, while considering themselves exempt from judgment, demonstrate that they have contempt for God's patience. They do not realize that the only thing which prevents God from utterly destroying them is that He is “patient...not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9; see also Psalm 86:15).

Tragically, many people misinterpret God's patience as a reprieve. They think that God will never judge their sin and they scoff at warnings of judgment. (2 Pet. 3:4). But the word translated “tolerance” in Greek implies a temporary halt to hostilities. God has delayed his judgment, not cancelled it.

repentance . . . This means “turning” and implies a change of heart, a turning away from sin and toward God. It involves a recognition that our former way of life was wrong and an acceptance of God's authority. It is not the same as remorse, or sorrow for sin, which may precede repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

**v. 5 “storing up wrath against yourself” . . .** All men are storing up something; the godly are storing up treasures (Matt. 6:20), the ungodly are storing up wrath.

**vv. 6-10 “God will give to each person according to what he has done” . . .** Paul uses a quote from Psalm 62:12 to introduce his point that judgment and reward are based on actions rather than ethnic identity. The first of these – judgment – presents no problem. It is the clear teaching of the Scriptures that judgment is based on works; those who die apart from Christ will get what they justly deserve (see Matt. 12:47-48). Yet, faith is what saves, and the works are only the fruit of faith. This is consistent with other New Testament passages which speak of works as the natural expression of faith (Matt. 7:15-23; Gal. 5:6; James 2:26).

**v. 11 “God does not show favoritism” . . .** Before God, all men are equal. No one will receive special treatment due to birth, social status, wealth, skill or achievement, or any other

factor. The only thing which matters is whether we possess the righteousness which comes from faith in Christ (Rom. 1:17).

**vv. 14-15** This passage answers the question raised by verse 12: How can a person who does not have God's revealed Law be held accountable for his actions? The answer is that all people, being created in the image of God, have an innate sense of right and wrong. They have a conscience which tells them what the "requirements of the law" are, and this conscience is constantly evaluating their actions, either accusing them or defending them. People may not know that God's law forbids stealing, but they know that stealing is wrong. Although they may attempt to convince themselves otherwise, they know deep down when their actions are wrong. Even their good actions serve to condemn them, because the fact that they do good things shows that they know the difference between right and wrong, so that when they do wrong, they have no excuse.

**v. 16 "This will take place"** . . . This (the judgment referred to in verse 12) will take place on Judgment Day, and Jesus Christ will be the Judge. For Christians, this will be a time of rejoicing, because their judge is also their savior.

## **No One Is Righteous**

<sup>9</sup>What shall we conclude then? Are we any better<sup>a</sup>? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup>As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;<sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup>All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”<sup>b</sup> <sup>13</sup>“Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.”<sup>c</sup> the poison of vipers is on their lips.”<sup>d</sup> <sup>14</sup> Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> ruin and misery mark their ways, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they do not know.”<sup>f</sup> <sup>18</sup>“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”<sup>g</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup>Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

<sup>21</sup>But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup>This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement,<sup>h</sup> through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— <sup>26</sup>he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Where, then is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. <sup>29</sup>Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, <sup>30</sup>since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

---

<sup>a</sup>9 Or worse; <sup>b</sup>12 Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20; <sup>c</sup>13 Psalm 5:9; <sup>d</sup>13 Psalm 140:3; <sup>e</sup>14 Psalm 10:7; <sup>f</sup>17 Isaiah 59:7,8; <sup>g</sup>18 Psalm 36:1; <sup>h</sup>25 Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In this passage, Paul uses both inclusive terms like “all,” “every,” and “whole” and exclusive terms like “no one” and “none.” Note how Paul uses these terms:

Inclusive (i.e. “all)

v9

v12

v19

Exclusive (i.e. “none”

v10

v11

v12

v20

2. According to this passage, what does the law do? What is it unable to do?

3. What does the phrase, “there is no difference,” tell us about the gospel? (v. 22)

4. How does the death of Christ demonstrate God’s justice? (vv. 25-26)

## ★ PRAYER POINT ★

### GRATEFULNESS FOR GOD’S GRACE & MERCY

- When did you first understand that your position before God was not based on your “works”?
- Do you ever find yourself trying to gain God’s favor through performance, or “measuring up” to his standards?
- What impact is God’s grace having on your life right now?



## COMMENTARY

This passage concludes the portion of the letter (1:18-3:20) in which Paul makes the point that all men, Jew and Gentile alike, are sinful and deserving of God's judgment. This point is essential to the message of Romans, because unless there is something to be saved from, there is no need of the gospel. Here Paul finishes off his argument by bringing together several Old Testament quotations which describe man's utter sinfulness.

**v. 9 "What shall we conclude then? Are we any better?"** . . . The "we" here refers to Christians, as in 3:8. Having condemned Jewish law-breakers in 2:17-27, Paul now reminds believers that they are no better off. (This is similar to 2:1, where he turned from describing sinful Gentiles to describing sinful Jews.) Sin and guilt are not unique to Jews or Gentiles, but are universal.

**vv. 10-12 "As it is written"** . . . In the following verses, Paul strings together quotations from several Old Testament passages, to emphasize that what he is saying is not some new doctrine, but is the consistent teaching of the Scriptures. This quote is from Psalm 14:1-3.

**"There is no one righteous"** . . . Paul makes absolutely clear his main point: all men, without exception, are sinners. (See also Solomon's prayer in I Kings 8:46).

**"All have turned away"** . . . Men do not merely ignore God, they actively avoid him (see Isaiah 53:6).

**vv. 13-14 "Their throats are open graves"** . . . In verses 13-18, Paul emphasizes the complete sinfulness of man by specifying different parts of the body, along with the sins which are characteristic of each one. Here, using quotes from Psalms 5:9, 140:3, and 10:7, Paul emphasizes the corrupt and deadly nature of men's speech. (See also James 3:6, 8.)

**vv. 15-17** This passage is a quote from Isaiah 59:7-8. Here Paul brings out the speed with which men rush to commit sins; also, its habitual nature--sin is not an occasional pastime, but a way of life.

**v. 21 "righteousness from God"** . . . Paul is speaking here of a right legal standing before God, of being "declared righteous in his sight" (3:20). This righteousness does not come from within ourselves, or from our right actions; rather, it comes from God.

**"But now . . . has been made known"** . . . These phrases indicate that the gospel is something which was not previously understood, although it was alluded to in the Old Testament (see Luke 24:25-27; Gal. 3:23-25). The gospel is a "mystery", something which was part of God's plan from the beginning, but which only now has been fully revealed (Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 3:3-9).

**v. 22 "through faith in Jesus Christ"** . . . Faith does not earn salvation; salvation has already been earned for us by Christ. It is merely the means through which salvation comes. Note that this faith is specific. It is not what many people mean when they say "have faith", a general confidence that everything will work out. It is faith in a specific person, Jesus Christ, and in his saving works on our behalf.

**“There is no difference”** . . . This phrase is a “hinge,” linking what comes before with what comes after. The righteousness which comes through faith in Christ is to all who believe. There is one way of salvation for all men, because there is one common problem: all have sinned. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, between those raised as Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, between “good” people and “bad” people. All have the same problem, and that problem has only one solution.

**v. 24 “and are justified”** . . . This justification is synonymous with being “declared righteous in his sight” (3:20). It does not mean to be made virtuous, so that one no longer sins. Rather, it means to be acquitted of sin, so that one is no longer considered guilty. This comparison to a court of law is appropriate, because Paul has just stated that the law is what makes us conscious of sin and makes us accountable to God (3:19-20).

**v. 25 “a sacrifice of atonement”** . . . The word translated “atonement” has the primary meaning of propitiation, or the turning away of wrath. God temporarily withheld punishment for the sins committed before Christ, but that punishment was only delayed, not eliminated. Through his death on the cross, Christ suffered God’s wrath for sins past, present, and future, so that those who have faith in him would not experience it. Even now, God is demonstrating his patience, withholding punishment for sins so that people can have every opportunity to repent and be saved (2 Pet. 3:9).

**v. 26 “he did it to demonstrate his justice”** . . . This verse tells us why Christ had to die. In order to demonstrate his mercy, God desired to save sinners. But he could not simply overlook their sin and remain just; sin must be punished. So in order to do both, Christ died in our place to satisfy the demands of justice.