

1. 1:1-7 Introduction and greeting.
  - a. 1:1 Author: Paul the Apostle
    - i. A bondservant of Christ, (slave to, belonging to Christ)
      1. All Christians truly belong to Christ as gifts from God the Father to His Son. (John 17:6-12, 6:39-40)
        - a. Purchased and redeemed by His blood. (1 Cor 6:19-20, Acts 20:28, Gal 3:13)
        - b. Part of His own body. (1 Cor 6:15)
        - c. Is there any greater honor than to be called one of Christ's sheep, whom He personally watches over as the Good Shepherd? (John 10:1-16)
        - d. And yet, while we have been purchased, Christ does not see us in this way. We are His friends. And brothers through adoption. (John 15:15)
        - e. Forever set free from the power of sin. We willingly give ourselves to Christ as slaves to righteousness, which comes from Him. (Rom 6:16,20-22)
      - ii. Called to be an apostle
        1. Directly by Christ (Acts 9:1-15, Gal 1:1)
        2. Into the office of Apostle. The New Testament version of a prophet. He received direct revelation from Jesus and preached this message. (Gal 1:11-12)
        3. In a similar manner, the church and every individual Christian is called out of the world. Out of darkness and into light. (1 Peter 2:9)
      - iii. Separated to the gospel of God
        1. Paul gave the rest of his life for this purpose. To spread the gospel of God.
        2. The gospel isn't just good news, but God's revealed plan for our salvation.
    - b. 1:2 This gospel was promised through His prophets and Holy Scripture.
      - i. Though it is called the New Testament, the gospel is not new and had been foretold throughout the Old Testament, though veiled in parts. (Col 1:26-27)
      - ii. Gen 3:15 is the first mention of this gospel. When the serpent is told by God that the seed of the woman would bruise His head.
    - c. 1:3 The gospel is about Jesus, our Lord. The promised Christ, descendant of David in the flesh.
      - i. 2 Sam 7:12-13 God promised to establish the throne of David forever. Jesus is the Son of David, directly descended. Luke's gospel traces the line all the way from Adam. (Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38)
      - ii. Jesus is Lord over all. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. (Mat 28:18) Every knee will bow to Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.
    - d. 1:4 Powerfully demonstrated to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.
      - i. Amongst other signs, the resurrection proved beyond doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. (John 10:25-30, Acts 2:24)
      - ii. Christ prophesied His own death and resurrection, proving His knowledge of the divine plan. (Mark 8:31)
      - iii. According to this verse He was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit. But all members of the trinity were involved. (Gal 1:1, 1 Peter 3:18, John 10:18)
    - e. 1:5-7 Through Christ there is grace as well as instruction for His saints.
      - i. The apostles were sent with declarative authority to bring people to the obedience of faith throughout all the world. (Mat 28:16-20)
      - ii. Paul addresses the epistle to the saints in Rome, beloved of God.
        1. All true believers are saints. Set apart and justified by His blood.

2. The beloved Son was Jesus (Mat 3:17, 17:5), but through His Spirit we are also beloved and adopted into His family. (Rom 8:15-16, Eph 1:5)
- iii. Grace and peace from God and Christ. Can there be any greater comfort outside of God's grace and peace?
2. 1:8-15 Paul desires to visit Rome and details his thoughts concerning them.
  - a. Notice the general spirit of grace and praise from verse 1 through 9. In this short space, Paul honors God, gives instruction, and encourages these saints whom he has not yet even met. What have we lost in modern communication?
  - b. 1:8-10 He offers prayers for these believers. Giving thanks to God for their faith. This is something to be emulated. We should pray for all the saints. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." (Mat 6:10)
  - c. Rome was known for their faith and Paul asked God to find a way to get to them. The irony being that when he does finally reach Rome, it is as a prisoner.
  - d. 1:11-12 His desire to visit was for their benefit as well as his own.
    - i. To impart some spiritual gift:
      1. Paul had been given the power to perform miraculous signs. (Acts 19:11-12)
      2. He wished to go to Rome and strengthen them however he could to help establish them, to check and secure a firm foundation for them, as the early church was under constant threat from within and without.
    - ii. He was hoping and expecting mutual encouragement, something that should be familiar amongst believers as we are all members of the same body of Christ. (1 Cor 12:12-14, Rom 12:4-5)
    - iii. 1:13-15 Though he has been hindered in his desire to visit the saints in Rome, he wishes to visit that he might have some fruit among them as He has had with other Gentiles.
      1. 1:13 Notice his care for what might seem a trivial thing. Their feelings and thoughts regarding His lack of visit. He takes the time to assure them, he wanted to come sooner, but was prevented.
      2. The fruit spoken of here is the work of conversion.
      3. 1:14 It is for this reason that Paul owes a debt to the Greeks and barbarians. For though his commission is from Christ, it is thanks to them that it is being fulfilled.
      4. 1:15 Therefore he is eager to go to Rome. Ready to preach to everyone. Something that does not sound appealing to most ears, especially under the circumstances he endured. But he understood the importance.
3. 1:16-17 The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation.
  - a. 1:16 He is not ashamed of this gospel.
    - i. Though it is foolishness to those who are perishing, it is the power to us who are being saved. (1 Cor 1:18-28)
    - ii. Neither can we be ashamed. For Jesus says "whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26)
  - b. God's power is on display in the resurrection and revealed in multiple aspects through the Gospel of Christ. This is why he was so eager to preach. He knows that it isn't empty philosophy.
  - c. This salvation is available to everyone who believes, but the Jew first, because the promises, prophets and Christ came through them. ( Mark 16:16, John 3:16, Acts 13:38-39, Rom 10:9-13)
  - d. The gospel reveals and grants the righteousness of God to those who will live by faith. (Eph 2:4-10)

4. 1:18-32 Paul now begins to lay down the foundation of his doctrine. That God's wrath is fully justified and deserved. Notice the abrupt change in his tone. Immediately after a pleasant greeting, and declaring that the just shall live by faith, we come to the serious reality of divine wrath. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Pro 9:10)
  - a. 1:18-19 Though it is not popular to preach the wrath of God in some churches today, it is nonetheless a reality spoken of throughout Scripture. Can you imagine, even briefly, the horror of the all powerful God doling out His wrath and punishment? What does it look like and how could any man stand against it?
    - i. We see some powerful examples of God's wrath in the Old Testament. The story of Noah is a perfect example of this. (Gen 6:5-7) Every living creature on the face of the earth was destroyed except those on the ark.
    - ii. The wrath of God is promised to all sinners in hell. And Jesus spoke of this frequently. (Mat 5:21-22 & 27-29, Mat 8:10-12, Mat 10:28, Mat 18:8, Mat 23:33, Mat 25:31-46)
    - iii. The only way to stand against God's wrath is through His mercy and grace. This began before time and the creation of the world. (Eph 1:3-6) And was promised to mankind through the Seed of the woman. (Gen 3:15) Finally fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ. (John 19:28-30, 1 John 4:10)
    - iv. "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." There is nothing hidden from the Lord and all will be punished according to their deeds. (Hebrews 4:13)
      1. There are many different forms of ungodliness and unrighteousness. Ungodliness may be seen as anything that lacks the consideration of the Holy and living God. I.e. Atheism, pride, prayerlessness, lack of due recognition to His expressed will. Whereas unrighteousness may be more of the actual lawless deeds of man. I.e. murder, rape, theft.
      2. It is not simply that people are unaware, but that they actively suppress the truth and knowledge of God. We know this to be a vain exercise as no man will escape the judgment of God. (2 Cor 5:10-11)
    - v. God's wrath is righteous and deserved. His law has been written on our hearts and made known to all men. Therefore to reject God is a deliberate and willful act of disrespect and ingratitude. But this is what we all do and why we need God's mercy.
      1. This is speaking of general revelation as opposed to special revelation which came in the form of His prophets, His Son and Holy Scripture.
  - b. 1:20 From the beginning of time, God's work has revealed His nature. His power, wisdom and order. These attributes are seen and understood by His creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)
    - i. This does not mean all things can be understood. But the evidence for the creator is seen everywhere. (Isa 40:21-25, Job 36:22-31)
    - ii. Have you ever stood on the ocean shore or in front of a vast array of mountains? Proper perspective puts us in a place of lowliness, how truly small we are compared to His majesty.

- iii. Our intellect and pride can be dangerous things, but God will humble the proud. (Mat 23:12)
  - iv. Now that the word has become flesh and Jesus has come to the earth, there is even less excuse to those who have heard the gospel. This is not to say that there ever was any excuse to begin with as we will see in the next verse. (John 15:22)
- c. 1:21 They knew God, therefore there is no excuse at all for those who reject God. Atheist or agnostic, to claim ignorance or claim there is no evidence is to call God a liar.
- i. Everyone is aware of God, but instead of giving Him the due glory and thanksgiving, they reject Him and set their attention on the benign, the useless.
  - ii. As a result, all of their thoughts from that moment forward are empty and blind because they have no truth or light. Though this is not a preventative for them and in their foolishness, love the darkness. (John 3:19)
  - iii. Even Christians can be guilty of this. We commit sins of omission through lack of knowledge or desire to understand His word. Neglect of duty, unfruitfulness or unfaithfulness.
- d. 1:22 Those who prop themselves up against God and His wisdom only show how much of a fool they truly are. (Pro 26:12)
- i. Without fear of the Lord, there is no true wisdom. Psalm 14:1 - "The fool has said in his heart, 'there is no God.'" (1 Cor 3:19)
  - ii. This becomes our permanent state of existence. When we reject God, we profess ourselves to be wiser than our creator and our entire world is built on lies. Even to the point that we create false gods in imitation of our suppressed knowledge.
- e. 1:23 Through this self deception mankind has routinely created idol after idol. Giving the due glory of God to corrupt man and lifeless statues of animals. (Exo 32:1-4)
- i. This is a violation of the first and second commandment of God. (Exo 20:1-6)
  - ii. Though idols are nothing but the work of men's hands, unaware and unworthy of worship, man still goes through the motions to appease their conscience, praying in vain to lumps of wood. (Isa 45:18-20, Zec 10:2)
- f. 1:24-25 Man is created in the image of God. When we reject God, we inevitably reject ourselves believing we are smarter than we truly are. Therefore, in His divine wisdom God allows those who reject Him to fulfill their lustful desires. Which ultimately dishonors themselves.
- i. Given up to uncleanness, in the lust of their hearts, they dishonor their own bodies.
    - 1. How filthy is man's heart? We have countless perverse examples throughout history made publicly known. How much worse is that which is hidden?
    - 2. As Christians our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Any sin against the body of a believer is directly against the Spirit as well. (1 Cor 6:17-20)

- ii. Exchanging the truth of God for a lie.
  - 1. The glory and truth of God's revelation is given up in favor of man's vain imaginings. We can see this at work in today's modern "gender theory". The idea that a man can be a woman if he simply "feels that way". And the world is pushing hard to accept this as normal.
  - 2. Satan is at work in this matter. For he is the father of lies and blinds the minds of the unbelieving. (John 8:44, 2 Cor 4:4)
  
- iii. Serving the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.
  - 1. This is known as idolatry which manifests itself in many ways. From worshiping nature, statues, ourselves or creating a god in our own mind that doesn't truly exist. There is no difference between these things. All of them are lies that set people against the one true living God. And there are countless people today who are deceived into the latter by false teachers.
  - 2. "Do as thou wilt" is a common philosophy of those who reject God. And with no true object to ground ourselves in reality, this will be the standard default. Where every man does what is right in his own eyes. (Pro 14:12)
  - 3. Notice that Paul cannot mention God without giving praise. Let us learn to do the same. Praise God!
  
- g. 1:26-27 When people forsake God, God allows them to reap the due penalties of their sinful acts. He steps out of the way and their unchecked vile passions ultimately lead to rampant homosexual behavior.
  - i. Paul mentions vile passions in association with homosexual behavior. All sin is wrong and against God's law, but this one is highlighted as unnatural and shameful for it is against the foundational design of God's order. (1 Cor 6:17-20)
    - 1. Homosexual behavior is prohibited in Leviticus 18:22 as an abomination and maintained throughout the Bible. 1 Cor 6:9 addresses this again and says, amongst other things, that No homosexual will enter the kingdom of heaven. God's natural design is for male and female to join together as one flesh. (Mat 19:4, 1 Cor 6:15-20)
    - 2. God does not cause this sin. Many people say "I was born this way", but God does not tempt anyone to sin. (James 1:13-15)
  - ii. When our passions and lusts are not bridled by the truth of God, we regress to animalistic behaviors, convincing ourselves there is no right or wrong, but doing only what feels good.
  - iii. The penalty mentioned in verse 27 is not explicit, however we know it is the result of abandoning God's designed order. And in today's world the CDC states that AIDS is primarily spread through male to male sexual contact.
  
- h. 1:28 Re-emphasizing the point; as a result of man discarding the knowledge of God, God gives them over to their own debased thoughts to do those things they ought not do. (Eph 4:17-19) see vs 1:21
  - i. The depravity of man is a doctrine, which says in effect that man is incapable of doing good. A result of the wretched effects of sin which spread to mankind through our federal head and first man, Adam. When left to our own devices we will choose to live a sin filled life. And

without God's direct intervention, we would not, could not choose to serve Him. (Isaiah 64:1-7 begins a powerful prayer asking for God's mercy in spite of this.)

- ii. Those under the influence of Satan will extol the virtue of sin, creating excuses and eventually praising it as something good to be desired. They seek freedom from God, but apart from his mercy, they will run to their own demise in hell.
  - iii. And once more, let us remember that the problem isn't simply that men do not know, but that they choose to discard the knowledge God has given them. And as such God gives them over to their own perverted thoughts.
- i. 1:29-32 We now see a host of sinful behavior which results from the fact mentioned in verse 28. That men do not like to retain the knowledge of God. The following sinful behavior is not to be considered exhaustive, but a mere sample of common sin practice.
- i. Sexual immorality - Though lacking a complete and precise definition, sexual immorality is generally understood as any sexual behavior outside of husband and wife intimacy. This is a wide category of sin, but includes anything from fornication to homosexual practice and bestiality. It has become a common practice in our world to see people never getting married though living together and having children.
  - ii. Wickedness - a general demeanor of disregard for God's law and authority. Webster's dictionary defines this as morally bad: evil, disgustingly unpleasant: vile.
  - iii. Covetousness - To wish for or desire that which belongs to someone else. It is the last commandment listed in Exodus 20:17 and it will lead us astray. (James 1:14-15)
  - iv. Maliciousness - Having a desire to cause harm. Malice (1) - desire to cause pain, injury or distress. Malice (2) - intent to commit an unlawful act or cause harm without legal justification or excuse. (Mark 11:18)
  - v. Envy - A painful or resentful awareness of someone else's belongings or advantages. Oftentimes leading to sabotage or slander. (Gen 37:3-4)
  - vi. Murder - The deliberate unlawful killing of another person. Jesus compares anger with murder in Matthew 5:21-22. And 1 John 3:15 reads: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer" (Gen 4:8 First murder)
  - vii. Strife - Bitter conflict and contentions, prolonging argument. (Pro 28:25, Gen 13:7-9)
  - viii. Deceit - Dishonesty, lying, deception. (Acts 5:1-11) However, there are some exceptions mentioned in Scripture. (Exo 1:15-21, Jos 2:1-7)
  - ix. Evil-mindedness - Having evil thoughts. In the case of depraved sinners, this is most if not all the time. (Pro 24:17)
  - x. whisperers/gossips - Speaking behind people's back, spreading rumors or sharing information that doesn't need to be shared. (Pro 11:9, Eph 4:29)
  - xi. Backbiters - To say mean or spiteful things about someone not present. (Pro 25:23)
  - xii. Haters of God - This is self explanatory, but they hate God and blame Him for their own troubles and evil doings.
  - xiii. Violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil - When there is no regard for God, there is no regard for anything except personal desires and fulfillment. All of life becomes selfish and vain and people will not only practice all manner of evil, but will continue to find new ways to shame and dishonor themselves before God. Though they will reject this shame and proclaim it as something good, willing to fight those who expose evil for what it is. (Mat 14:3-11)

- xiv. Disobedient to parents - God considers this so important as to be mentioned in the ten commandments. And violation of this commandment was punishable by death (Exo 21:15&17, Deut 21:18-21) As well as multiple times throughout the new testament. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." (Eph 6:1-3, Mat 15:4, Col 3:20)
  - xv. 1:31 Paul finally ends this list with some negative examples of things people lack. First of all discernment, which is the ability to judge well. They can't be trusted, they do not love others, neither do they forgive or have mercy.
  - xvi. 1:32 But worst of all is that they know the righteous judgment of God. They know that those who practice these things are deserving of death, yet still do them. And not only do they know this, but they encourage others to do the same. "Pride" parades openly celebrate hostility towards God. And those who support these parades and lifestyles advocate a path that leads to death. (2 Pet 2:12-14, Pro 17:15, 28:4, Isa 5:20, Eze 13:22)
5. Self test Introduction and chapter 1
- a. Who wrote the Epistles to the Romans?
  - b. How did he receive his teaching and apostleship?
  - c. What is the main theme of this Epistle?
  - d. What is the biblical meaning of the word saint?
  - e. Why was the author eager to go to Rome?
  - f. Why has God revealed His wrath on mankind?
  - g. What is the difference between ungodliness and unrighteousness? Are they the same?
  - h. What is the only valid excuse to reject God and be spared from the pit of hell?
  - i. Name at least 2 things that happen to those who knowingly reject God?
  - j. Who is more guilty and therefore more likely to be punished by God: the one who commits sin or the one who condones it?

6. Review of chapter 1. After a personal greeting to the saints in Rome, wherein Paul declares the gospel of Christ as the “power of God to salvation for everyone who believes”, and that the “just shall live by faith”, he begins to lay the foundation for this gospel and why we need it in the first place. Addressing the guilt of man and the righteous indignation of God, he establishes that the knowledge of God is undeniable throughout creation. God has made Himself known and there is evidence to be seen everywhere. Sinful man intuitively knows His creator, yet suppresses the truth of God in unrighteousness. Therefore God allows sinners to fulfill their unrighteous desires and reap the consequences of their actions.
7. 2:1-16 Paul now begins to address those who claim to know better. This would include the Jews of his time and any moralist who might think themselves better or judge others for their sins. (“God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.” - Luke 18:11) Those who claim to have the truth and judge others only store up wrath for the day of judgment. For the more knowledge we have, the higher the accountability. (Hebrews 10:26-27, James 3:1)
  - a. 2:1 There is no excuse for anyone to judge another based on their sins. We are all sinners in need of God’s grace and mercy. By wrongfully judging others, we only condemn ourselves, for we admit knowledge of God’s standards, yet we are just as guilty of violating His law.
    - i. Self righteousness is a common problem for mankind. People often have a substandard knowledge of God’s holiness and will convince themselves they are good. (Pro 20:6) Instead of investing time to understand God and reflect on His word, they will overlook their own sins and focus on the lives of other people. (John 8:9)
    - ii. The Jews believed they would inherit the blessings promised to Abraham simply because of their heritage. In a similar manner today, there are many who believe they will automatically go to heaven because they were baptized as an infant or go to church. Yet neither of these facts alone will save a person. Do you know what is necessary to save a soul? (Mark 1:15)
    - iii. (1 Cor 5:11) This is not an all out ban on judgment. Christians are called to use righteous judgment in accordance with God’s truth. We must use wise discernment to rebuke or distance ourselves from professing Christians who knowingly sin, to sift through false teachers or to enact church discipline. (John 7:21-24, Mat 7:1-5)
  - b. 2:2 “But we know”, that is, those who have been taught the law of God and or understand that there is a difference between good and evil. We know that God judges righteously and true against all sin.
    - i. (Isaiah 45:19) The judgment of God is according to truth because it is God who establishes truth. He is the standard by which all truth is measured. His work is perfect and without injustice, therefore His word cannot deceive. (Deut 32:3-4, Psalm 33:4-5, Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18)

- ii. (Jer 17:10) When God judges a man, it is without error and is perfect judgment because He sees through the outward appearance and into our secret thoughts.
- c. 2:3 If we are judging others in any capacity, we must have a real understanding and knowledge of our own sin state. For those who judge others will be held accountable, not only to their own standards, but also to God's holy standard. (Luke 6:37-38)
  - i. There is a measure of self deceit and lack of awareness in the sin of hypocrisy. To overlook our own sins while pointing out others, seems to be inviting God for His immediate judgment. (Mat 23:29-33, Pro 16:5)
  - ii. Consider the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. The king forgave a servant who owed an enormous debt after he begged and pleaded. But afterwards, this same servant went out and demanded repayment with violence for a debt he was owed. When the king found this out he ordered that the wicked servant be tortured. At the end of the parable Jesus said "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."
  - iii. None will escape the coming judgment except those who are covered by the blood of Jesus and wear His righteousness.
- d. 2:4 God's goodness is unparalleled and it is only because of this fact that we come to repentance at all. (Eph 2:8) He displays this goodness to all men, and far more than is rightly deserved. But Instead of contemplating on this goodness, it is wholly taken for granted.
  - i. (Eze 18:31-32, 33:11) Our days on this earth are numbered. And it is only by the grace of God that we stand moment to moment. His goodness allows us time while we still have breath to turn away from sin. Can you name one good reason that God should allow you another day on this earth? Let us give Him thanks for His mercy.
  - ii. (2 Pet 3:1-9) Forbearance and longsuffering - God holds back His immediate judgment. With enduring patience He is slow to anger and abundant in mercy. He will forgive those who turn to Him in repentance. But He will by no means clear the guilty. (Num 14:18)
  - iii. It is thanks to the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. (Tit 3:3-7)
- e. 2:5 (Ecc 8:11) Those self righteous persons who will not humble themselves to acknowledge their own sins will do nothing, but add to their own negative account for the day of judgment.
  - i. Without Christ, this is the only possibility. For He is the only way offered for the forgiveness of our sins. Every evil deed will be weighed and counted on the day of judgment. Even every idle word we speak and those things we do in secret. (Rom 2:16, Mat 12:36)

- ii. (Heb 3:12-15) The hardening of our hearts leads us away from God. Even those who believe they are in God's will can, and will, be deceived by sin if it is allowed to run free. Therefore diligence on our part is required that we do not stray. We must repent of any sin as soon as we become aware of it. And exhort each other to repent if we become aware of the sins of another.
  - iii. (Rev 16:8-11) When the day of judgment arrives, those who have rejected the grace of God still will not repent of their sins, but blame Him for their troubles.
- f. 2:6-11 "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" Everyone will stand before God. The righteous and the unrighteous. God, who is righteous and just will give to everyone exactly what they deserve. Nothing will be hidden, for God knows all. (Job 34:11, Jer 17:10, Heb 9:27)
- i. (2 Cor 5:10) At this time, our deeds will be taken into account and punished or rewarded as God sees fit, according to what we did with the life and talents He has given us. And though the just will be saved by grace through faith in Christ, God will repay us for our righteous efforts or for our evil deeds. (Mat 6:19-22, 10:28, 16:27)
  - ii. (Rev 7: 9-17) Heaven is a place for glory and honor and peace. Called the heavenly Jerusalem and city of the living God, it is a place to worship the Lord and there will be an innumerable number of angels as well as men and women from all nations and tribes of the earth. Jesus will dwell among the inhabitants of heavens and there will no longer be any hunger or thirst or tears for any reason. (Heb 12:22, Rev 7:9-10, 16-17)
  - iii. (Mat 13:41-42) Hell on the other hand, is also a real place, described by Jesus as a place of torment and everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. But everyone who does not have the blood of Christ to cover their sins will find themselves here as well. (Mat 25:41, Rev 20:15)
  - iv. Additionally, there will be degrees of rewards or suffering accordingly. (Luke 12:47-48, 1 Cor 3:11-15)
  - v. (V7)"patient continuance" We are counseled many times regarding the importance of perseverance. It is regarded as a mark of true conversion. Those who run the race till the end, whose eyes are always on the prize, seeking for the glory and honor only He can bestow, will live in peace in His immortal presence. (1 John 2:19, Mat 24:9-13, Mat 10:22)
  - vi. (John 15:1-4) It is not accurate to say that we must act and do good or else be punished, but that our actions are a reflection of the reality within us. Our good deeds are evidence of our salvation and not the cause for it. (James 2:14-17)
  - vii. (2 Cor 5:17) Those who are truly saved have been regenerated. They are a new creation by an act of God and are in the process of being sanctified. Which process does not end until it is complete and we are glorified with Christ. (Php 1:6)
  - viii. On the other hand, those who do not obey God, but rather obey their own selfish and lustful hearts, will receive their due reward, which is wrath and indignation. (1 John 2:15-17)

- ix. (2 Cor 13:5) We must be diligent in this matter. For it is possible to deceive ourselves. There are many false professions and there are many corrupt teachers. Some people think they can pick and choose which parts of the Bible to follow while others have never opened it at all, making up their own ideas as they go along. But claiming a belief in God is not enough and will not save you. (165 million adults in America profess to be Christian.) (1 John 2:3-4, Jer 17:9)
- x. (V9-11) (Mark 12:14) God does not show favoritism to anyone. Your race, nationality and or ancestry matter nothing when it comes to salvation. You will be dealt with according to your own sins. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." (Eze 18:20)
- xi. However, we are held accountable for the degree of truth and light that has been given to us. Such is why the Jews are mentioned first. They hold a special place in God's plan for salvation. Given the law and prophets, they should be the first to understand that grace is by faith. "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:47-48)
  
- g. 2:12 Everyone who sins is guilty, period. Whether they live in the remote places of the earth and only have a general revelation of God or they have been privileged to know the special revelation of God. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." and "The soul who sins shall die." (Rom 1:18, Eze 18:20)
  
- h. 2:13-16 The Jews have the written law which judges them. But the gentile world has God's law written in their hearts and as such, are just as guilty. For their conscience bears witness against them and God knows the truth of our internal reality when we ignore or obey our conscience.
  - i. (V13) Not the hearers, but the doers. The Jews did not garner any special favor in God's eyes, simply because they heard the law spoken or because it was passed down through generations of their bloodline. Nor is anyone granted access to heaven simply because they might go to church on Sundays or listen to so-called Christian radio. (Mat 3:9, 7:24-27)
  - ii. It is easy to discard the role of works in regards to our salvation. But Scripture warns us that righteous works should be evident and Jesus said "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Mat 7:15-27, James 2:14-17)
  - iii. (V14) Though they "do the things in the law" that is not to say that any of them have done such a good work as to merit heaven. Or that they have kept the law where the Jews could not, but only that the law is shown to be at work inside them by their refrain of certain evils. ("shall not murder, shall not commit adultery.")
  - iv. (V15) "work of the law written in their hearts" Even those who declare themselves atheist still show understanding of the natural law. That there is a difference between right and wrong. Although the suppression of truth is at work and blatantly expressed in

- postmodern theories, you would be hard pressed to encounter someone who believes it is right to steal or rape a child. (Job 9:20)
- v. "Conscience also bearing witness" The conscience is not the law. God's law exists eternally unchanging. But our conscience is a tool given to us by God, to observe and direct us according to His law. And the fact that we have a conscience is proof that we are aware of right and wrong. Therefore our conscience will bear witness against us. Either to excuse or accuse us on the day of judgment against His law.
  - vi. (V16) Every man and woman will be judged through Jesus Christ. (Mat 25:31-32, John 5:22)
- i. 2:17-20 The Jewish nation was an honored one. A chosen people, to whom God had revealed Himself directly, to give them the law and from their line, bring forth Christ. Having the privilege of God's written word, they should know with certainty, His will and what was truly good and bad. But this only brought about a sense of superiority and a religious dogma void of true understanding and spirituality.
- i. (V17) They may have been called Jews, but they were legalists relying on their own understanding and application of the law. Their entire understanding was void of the larger implications and necessary faith in Christ. (Mat 27:6, Mark 3:1-4)
  - ii. It is proper and right to boast in God. For there is nothing to boast of in ourselves. He is worthy of all praise and worship. "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. (Ps 34:1-3, 1 Co 1:31, 2 Co 10:17, Jer 9:24)
  - iii. (V18) Having been instructed by the law, the Jews had the possibility for proper knowledge and the ability to approve that which is right and good, but they relied on themselves and didn't have a right relationship with God. They did not know what Jesus meant by "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." (Ho 6:6, Isa 1:11-17, Mat 9:10-13, 1 Tim 1:8-10)
  - iv. (V19) Their self confidence was a hindrance. They were so certain of themselves to be a guide to the blind, and a light to those in darkness that they were blinded themselves as Jesus said of them, "They are blind leaders of the blind." (Pro:14:16, Mat 15:14)
  - v. The world teaches that self confidence is a grand thing to be desired, but such confidence in ourselves is a dangerous belief that turns us away from God. Everything we have is a gift from God. From our life and bodies, to our personalities and talents. We can not live without God and would not know love apart from Him. He is the author and finisher of our faith. And in Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:2, Heb 12:2)
  - vi. (V20) (Mat 15:8-9) They had the form of knowledge and truth, but were lacking in reality. Jesus said of the Pharisees that they tithed mint and cumin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. All the "good" a person might do in their life is irrelevant without God.

- j. 2:21-24 Coming back around to how the chapter began, Paul questions the self righteousness and hypocritical nature of the Jewish people. Yes, they had been given the law and honor that other men did not receive, but were they using this knowledge to their advantage? It would seem evident they did not. For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (2 Sam 12:14, Isa 52:5, Eze 36:16-21, Mat 3-5)
  
- k. 2:25 Circumcision was an important part of Jewish tradition. It originated as a sign of the covenant given to Abraham by God and was to be maintained throughout generations. It was so serious in God's eyes that if a male child was not circumcised, that child must be cut off from among his people. In the time of Moses, the law was introduced and the obligation of circumcision was renewed. Paul is expressing in this verse, that the law and circumcision are inseparably tied together. He is saying that if the neglect of circumcision violates and nullifies the law. Then to violate and neglect the law was to nullify the circumcision. Therefore circumcision is only profitable if you keep the law, which none of them could do. (Gen 17:9-14, Ex 4:24-26, Lev 12:2-3)
  
- i. Though Jesus Himself was circumcised, circumcision is no longer required as a sign of the covenant. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Acts 15, Rom 10:4, 1 Cor 7:18-20)
  
- l. 2:26-29 Continuing in this line of thought, and bringing the chapter to a close, once again we find that God is a discerner of the heart. Circumcision, an act done to our flesh, means nothing if it is not accompanied by a renewed spirit and actions that match our profession. In this we have the principle understanding regarding the circumcision of the heart. ( Deut 10:12-17, 30:6, Jer 4:4, 9:25-26)
  
- i. (V26) As mentioned earlier in this chapter, verse 11, God shows no partiality. Jewish or Gentile, It is not our words that justify us, but our hearts. What are the motives behind your actions? God sees through it all and will reward those who truly turn to Him in fear and love. (Eze 33:19, Acts 10:34-35)
- ii. (V27) Jesus made this same declaration in Mat 12:41-42. Those who fulfill the will of God will be set in high places. It doesn't matter what knowledge or experience you may have had in life, it is to no avail if you do not come to the cross and acknowledge your need for the salvation Jesus offers.
- iii. (V28-29) Our heritage, and upbringing hold no value in regards to salvation. Neither does the name by which we call ourselves. Even if there is an outward appearance of righteousness, without an inward change and a renewed heart there is nothing to expect, but condemnation and judgment. If we are to find favor in the eyes of God we must believe in His Son and trust what Jesus told Nicodemus "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And such a birth does not occur through the letter of the law, but by the Spirit of God. (John 3:3, Php 3:2-3)