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Romans

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to churches that met in homes in the city of Rome. Paul had never been to Rome. But he writes that he is planning to go through Rome on his way to Spain. There he hopes to continue his work of telling people the Good News about Jesus. And Paul wants the believers in Rome to support him in this mission.

First, Paul must deal with some problems among the believers in Rome. They are not united in their understanding of the Good News. This problem may have been caused by Jewish followers of Jesus who had recently returned to Rome. Some of them may have been the ones who had started these churches years earlier. After these Jewish believers had taught many non-Jewish people in Rome about Jesus, they had been forced to leave. Like all the Jews in Rome, they had been blamed for a riot. And this had caused the Roman Emperor Claudius to force all Jews out of the city. But after Claudius died, many Jews, including Jewish followers of Jesus, came back to Rome.

When the Jewish believers returned, they found the churches now being led by non-Jewish followers of Jesus. It appears that some of these Jewish believers were teaching things that were different from the Good News that Paul taught. And they began to criticize the believers who were not Jews. Paul knew that God wanted the believers to be united in their understanding of the Good News. And it was also important for Paul's plan. If

they were not all in agreement with his teaching, they would not be willing to help him in his mission.

So Paul arranges his teaching in Romans to deal with the wrong ideas of these Jewish-Christian teachers. He uses a style of writing that was popular among educated people in the ancient world, such as those who lived in Rome. He includes statements and questions that express a point of view different from his own. He does this so that he can respond to these false ideas. He wants to give the believers in Rome a clear understanding of the Good News from God.

Paul's main problem with these Jewish-Christian teachers was their refusal to fully accept the non-Jewish followers of Jesus. They said that non-Jews could not be part of God's people unless they followed certain parts of the Law of Moses. But Paul shows that the law has nothing to do with the way God saves people. God has made a way through Jesus to free people from sin and give them life that does not end at death. People who put their trust in Jesus are united with him. And this makes them part of God's family.

Paul teaches that God the Father sent his Son to the world to save people because of his unconditional love (grace). This was his plan from the very beginning. The Good News is that God sent his Son to complete the promises he had made long ago to Abraham. Abraham was the most important ancestor of the Jews. But those promises were not just for the Jewish people. They were for all people who put their faith in God,

as Abraham did. The Good News tells how God has made a way for all people to be accepted as right through faith in Jesus. In this way God brings people from every nation together in unity with Jesus, the Christ (or Messiah, God's Chosen King). And God gives his new people power through his Spirit to live the kind of life he desires.

In the book of Romans we see...

Paul's greeting and theme: the Good News is God's power to save everyone (1:1-17)

A frightful view of sinful humanity (1:18-32)

Paul's argument: God is right to save everyone through Jesus (2:1 – 3:31)

God saves Jews and non-Jews the same way he saved Abraham (4:1-25)

The Good News: God has shown his kindness through Jesus (5:1 – 8:39)

Paul's concern for his own people who don't accept Jesus as Messiah (9:1 – 11:36)

God's people, united with Jesus, show the world a new way to live (12:1 – 15:13)

Paul's mission and his plans (15:14-33)

Paul's greetings to the churches and closing words about the Good News (16:1-27)

1 Greetings from Paul, a servant belonging to Christ Jesus.*

God chose me to be an apostle and gave me the work of telling his Good News. ²God promised this Good News long ago by what his prophets said in the Holy Scriptures ³about his Son. As a human, the Son came from the family of David. ⁴And when he was raised from

death by the Holy Spirit,[†] he was given full authority to rule as God's Son. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁵Through him, God showed me his kindness. He gave me the special work of an apostle—to go to the people of all nations and lead them to trust and obey him. I do all this to honour Christ. ⁶And you are some of those people he sent me to. God has chosen you to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷This letter is to all of you in Rome. God loves you and has chosen you to be his holy people.

I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give you grace and peace.

A Prayer of Thanks

⁸First I want to say that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. I thank him because people everywhere in the world are talking about your great faith. ⁹⁻¹⁰Every time I pray, I remember you. God knows that this is true. He is the one I serve with all my heart by telling people the Good News about his Son. I keep praying that now at last God will somehow open a way for me to come to you. ¹¹I want very much to see you and give you a spiritual gift of some kind to make your faith stronger. ¹²I mean that I want us to help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you.

¹³Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I have planned many times to come to you, but something always happens to change my plans. I would like to see the same good result among you

***1:1 Christ Jesus** Or "King Jesus". The term "Christ" is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah", a royal title. See Mark 15:32; Luke 23:2. See also Christ and Messiah in the Word List.

[†]**1:4 Holy Spirit** Literally, "spirit of holiness".

that I have had from my work among the other non-Jewish people.

¹⁴I must serve all people, whether they are civilized or savages,[‡] educated or ignorant. ¹⁵That is why I want so much to tell the Good News to you there in Rome.

¹⁶For me there is no shame[¶] in telling the Good News. No, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—the Jews first, and now also those who are not Jews. ¹⁷Yes, the faithful goodness of God is made clear in the Good News by the faithfulness of one, which leads to the faithfulness of many. As the Scriptures say, “The one who is right with God by faith will live.”[§]

All People Have Done Wrong

¹⁸God shows his anger from heaven against all the bad things wicked people do. They show no respect for him, and they do wrong to each other. Their evil lives keep the truth about God from being known. ¹⁹This makes God angry because they have been shown what he is like. Yes, God has made it clear to them.

²⁰There are things about God that are invisible—his eternal power and all that makes him God. But from the time the world was created, these things have been easy for people to see. That is, people can understand what God is like by seeing what he has made. So people have no excuse for the evil they do.

²¹People knew about God, but they did not honour him as God. And they

did not give thanks to him. Instead, they turned their attention to useless things. Their confused minds were filled with darkness. ²²They said they were wise, but they became fools. ²³They did not honour the greatness of God, who lives forever. They traded the worship of God for the worship of idols—things made to look like humans, who all finally die, or like birds, animals and reptiles.

²⁴So God handed them over to their filthy desires. And they became immoral and dishonoured their bodies by the evil ways they used each other. ²⁵They honoured and worshipped the things God created instead of worshipping the God who created those things. He is the one who should be praised forever. Amen.

²⁶So, because people did not honour God, he handed them over to the shameful things they wanted to do. Their women traded the natural way of having sex for something against nature—having sex with each other. ²⁷The men did the same. They stopped having natural sex with women and burned with desire for each other all the time. They did shameful things with other men or boys. They brought this shame on themselves, getting what they deserve for wandering away from the truth.

²⁸These people had the idea that it was not important to think about God. So God handed them over to their own wrong thinking. And so they do things no one should ever do. ²⁹Their lives are filled with every kind of wrongdo-

[‡]1:14 *civilized or savages* Literally, “Greeks and barbarians”. See Greek in the Word List.

[¶]1:16 *no shame* Paul mentions the idea of shame because for many people in Paul’s time, the Good News was shocking and embarrassing. As he says in another letter, a basic part of the message was “Christ (God’s King) was killed on a cross.” He adds, “This message is a problem for Jews, and to other people it is nonsense.” See 1 Cor. 1:22-25.

[§]1:17 *The one who ... will live* Quote from Hab. 2:4 (Greek version). This also may be translated, “the righteous one will live through faithfulness.”

ing, evil, greed and hatred. They are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying and a desire to hurt others. They gossip³⁰ and say evil things about each other. They hate God. They are rude, proud and boast about themselves. They invent ways of doing evil. They don't obey their parents.³¹ They are foolish, and they don't keep their promises. They show no kindness or mercy to others.³² They know God's law says that anyone who lives like that should die. But they continue to do these things themselves, and more than that, they also encourage others who do them.

You Cannot Judge Others

2 So do you think that you can judge those other people? You are wrong. You too are guilty of sin. You judge them, but you do the same things they do. So when you judge them, you are really condemning yourself.² God is right to punish all who do such things.³ But since you do the same things as those people you judge, surely you understand that God will punish you too. How could you think you would be able to escape his judgement?⁴ God has been kind to you. He has been very patient, waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his great kindness. Maybe you don't understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your heart and life.

⁵ But you are so stubborn! You refuse to change. So you are making your own punishment greater and greater. You will be punished on that day when God will show his anger—the day everyone will see God judge people fairly.^{** 6} “He will reward or punish everyone for what

they have done.”^{†† 7} Some people never tire of doing good. They live for glory and honour from God and for life that cannot be destroyed. God will give eternal life to them.⁸ But others do only what supports their own interests. So they reject what is right and choose to do what is wrong. They will suffer God's angry judgement.⁹ Trouble and suffering will come to everyone who does evil—to the Jews first and also to those who are not Jews.¹⁰ But glory, honour and peace will come to everyone who does good—to the Jews first and also to those who are not Jews.¹¹ God judges everyone the same, no matter who they are.

¹² So people who have the law and those who have never heard of the law are all the same when they sin. People who don't have the law and are sinners will be destroyed. And, in the same way, those who have the law and are sinners will be judged guilty by the law.¹³ After all, just hearing the reading of the law does not make people right with God. Only those who do what the law says will be right before him.

¹⁴ Well then, think about those who are not Jews and did not grow up with the law. When they do what the law commands,^{‡‡} they are examples of the law, even though they don't have the written law.¹⁵ They show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong, as the law commands, and their consciences agree. But sometimes their thoughts tell them that they have done wrong or even that they have done right.¹⁶ This is how it will be on the day when God “judges all the things people keep

****2:5 You will ... fairly** See Rom 1:18; 2:1.

††2:6 Quote from Ps. 62:12 and Prov. 24:12.

‡‡2:14 did not ... commands Or “... don't have the law. But when they naturally do what the law commands, ...”.

secret". (In the way I tell the Good News, God will do this through Christ Jesus.)

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷ You call yourself a Jew, and you feel secure in having the law. You proudly claim to be one of God's special people.

¹⁸ You know what God wants you to do. And you know what is important, because you have learned the law. ¹⁹ You think you are a guide for people who can't see the right way, a light for those who are in the dark. ²⁰ You think you can show foolish people what is right. And you think you are a teacher for those who are just beginning to learn. You have the law, and so you think you know everything and have all truth.

²¹ You teach others, so why don't you teach yourself? You tell them not to steal, but you yourself steal. ²² You say they must not commit adultery, but you yourself are guilty of that sin. You hate idols, but you steal them from their temples. ²³ You are so proud that you have God's law, but you bring shame to God by breaking his law. ²⁴ As the Scriptures say, "People in other nations insult God because of you."[¶]

²⁵ If you follow the law, your circumcision has meaning. But if you break the law, it is as if you were never circumcised. ²⁶ Those who are not Jews are not circumcised. But if they do what the law says, it is as if they were circumcised. ²⁷ You have the written law and circumcision, but you break the law. So those who are not circumcised in their bodies, but still obey the law, will show that you are guilty.

²⁸ You are not a true Jew if you are a Jew only on the outside. I mean true circumcision goes deeper than the skin.

²⁹ A true Jew is one who is a Jew inside. Yes, true circumcision takes place in the heart. It is something the Spirit does, not what is done to follow the written law. And anyone who is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit gets praise from God, not from people.

3 So, do Jews have any benefit that others don't have? Does their circumcision do them any good? ² Oh yes, the Jews have many benefits. The most important one is this: God trusted them to share his promises. ³ It is true that some Jews were not faithful to do what God wanted. But will that stop God from faithfully doing what he promised? ⁴ Of course not! Even if everyone else fails to keep their promises, God will always do what he says. As the Scriptures say about him,

"You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win when people accuse you."^{§§}

⁵ But here's the way some people think: when we do wrong, that shows more clearly that God is right. So can we say that God is unfair when he punishes us? ⁶ Of course not! If God is unfair, how can he judge the world?

⁷ But when I lie, it really gives God glory, because my lie makes it easier to see that he is truthful. So why am I judged a sinner? ⁸ And why not say, "We should do evil so that good will come from it?" Some people are saying that's what we teach! They should be condemned for saying that.

⁹ So are we Jews better than everyone else? No, I have already shown that all people, whether they are Jews or non-Jews, are under the power of sin.

[¶]2:24 Quote from Isa. 52:5. See also Ezek. 36:20-23.

^{§§}3:4 Quote from Ps. 51:4.

All People Are Guilty

¹⁰ As the Scriptures say,
“There is no one who does what is right,
not even one.

¹¹ There is no one who understands,
no one who wants to follow God.

¹² All have turned away from him,
and now they are of no use to anyone.
There is no one who does good,
not even one.”*

¹³ “Their words are as dangerous as an
open grave.

They use their tongues for telling lies.”†

“Their words are like the poison of
snakes.”‡

¹⁴ “Their mouths are full of cursing and
angry words.”¶

¹⁵ “They are always ready to kill
someone.

¹⁶ Everywhere they go they cause trou-
ble and ruin.

¹⁷ They don’t know how to live in
peace.”§

¹⁸ “They have no fear or respect for
God.”**

¹⁹ We know that what the law says
is for those the law was given to. This
means that all people, Jews as well as
non-Jews, have no excuse for what they
have done. So the whole world stands
before God and must answer to him.

²⁰ Why? Because following the law can-
not make anyone right before God.†† In
fact, it is the law that shows us our sin.

How God Makes People Right

²¹ But now God has shown us how
good and faithful he is. The way he did
this has nothing to do with the law, al-
though the law and the prophets told
us this would happen. ²² God’s faithful
goodness has been made known through
faith in‡‡ Jesus Christ. He does this for
all who believe in Christ. Everyone is the
same. ²³ Yes, all people have sinned and
no longer share in God’s divine great-
ness. ²⁴ But God has ordered that we all
be released from sin. This free gift of his
grace came to us by what Christ Jesus
did to make us free. ^{25–26} God offered
Jesus as a way to forgive people’s sins
through their faith in him. God can for-
give them because the blood sacrifice of
Jesus frees them from their sins. God
gave Jesus to show that he always does
what is right and fair. He was right in
the past when he was patient and did not
punish people for their sins. And in our
own time he still does what is right. God
worked all this out in a way that allows
him to judge people fairly and still make
right any person who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ So what do we Jews have to be
proud of? Nothing. God has shut the
door on Jewish pride. What law says
that? The law that calls for works? No,
it’s the law that calls for faith. ²⁸ I mean
we are made right with God through
faith, not through what we have done to
follow the law. This is what we believe.
²⁹ Is God only the God of the Jews? Don’t

*3:12 Quote from Ps. 14:1-3.

†3:13 Quote from Ps. 5:9.

‡3:13 Quote from Ps. 140:3.

¶3:14 Quote from Ps. 10:7.

§3:17 Quote from Isa. 59:7-8.

**3:18 Quote from Ps. 36:1.

††3:20 *cannot ... before God* See Ps. 143:2.

‡‡3:22 *faith in* Or “the faithfulness of”.

you think he is the God of other people too? Yes, he is also the God of non-Jews.³⁰ There is only one God. He will make Jews[¶] right with him by their faith, and he will also make non-Jews^{§§} right with him through their faith.³¹ So are we replacing the law with this faith? Not at all! In fact, what I am saying supports what the law says.

The Example of Abraham

4 What does the law tell us about Abraham,^{*} the great ancestor of our people?² If Abraham was made right because of what he did, that is something to be proud of! But, as God sees it, he had no reason to be proud.³ This is clear from what the Scriptures say, “Abraham believed God. And because he believed, God accepted him as one who has done what is right.”[†]

⁴ When people work, their pay is not considered to be a gift. It is something owed to them for working.⁵ But people cannot do any work that will make them right with God. So they must trust in him. Then he accepts their faith, and that makes them right with him. He is the one who makes even evil people right.⁶ David said the same thing when he wrote about the blessing people have when God accepts them as right without looking at what they have done:

⁷ It is a great blessing for people when they are forgiven for the wrongs they have done,
when their sins are pardoned!

⁸ It is a great blessing for people

when the Lord removes their sin from his record![‡]

⁹ Is this blessing only for those who are circumcised? Or is it also for those who are not circumcised? We have already said that it was because of Abraham’s faith that he was accepted as one who is right with God.¹⁰ So how did this happen? Did God accept Abraham before or after he was circumcised? God accepted him before his circumcision.¹¹ Abraham was circumcised later to show that God had accepted him as right. Abraham was accepted because he put his faith in God. And this was before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all those who believe in God but are not circumcised. Like Abraham, they are accepted as people who are right with God because of their faith.¹² And Abraham is the father of those who are circumcised, but not just because they are circumcised. He is their father because they put their faith in God in the same way Abraham did before he was circumcised.

God’s Promise Received Through Faith

¹³ God made a promise to Abraham and his descendants to give them the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise because he followed the law. He received that promise because he was right with God through his faith.¹⁴ If people could get God’s promise by following the law, then faith is worthless. And God’s promise to Abraham is worthless,¹⁵ because the law can only bring God’s anger on those who dis-

[¶]3:30 *Jews* Literally, “circumcision”.

^{§§}3:30 *non-Jews* Literally, “uncircumcision”.

^{*}4:1 *What ... Abraham* Literally, “what shall we say we have found [in the law] concerning Abraham?”

[†]4:3 Quote from Gen. 15:6.

[‡]4:8 Quote from Ps. 32:1-2.

obey it. But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey.

¹⁶So people get what God promised by putting their faith in him. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham's people will get that promise. The promise is not just for those who live under the Law of Moses. It is for all who put their faith in God as Abraham did. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷As the Scriptures say, "I have made you a father of many nations."[¶] When Abraham heard this promise, he put his faith in God. It is God who gives life to the dead and with his command creates what does not yet exist.

¹⁸There was no hope that Abraham would have children, but Abraham put his faith in God and continued to hope. And that is why he became the father of many nations. As God told him, "You will have many descendants."[§] ¹⁹Abraham was almost 100 years old, so he was past the age for having children. Also, Sarah could not have children. Abraham was well aware of this, but his faith in God never became weak. ²⁰He never doubted that God would do what he promised. He never stopped believing. In fact, he grew stronger in his faith. He honoured God ²¹and felt sure that God was able to do what he promised. ²²So that's why "he was accepted as one who is right with God".^{**} ²³These words, "he was accepted", were written not only for Abraham. ²⁴They were also written for us. God will also accept us because we believe. We believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵Jesus was handed over to die for our sins,

and he was raised from death to make us right with God.

Made Right With God

5 Yes, we have been made right with God because of faith. So we have^{††} peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through our faith, Christ has opened the door for us to God's grace, which we now enjoy. And we celebrate because we look forward to sharing God's glory. ³And we even celebrate the troubles we suffer. Why? Because we know that suffering teaches us to be courageous in the face of difficulties. ⁴And this courage is proof that we are strong. And this proof gives us hope. ⁵And with this hope we will never be disappointed. We know this because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts through the Holy Spirit he gave us.

⁶This is all true because of what Christ did. At a time when we were unable to help ourselves, he died for us, people who showed no respect for God. ⁷Very few people will die to save the life of someone else, even if it is for a good person. Someone might be willing to die for an especially good person. ⁸But think about how God showed his great love for us: it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us.

⁹We have been made right with God by the blood sacrifice of Christ. So through him it is even more certain that we will be saved from God's anger. ¹⁰I mean that while we were God's enemies, he made friends with us through his Son's death. And the fact that we are now God's friends makes it even more certain that he will save us through his

[¶]4:17 Quote from Gen. 17:5 of God speaking to Abraham.

[§]4:18 Quote from Gen. 15:5.

^{**}4:22 Quote from Gen. 15:6.

^{††}5:1 *we have* Some important Greek copies have "let us have".

Son's life. ¹¹ Not only will we be saved, but we also rejoice right now in what God has done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that we are now God's friends.

Adam and Christ

¹² How did this happen? Well, sin came into the world because of what one man did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because they all sinned. ¹³ Sin was in the world before the Law of Moses. But God did not keep a record of sin when there was no law. ¹⁴ But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, death ruled over everyone. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying God's command. But even those who did not sin that same way had to die.

That one man, Adam, can be compared to the one who was to come later. ¹⁵ But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man. But the grace that people received from God was more powerful. Many received God's gift of life by the grace of this other man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶ After Adam sinned once, the result was that he was judged guilty and given the death sentence. But the gift of God is different. His free gift came after many sins, and the result is that those who sinned are judged as right. ¹⁷ One man sinned, and so death ruled over all people because of that one man. But now it is even more certain that many people will rule in life over death through Jesus the Christ. I am talking about all who receive God's boundless grace and his wonderful gift of being made right.

¹⁸ So that one sin of Adam brought the sentence of death to all people. But in the same way, Christ did one thing so good that it makes all people right with God. And that brings them true life.

¹⁹ One man disobeyed God and many became sinners. But in the same way, one man obeyed God and many will be made right. ²⁰ After the law came, there were more ways for people to do wrong. But the more people sinned, the more God poured out his grace. ²¹ Sin once used death to rule over us. But now God's grace rules over sin and death by making us right with him. And this brings us eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive for God

6 So do you think we should continue sinning so that God will give us more and more grace? ² Of course not! Our old sinful life ended. It's dead. So how can we continue living in sin? ³ Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ Jesus when we were baptized? In our baptism we shared in his death. ⁴ So when we were baptized, we were buried with him and took part in his death. And just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father, so we can now live a new life.

⁵ Yes, we have been joined with him by dying as he did. So we will also be joined with him by rising from death as he did. ⁶ We know that our old life was put to death on the cross with him. This happened to take away the power that our sinful desires had over our bodies. And now we are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ Anyone who has died has been released from sin's control.

⁸ If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ was raised from death and cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. ¹⁰ Yes, when he died, he died to defeat the power of sin once—enough for all time. He now has a new life, a life he lives by the power of God.

¹¹ In the same way, you should see your-

selves as being dead to the power of sin and alive by the power of God because you belong to Christ Jesus.

¹²The body you live in here on earth is going to die. So don't let sin control it and make you obey its desires. ¹³Don't offer the parts of your body to sin to be used for doing evil. But offer yourselves to God, as people who have died and now live. Offer every part of your body to God to be used for doing what is right. ¹⁴Sin will not be your master, because you are not under law. You now live under God's grace.

Slaves to What Is Right

¹⁵So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace and not under law? Certainly not! ¹⁶Surely you know that you become the slaves of whatever you give yourselves to. Anything or anyone you obey will be your master. You can follow sin, or you can obey God. Following sin will bring spiritual death. But obeying God will lead to being right with him. ¹⁷In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you willingly obeyed all the teachings he led you to learn. ¹⁸You were made free from sin, and now you are slaves to what is right. ¹⁹I use this example from everyday life because you need help in understanding this spiritual truth. In the past you offered the parts of your body as slaves to your immoral and evil thoughts. The result was that you lived only for what was evil. In the same way, you must now offer yourselves as slaves to what is right. Then you will live only for God.

²⁰In the past you were slaves to sin, and you did not even think about doing right. ²¹You did evil things, and now you are ashamed of what you did. Did those things make your life better? No, they only brought you death. ²²But

now you are free from sin. You have become slaves of God, and the result is that you live only for God. This will bring you eternal life. ²³When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Example From Marriage

7 Brothers and sisters, you all know something about the law. So surely you know that the law rules over people only while they are alive. ²It's like what the law says about marriage: a woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, she is made free from the law of marriage. ³If she marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law says she is guilty of adultery. But if her husband dies, she is made free from the law of marriage. So if she marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.

⁴In the same way, my brothers and sisters, your old selves died and you became free from the law through the body of Christ. Now you belong to him, the one who was raised from death. We all belong to him so that we can be used in service to God. ⁵In the past we were ruled by our sinful selves. The law made us want to do sinful things. And those sinful desires controlled our bodies, so what we did only brought us death. ⁶In the past the law held us as prisoners, but our old selves died, and we were made free from the law. So we no longer serve God in the old way, with the written rules. Now we serve God in the new way, with the Spirit.

How Sin Uses the Law

⁷You might think I am saying that sin and the law are the same. That is not true. But the law was the only way

I could learn what sin means. I would never have known that it is wrong to want something that is not mine. But the law said, “You must not want what belongs to someone else.”⁸ And sin found a way to use that command and make me want all kinds of things that were not mine. So sin came to me because of the command. But without the law, sin lies dead and powerless.⁹ Before the law came, I was alive. But when I heard the law’s command, sin came alive,¹⁰ and that meant death for me. The command was meant to bring life, but for me it brought death.¹¹ Sin found a way to fool me by using the command to make me die.

¹²So the law is holy, and the command is holy and right and good.¹³ Does this mean that something that is good brought death to me? No, it was sin that used the good command to bring me death. This shows how terrible sin really is. It can use a good command to produce a result that shows sin at its very worst.

The War Inside Us

¹⁴So we know that the law is spiritual, but I am not. I am so human. Sin rules me as if I were its slave.¹⁵ I don’t understand why I act the way I do. I don’t do the good I want to do, and I do the evil I hate.¹⁶ And if I don’t want to do what I do, that means I agree that the law is good.¹⁷ But I am not really the one doing the evil. It is sin living in me that does it.¹⁸ Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is not spiritual. I want to do what is good, but I don’t do it.¹⁹ I don’t do the good that I want to do. I do the evil that I don’t want to do.²⁰ So if I do what I don’t want to do, then I am

not really the one doing it. It is the sin living in me that does it.

²¹So this is what I have learned about the law: when I want to do the good that the law commands, evil is there with me.²²In my mind I am happy to follow God’s law.²³But I see another “law” working within me, and it is at war against the law that my mind accepts. This other “law” is the rule of sin that defeats me and makes me its prisoner.²⁴What a miserable person I am! Who will save me from this body that brings me death?²⁵I thank God, who saves us through Jesus Christ our Lord! So in my mind I am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 So now anyone who belongs to Christ Jesus has escaped the death sentence.²That is because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit that brings life made you[¶] free from the law that brings sin and death.³Yes, the law was powerless to help us because it was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do: he sent his own Son to earth with the same kind of body that we use to sin. God sent him to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to give sin the death sentence.⁴God did this so that we could be right just as the law said we must be. Now we don’t live following our sinful selves. We live following the Spirit.

⁵People who let their sinful selves lead them think only about what they want. But those who let the Spirit lead them are thinking about what the Spirit wants.⁶If your thoughts are under the control of your sinful self, the result is death. But if your thoughts are under the con-

⁸7:7 Quote from Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.

[¶]8:2 *you* Some Greek copies have “me”. Also in the next sentence.

trol of the Spirit, the result is life and peace. ⁷ Why is this true? Because anyone whose thoughts are controlled by their sinful self is fighting against God. They refuse to obey God's law. And really they are not able to obey it. ⁸ Those who are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. If the Spirit of God lives in you, you are under the Spirit's control. Of course, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ Your body will always be dead because of sin. But if Christ is in you, then the Spirit gives you life, because Christ made you right with God. ¹¹ God raised Jesus from death. And if God's Spirit lives in you, he will also give life to your dying bodies. Yes, the One who raised Christ from death will raise you to life through his Spirit living in you.

¹² So, my brothers and sisters, we must not be ruled by our sinful selves so that we follow its desires. ¹³ If you let your sinful selves control your life, you will die. But if you let the Spirit help you put an end to the wrong things you do with your body, you will have true life.

¹⁴ The true children of God are those who are led by God's Spirit. ¹⁵ The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us God's chosen children. And with that Spirit we cry out, "*Abba*,^{§§} Father."^{§§} ¹⁶ And the Spirit himself speaks to our spirits to make us sure that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And as God's children, we will receive the blessings he has for his people. He will give us all that he has

given Christ. We who suffer now as he suffered will share in his glory.

Our Time of Glory Is Coming

¹⁸ But I consider that the ways we suffer now are nothing compared to the great glory we will soon enjoy. ¹⁹ Even creation is full of excitement, eagerly waiting for the time when he will show who the real "children of God"* are. ²⁰ Everything God made was put under a curse that kept it from becoming all that God created it to be. That was not its choice, but God made it happen with this hope in view: ²¹ that this creation would no longer be a slave to the powers that ruin it. God wanted creation to have the same freedom and glory that belong to God's children.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in pain until now, like a woman ready to give birth. ²³ Not only creation, but we also have been groaning with pain inside. We have the Spirit as the first part of God's promise. So we are waiting eagerly for God to finish making us his own children. I mean we are waiting for our bodies to be made free. ²⁴ We were saved to have this hope. It is not something we can see yet. If we could see it, it would not be hope. People don't hope for something they already have. ²⁵ But we are hoping for something we don't have yet, and we are waiting for it patiently.

²⁶ Also, the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We don't know what to pray for, but the Spirit himself prays to God for us, using the groans we cannot put into words. ²⁷ God knows our deepest thoughts. And he understands what the Spirit wants to say, because the Spirit

§§8:15 *Abba* An Aramaic word that was used by Jewish children as a name for their father.

*8:19 Literally, "sons of God", which Paul may use here to stress the difference between believers and the Roman emperor, who claimed to be a "son of God".

prays for God's people in a way that agrees with what God wants.

²⁸ And we know that in everything God[†] is working for the good of those who love him. These are the people God chose, because that was his plan. ²⁹ God knew them before he made the world. And he decided that they would be like his Son. Then Jesus would be the first-born of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ God planned for them to be like his Son. He chose them and made them right with him. And after he made them right, he gave them his glory.

God Shows Us His Love Through Jesus

³¹ So what should we say about all this? If God is for us, who can stand against us? ³² God even let his own Son suffer to save us. Yes, he gave up his Son for all of us. So now with Jesus, God will certainly give us everything else. ³³ Who can accuse the people God has chosen? No one! God is the one who makes them right. ³⁴ Who can say that God's people are guilty? No one, because Christ Jesus died for us. And more than that, he was raised from death and is now at God's right side, speaking to him for us. ³⁵ Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble or problems or persecution separate us from his love? If we have no food or clothes or face danger or even death, will that separate us from his love? ³⁶ As the Scriptures say, "For you, we are in danger of death all the time. People think we are worth no more than sheep to be killed."[‡]

³⁷ But in all these troubles we have complete victory through God, who has shown his love for us. ³⁸⁻³⁹ Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not death or life, not angels or ruling spirits. I am sure that nothing now or in the future, no spiritual powers of any kind, nothing above us or below us—nothing in all creation—will ever be able to separate us from the love God has shown us through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and the Jewish People

9 I speak to you now as one who belongs to Christ. So you can be sure I am not lying. My conscience, ruled by the Holy Spirit, agrees that what I say now is true: ² my heart is filled with sorrow and pain that never ends ³ because of my own people. They are my brothers and sisters, my earthly family. I wish I could help them. I would even be willing to suffer the curse of being cut off from Christ if that would help them. ⁴ They are the people of Israel, God's chosen children. They have the glory of God and the agreements he made between himself and his people. God gave them the Law of Moses, the Temple worship and his promises. ⁵ They are the descendants of our great ancestors, and they are the earthly family of the Messiah,[¶] who is God over all things. Praise him forever![§] Amen.

⁶ I don't mean that God failed to keep his promise to the Jewish people. But only some of the people of Israel are re-

[†]8:28 *God* Or "the Spirit".

[‡]8:36 Quote from Ps. 44:22.

[¶]9:5 *Messiah* Literally, "Christ", a Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Messiah". See Christ and Messiah in the Word List.

[§]9:5 *Messiah, who is ... forever* Or "Messiah. May God, who rules over all things, be praised forever!"

ally God's people.** 7 And only some of Abraham's children are his true descendants. This is what God said to Abraham: "Your true descendants will be those who come through Isaac."^{††} 8 This means that not all of Abraham's descendants are true children of God. Abraham's true descendants are those who become God's children because of the promise he made to Abraham. 9 Here is what God said in that promise: "About this time next year I will come back, and Sarah will have a son."^{‡‡}

¹⁰ And that is not all. Something like that also happened to Rebecca after she became pregnant with twin sons by the same father, our ancestor Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹² Yes, before the two sons were born, God told Rebecca, "The older son will serve the younger."^{¶¶} This was before the boys had done anything good or bad. God said this before they were born so that the boy he wanted would be chosen because of God's own plan. This boy was chosen because he was the one God wanted to call, not because of anything the boys did. ¹³ As the Scriptures say, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau."^{§§}

¹⁴ So does this mean that God is not fair? Certainly not! ¹⁵ God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I want to show mercy to. I will show pity to anyone I choose."^{*} ¹⁶ So God will choose to show mercy to anyone he wants, and his choice does not depend on what people want or how well they run the race. ¹⁷ In the Scriptures God says to Pharaoh,

"I made you king for this reason: to show my power through you. I wanted my name to be announced throughout the world."[†] ¹⁸ So God shows mercy to those he wants to show mercy to and makes stubborn those he wants to make stubborn.

¹⁹ So you will ask me, "If God controls what we do, why does he blame us for our sins?" ²⁰ Don't ask that. You are only human and have no right to question God. A clay jar does not question the one who made it. It does not say, "Why did you make me like this?" ²¹ The one who makes the jar can make anything he wants. He uses the same clay to make different things. He might make one thing for special purposes and another for daily use.

²² It is the same way with what God has done. He wanted to show his anger and to let people see his power. But he patiently endured those he was angry with—people who were ready to be destroyed. ²³ He waited with patience so that he could make known the riches of his glory to the people he has chosen to receive his mercy. God has already prepared them to share his divine greatness. ²⁴ We are those people, the ones God chose not only from the Jews but also from those who are not Jews. ²⁵ As he says in the book of Hosea, "The people who are not mine— I will say they are my people. And the people I did not love— I will say they are the people I love."^{‡‡}

****9:6 God's people** Literally, "Israel", the people God chose to bring his blessings to the world.

††9:7 Quote from Gen. 21:12.

‡‡9:9 Quote from Gen. 18:10,14.

¶¶9:11-12 Quote from Gen. 25:23.

§§9:13 Quote from Mal. 1:2-3.

***9:15** Quote from Exod. 33:19.

†9:17 Quote from Exod. 9:16.

‡9:25 Quote from Hos. 2:23.

²⁶ And,
 “Where God said in the past,
 ‘You are not my people’—
 there they will be called children of the
 living God.”[¶]

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out about Israel:
 “There are so many people of Israel,
 they are like the grains of sand by the
 sea.

But only a few of them will be saved.

²⁸ Yes, the Lord will quickly finish
 what he said he would do on the earth.”[§]

²⁹ It is just as Isaiah said:
 “If the LORD All-Powerful
 had not allowed a few people to live,
 we would have been destroyed
 completely,
 like the wicked cities of Sodom and Go-
 morrah.”^{**}

³⁰ So what does all this mean? It means
 that people who are not Jews were made
 right with God because of their faith,
 even though they were not trying to
 make themselves right. ³¹ And the peo-
 ple of Israel, who tried to make them-
 selves right with God by following the
 law, did not succeed. ³² They failed be-
 cause they tried to make themselves
 right by the things they did. They did not
 trust in God to make them right. They
 stumbled over the stone that makes peo-
 ple fall. ³³ The Scriptures talk about that
 stone:

“Look, I put in Zion a stone that will
 make people stumble.

It is a rock that will make people fall.

But anyone who trusts in him
 will never be disappointed.”^{††}

10 Brothers and sisters, what I want
 most is for all the people of Is-
 rael to be saved. That is my prayer to
 God. ² I can say this about them: they
 really try hard to follow God, but they
 don’t know the right way. ³ They did not
 know the way that God makes people
 right with him. And they tried to make
 themselves right in their own way. So
 they did not accept God’s way of mak-
 ing people right. ⁴ The law ended when
 Christ completed its purpose. Now ev-
 eryone who believes in him is made right
 with God.

⁵ Moses writes about being made right
 by following the law. He says, “The per-
 son who obeys these laws is the one
 who will have life through them.”^{‡‡} ⁶ But
 this is what the Scriptures say about
 being made right through faith: “Don’t
 say to yourself, ‘Who will go up into
 heaven?’” (This means “Who will go up
 to heaven to get Christ and bring him
 down to earth?”) ⁷ “And don’t say, ‘Who
 will go down into the world below?’”
 (This means “Who will go down to get
 Christ and bring him up from death?”)

⁸ This is what the Scripture says:
 “God’s message is near you; it is on your
 lips and in your heart.”^{¶¶} This message
 from God is the message about faith that
 we tell everyone. ⁹ If you confess with
 your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and believe
 in your heart that God raised him from
 death, you will be saved. ¹⁰ Yes, we be-
 lieve in Jesus deep in our hearts, and
 so we are made right with God. And we
 openly confess that belief, and God saves
 us.

[¶]9:26 Quote from Hos. 1:10.

[§]9:28 Quote from Isa. 10:22-23.

^{**}9:29 Quote from Isa. 1:9.

^{††}9:33 Quote from Isa. 8:14; 28:16.

^{‡‡}10:5 Quote from Lev. 18:5.

^{¶¶}10:8 See Deut. 30:12-14.

¹¹The Scriptures say, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disappointed.”^{§§} ¹²It says “anyone” because there is no difference between those who are Jews and those who are not. The same Lord is the Lord of all people. And he richly blesses everyone who calls out to him for help. ¹³Yes, “everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.”*

¹⁴But how can people call out to the Lord for help if they don’t believe in him? And how can they believe in the Lord if they have not heard about him? And how can they hear about him if no one tells them? ¹⁵And how can anyone go and tell them without being sent. That’s why the Scriptures say, “How wonderful it is to see someone coming to tell good news!”[†]

¹⁶But not all the people accepted that good news. And that’s why Isaiah said, “Lord, who believed what we told them?”[‡] ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing the Good News. And people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ.

¹⁸But I ask, “Did those people not hear the Good News?” Yes, they heard—as the Scriptures say, “The announcement went out to all the earth. The message went to every part of the world.”[¶]

¹⁹Again I ask, “Did the people of Israel not understand?” Yes, they did understand. First, Moses says this for God:

“I will use those who are not really a nation to make you jealous.

I will use a nation that does not understand to make you angry.”[§]

²⁰Then Isaiah was bold enough to say this for God:

“The people who found me were not looking for me.

I made myself known to people who were not asking for me.”**

²¹But about the people of Israel God said,

“All day long I stood ready to accept those people, but they are stubborn and refuse to obey me.”^{††}

God Has Not Forgotten His People

11 So I ask, “Has God rejected his own people?” Of course not! I myself am an Israelite. I am from the family of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God chose the Israelites to be his people before they were born. And he has never rejected them. Surely you know what the Scriptures say about Elijah. The Scriptures tell about Elijah praying to God against the people of Israel. He said, ³“Lord, they have killed your prophets and destroyed your altars. I am the only prophet still living, and now they are trying to kill me.”^{‡‡} ⁴But what answer did God give to Eli-

§§10:11 Quote from Isa. 28:16 in the ancient Greek version.

*10:13 Quote from Joel 2:32. See also Exod. 2:23-25.

†10:15 Quote from Isa. 52:7.

‡10:16 Quote from Isa. 53:1.

¶10:18 Quote from Ps. 19:4.

§10:19 Quote from Deut. 32:21.

**10:20 Quote from Isa. 65:1.

††10:21 Quote from Isa. 65:2.

‡‡11:3 Quote from 1 Kgs 19:10,14.

jah? God said, “I have kept for myself 7000 men who have never offered worship to Baal.”^{¶¶}

⁵It is the same now. God has chosen a few people by his grace. ⁶And if he chose them by grace, then it is not what they have done that made them his people. If they could be made his people by what they did, his gift of grace would not really be a gift.

⁷So this is what has happened: the people of Israel wanted God’s blessing, but they did not all find it. The people he chose did get his blessing, but the others became hard and have refused to listen to him. ⁸As the Scriptures say, “God caused the people to fall asleep.”^{§§} “God closed their eyes so that they could not see, and he closed their ears so that they could not hear.

This continues until now.”^{*}

⁹And David says,

“Let those people be caught and trapped by the feasts they enjoy.

Let those good times cause them to fall and get the punishment they deserve.

¹⁰Blind their eyes so that they cannot see.

Keep their backs bent under a load of troubles.”[†]

¹¹So I ask: when God’s people failed to listen to him, did their failure destroy them? Certainly not! But their mistake brought salvation to those who are not Jews. The purpose of this was to make the Jews jealous. ¹²Their mistake and their loss brought rich blessings to the world—to the non-Jewish people. So imagine how much greater the blessings

will be for the world when enough Jews become the kind of people God wants.

¹³Now I am saying this for you people who are not Jews. Since I am the one God appointed as an apostle to the non-Jewish people, I will do my best to honour his trust. ¹⁴I hope I can make my own people jealous. That way, maybe I can help some of them to be saved. ¹⁵God turned away from them. When that happened, he became friends with the other people in the world. So when he accepts the Jews, it will be like bringing people to life after death. ¹⁶If the first piece of bread is offered to God, then the whole loaf is made holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, the tree’s branches are holy too.

¹⁷It is as if some of the branches from an olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to that first tree. If you are not a Jew, you are the same as that wild branch, and you now share the strength and life of the first tree. ¹⁸But don’t act as if you are better than those branches that were broken off. You have no reason to be proud of yourself, because you don’t give life to the root. The root gives life to you. ¹⁹You might say, “Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree.” ²⁰That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe. And you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Don’t be proud, but be afraid. ²¹If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, he will not let you stay if you stop believing.

²²So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. He punishes those

^{¶¶}11:4 Quote from 1 Kgs 19:18.

^{§§}11:8 Quote from Isa. 29:10.

^{*}11:8 Quote from Deut. 29:4.

[†]11:10 Quote from Ps. 69:22-23.

who stop following him. But he is kind to you, as long as you continue trusting in his kindness. If you stop depending on him, you will be cut off from the tree. ²³ And if the Jews will believe in God again, he will accept them back. He is able to put them back where they were. ²⁴ It is not natural for a wild branch to become part of a good tree. But you, as a non-Jew, are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like branches that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.

²⁵ I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers and sisters. This truth will help you see that you don't know everything. The truth is this: part of Israel has been made stubborn, but that will change when enough non-Jewish people have come to God. ²⁶ And that is how all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say,

“The Saviour will come from Zion;
he will take away all evil from the descendants of Jacob.

²⁷ And I will make this agreement with those people
when I take away their sins.”[‡]

²⁸ For now, the Jews who refuse to accept the Good News are God's enemies. This has happened to help you who are not Jews. But they are still God's chosen people, and he loves them because of the promises he made to their ancestors. ²⁹ God never changes his mind about the people he calls. He never decides to take back the blessings he has given them. ³⁰ At one time you too re-

fused to obey God. But now you have received mercy because the Jews refused to obey. ³¹ And now they are the ones who refuse to obey because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they can also receive mercy from him. ³² God has locked everyone up together in the prison of disobedience. But he has done this so that he can show mercy to all.

Praise to God

³³ Yes, God's riches are very great! His wisdom and knowledge have no end! No one can explain what God decides. No one can understand his ways. ³⁴ As the Scriptures say,

“Who can know what is on the Lord's mind?

Who is able to give him advice?”[¶]

³⁵ “Who has ever given God anything? God owes nothing to anyone.”[§]

³⁶ Yes, God made all things. And everything continues through him and for him. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Give Your Lives to God

12 So, brothers and sisters, I ask you to respond to the great kindness God has shown us. Offer your bodies** as a living sacrifice to him. Live only for God and be pleasing to him. Considering what he has done, it is only right that you should worship him in this way. ² Don't think and act like the people of this world, but let God change you inside with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to understand and accept what God wants—all that is good, pleasing to him and perfect.

[‡]11:27 Quote from Isa. 59:20-21; 27:9.

[¶]11:34 Quote from Isa. 40:13.

[§]11:35 Quote from Job 41:11.

**12:1 *Offer your bodies* Paul is using the language of Old Testament animal sacrifice to express the idea of believers giving their lives completely to God.

³ God has given me a special gift, and that is why I have something to say to each one of you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself just as you are. Decide what you are by the faith God has given each of us. ⁴ Each one of us has one body, and that body has many parts. These parts don't all do the same thing. ⁵ In the same way, we are many people, but because we belong to Christ, we are all one body. We are the parts of that body, and each part belongs to all the others.

⁶ We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace God gave us. Whoever has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in a way that fits the kind of faith they have. ⁷ Whoever has the gift of serving should serve. Whoever has the gift of teaching should teach. ⁸ Whoever has the gift of encouraging others should do that. Whoever has the gift of providing for the needs of others should share generously. Whoever has the gift of leading should work hard at it. Whoever has the gift of showing kindness to others should do it gladly.

⁹ Your love must be real. Hate what is evil. Do only what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other as your own family. And try to be first in giving honour to each other. ¹¹ As you serve the Lord, work hard and don't be lazy. Be excited about serving him!^{††} ¹² Be happy because of the hope you have. Be patient when you have troubles. Pray all the time. ¹³ Share with God's people who are in need. Be ready to welcome into your homes any who are travelling or need help.

¹⁴ Wish only good for those who mistreat you. Ask God to bless them, not

curse them. ¹⁵ When others are happy, you should be happy with them. And when others are sad, you should be sad too. ¹⁶ Live together in peace with each other. Don't be proud, but be willing to be friends with people who are not important to others. Don't think of yourself as smarter than everyone else.

¹⁷ If someone does you wrong, don't try to pay them back by doing wrong to them. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. ¹⁸ Do the best you can to live in peace with everyone. ¹⁹ My friends, don't try to punish anyone who does wrong to you. Wait for God in his anger to punish them. In the Scriptures the Lord says, "I will punish them for what they have done."^{‡‡} ²⁰ Instead, "if you have enemies who are hungry, give them something to eat. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this you will make them feel ashamed."^{¶¶§§}

²¹ Don't let evil defeat you, but defeat evil by doing good.

Obey Your Government Rulers

13 You must all obey the government rulers. No one can rule without God's authority. And all those who rule now were given that power by God. ² So anyone who is against the government is really against something God has put in place. Those who are against the government bring punishment on themselves. ³ People who do right don't have to fear the rulers. But those who do wrong must fear them. Do you want to be free from fearing them? Then do only what is right, and they will praise you.

^{††}12:11 *Be excited ... him* Or "Be on fire with the Spirit!"

^{‡‡}12:19 Quote from Deut. 32:35.

^{¶¶}12:20 *you will ... ashamed* Literally, "you will pile burning coals on their head."

^{§§}12:20 Quote from Prov. 25:21-22.

⁴Rulers are God's servants to help you. But if you do wrong, you have reason to be afraid. They have the power to punish, and they will use it. They are God's servants to punish those who do wrong. ⁵So you must obey the government, not just because you might be punished, but because you know it is the right thing to do.

⁶And this is why you pay taxes too. Those rulers should be paid for taking care of all the duties they have. They are really working for God. ⁷Give everyone what you owe them. If you owe them any kind of tax, then pay it. Show respect to those you should respect. And show honour to those you should honour.

Loving Others Is the Only Law

⁸You should owe nothing to anyone, except that you will always owe love to each other. The person who loves others has done all that the law commands. ⁹The law says, "You must not commit adultery, you must not murder anyone, you must not steal, you must not want what belongs to someone else."* All these commands and all other commands really add up to this one rule: "Love your neighbour[†] the same as you love yourself."[‡] ¹⁰Love doesn't hurt others. So loving is the same as obeying all the law.

¹¹I say this because you know that we live in an important time. Yes, it is now time for you to wake up from your sleep. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is almost

finished. The day is almost here. So we should stop doing whatever belongs to darkness. We should prepare ourselves to fight evil with the weapons that belong to the light. ¹³We should live in a right way, like people who belong to the day. We should not have wild parties or be drunk. We should not be involved in sexual sin or uncontrolled and shameful behaviour. We should not cause arguments or be jealous. ¹⁴Instead, be like Christ Jesus your Lord in everything you do.[¶] Don't think about how to satisfy the desires of your sinful self.

Don't Criticize Others

14 Be willing to accept those who still have doubts about what believers can do. And don't argue with them about their different ideas. ²Some people believe they can eat any kind of food,[§] but those who have doubts eat only vegetables. ³Those who know they can eat any kind of food must not think that they are better than those who eat only vegetables. And those who eat only vegetables must not decide that those who eat all foods are wrong. God has accepted them. ⁴You cannot judge the servants of someone else. It is for their own master to decide if they are accepted or not. And they will be accepted, because the Lord is able to make that happen.

⁵Some people might believe that one day is more important than another. And others might believe that every day is the same. Everyone should be sure about their beliefs in their own mind. ⁶Those

*13:9 Quote from Exod. 20:13-15,17.

†13:9 *your neighbour* Or "others". Jesus' teaching in Luke 10:25-37 makes clear that this includes anyone in need.

‡13:9 Quote from Lev. 19:18.

¶13:14 *be like ... you do* Literally, "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ."

§14:2 *any kind of food* The Jewish law said there were some foods that Jews could not eat. When they became followers of Christ, some of them did not understand that they could now eat all foods.

who think one day is more important than other days are doing that for the Lord. And those who eat all kinds of food are doing that for the Lord. Yes, they give thanks to God for that food. And those who refuse to eat some foods do that for the Lord. They also give thanks to God.

⁷We don't live or die just for ourselves. ⁸If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord. ⁹That is why Christ died and rose from death to live again—so that he could be Lord over those who have died and those who are living.

¹⁰So why do you judge your brother or sister in Christ? Or why do you think you are better than they are? We will all stand before God, and he will judge us all. ¹¹Yes, the Scriptures say, “As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “everyone will bow before me; everyone will say that I am God.”^{**} ¹²So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we do.

Don't Cause Others to Sin

¹³So we should stop judging each other. Let's decide not to do anything that will cause a problem for a brother or sister or hurt their faith. ¹⁴I know that there is no food that is wrong to eat. The Lord Jesus is the one who convinced me of that. But if someone believes that something is wrong, then it is wrong for that person.

¹⁵If you hurt your brother or sister because of something you eat, you are not following the way of love. Christ died for them. So don't destroy their faith by eating something they think is wrong. ¹⁶Don't allow what is good for you to be-

come something they say is evil. ¹⁷Life in God's kingdom is not about what we eat and drink. It is about a right way of living, peace and joy—all from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Whoever serves Christ by living this way is pleasing to God and has the respect of others.

¹⁹So let's try as hard as we can to do what will bring peace. Let's do whatever will help each other grow stronger in faith. ²⁰Don't let the eating of food destroy the work of God. All food is right to eat, but it is wrong for anyone to eat something that hurts the faith of another person. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that hurts the faith of your brother or sister.

²²You should keep your beliefs about these things a secret between yourself and God. It is a blessing to be able to do what you think is right without feeling guilty. ²³But if you eat something without being sure it is right, you are doing wrong. That's because you did not believe it was right. And if you do anything you believe is not right, it is sin.

15 Some of us have no problem with these things. So we should be patient with those who are not so strong and have doubts. We should not do what pleases us ²but do what pleases them and is for their good. We should do whatever helps everyone grow stronger in faith. ³Even Christ did not live trying to please himself. As the Scriptures say, “When people insult you, they insult me as well.”^{††} ⁴Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those Scriptures were written to give us hope, which comes from the patience and encouragement we find in them. ⁵All patience and encouragement come from God. And I pray that God will help you

** 14:11 Quote from Isa. 45:23.

†† 15:3 Quote from Ps. 69:9.

all agree with each other, as Christ Jesus wants. ⁶Then you will all be joined together. And together you will give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring honour^{‡‡} to God. ⁸I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jewish people to show that God has done what he promised their great ancestors. ⁹And he also did this so that the non-Jewish people could praise God for the mercy he gives to them. The Scriptures say, “So I will give thanks to you among the people of other nations;

I will sing praise to your name.”^{¶¶}

¹⁰And the Scriptures say,

“You people of other nations should celebrate with God’s people.”^{§§}

¹¹The Scriptures also say,

“Praise the Lord all you people of other nations;

all people should praise the Lord.”^{*}

¹²And Isaiah says,

“Someone will come from Jesse’s family.[†]

He will rise to rule over the nations, and they will put their hope in him.”[‡]

¹³I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with joy and peace as you trust in him. And may this cause your hope to increase until it fills you completely by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul Talks About His Work

¹⁴My brothers and sisters, I know without a doubt that you are full of

goodness and have all the knowledge you need. So you are certainly able to counsel each other. ¹⁵But I have written to you very openly about some things that I want you to remember. I did this because God gave me this special gift: ¹⁶to be a servant of Christ Jesus for those who are not Jews. I serve like a priest whose duty it is to tell God’s Good News. He gave me this work so that you non-Jewish people could be an offering that he will accept—an offering made holy by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷That is why I feel so good about all that has been done for God because I belong to Christ Jesus. ¹⁸I will not talk about anything I did myself. I will talk only about what Christ has done through me in leading the non-Jewish people to obedience. He worked through what I have said and done. ¹⁹He worked through the power of miraculous signs and wonders, through the power of God’s Spirit. The result is that I have told people the Good News about Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. And so I have finished that part of my work. ²⁰I always want to tell the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I don’t want to build on the work that someone else has already started. ²¹As the Scriptures say,

“Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard about him will understand.”^{¶¶}

^{‡‡}15:7 *honour* Or “glory”. See glory in the Word List.

^{¶¶}15:9 Quote from Ps. 18:49.

^{§§}15:10 Quote from Deut. 32:43.

^{*}15:11 Quote from Ps. 117:1.

[†]15:12 *Jesse’s family* Jesse was the father of David, king of Israel. Jesus was from their family.

[‡]15:12 Quote from Isa. 11:10.

^{¶¶}15:21 Quote from Isa. 52:15.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²² That work has kept me busy and so many times has prevented me from coming to see you.

²³ For many years I have wanted to visit you, and now I have finished my work in these areas. ²⁴ So I will visit you when I go to Spain. Yes, I plan to travel to Spain and hope to visit you on my way. I will stay a while and enjoy being with you. Then I hope you can help me continue on my trip.

²⁵ Now I am going to Jerusalem to help God's people there. ²⁶ Some of them are poor, and the believers in Macedonia and Achaia wanted to help them. So they gathered some money to send them. ²⁷ They were happy to do this. And it was like paying something they owed them, because as non-Jews they have been blessed spiritually by the Jews. So now they should use the material blessings they have to help the Jews. ²⁸ I am going to Jerusalem to make sure the poor get this money that has been given for them.

After I finish that, I will leave for Spain and stop to visit you on the way. ²⁹ And I know that when I visit you, I will come with all the blessings that Christ gives.

³⁰ Brothers and sisters, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. Do this because of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love that the Spirit gives us. ³¹ Pray that I will be saved from those in Judea who refuse to accept our message. And pray that this help I am taking to Jerusalem will please God's people there. ³² That would make my trip there to see you a happy one, if that's what God wants. And we can then enjoy an encouraging time together. ³³ The

God who gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul Has Some Final Things to Say

16 I want you to know that you can trust our sister Phoebe. She is a special servant of the church in Cenchrea. ² I ask you to accept her as one who belongs to the Lord. Accept her the way God's people should. Help her with anything she needs from you. Many people, including me, have depended on her for support.

³ Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, who have worked together with me for Christ Jesus. ⁴ They risked their own lives to save mine. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful to them.

⁵ Also, give greetings to the church that meets in their house.

Give greetings to my dear friend Epaeetus. He was the first person in Asia to become a follower of Christ.

⁶ Greetings also to Mary. She worked very hard for you.

⁷ And greet Andronicus and Junia. They are my relatives, and they were in prison with me. They were followers of Christ before I was. And they are some of the most important of those he sent out to do his work.⁸

⁸ Give my greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend among the Lord's people, ⁹ and to Urbanus. He has worked together with us for Christ.

Give greetings also to my dear friend Stachys ¹⁰ and to Apelles, who has proved himself to be a true follower of Christ.

Give greetings to everyone in the family of Aristobulus ¹¹ and to Herodion, my relative.

⁸16:7 *most important ... work* Literally, "important among (or to) the apostles".

Greetings to all those in the family of Narcissus who belong to the Lord¹² and to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, women who work very hard for the Lord. Greetings to my dear friend Per-sis. She has also worked very hard for the Lord.

¹³ Greetings also to Rufus, one of the Lord's chosen people, and to his mother, who has been a mother to me too.

¹⁴ Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and all the believers who are with them.

¹⁵ Give greetings to Philologus and Julia, to Nereus and his sister, to Olympas and to all of God's people with them.

¹⁶ Give each other the special greeting of God's people.^{**}

All the churches of Christ send their greetings to you.

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, I want you to be very careful of those who cause arguments and hurt people's faith by teaching things that are against what you learned. Stay away from them. ¹⁸ People like that are not serving Christ our Lord. They are only pleasing themselves. They use fancy talk and say nice things to fool those who don't know about evil. ¹⁹ Everyone has heard about your obedience to the Lord, and I am very happy about that. But I want you to be wise about what is good and to know nothing about what is evil.

²⁰ The God who brings peace will soon defeat Satan and give you power over him.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹ Timothy, a worker together with me, sends you his greetings. Also Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (these are my relatives) send their greetings.

²² I am Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul. I send you my own greetings as one who belongs to the Lord.

²³ Gaius is letting me and the whole church here use his home. He sends his greetings to you. Erastus and our brother Quartus also send their greetings. Erastus is the city treasurer here. ²⁴††

²⁵ Praise God! He is the one who can make you strong in faith. He can use the Good News that I teach to make you strong. It is the message about Jesus Christ that I tell people. That message is the secret truth that was hidden for ages and ages but has been made known.

²⁶ And that truth has now been shown to us. It was made known by what the prophets wrote in the Scriptures, as the eternal God commanded. And it has now been made known to all people to lead them to trust and obey him. ²⁷ Glory forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

^{**} **16:16** *the special greeting of God's people* Literally, "a holy kiss".

^{††} **16:24** Some Greek copies add verse 24: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Those copies end the letter with verse 24 and either do not have verses 25-27 or place them at the end of chapter 14.