

# Romans 12:1-15:13

## Background

In the book of Romans, God uses the apostle Paul to answer the following question:

### **How can an imperfect, created being please a perfect creator?**

When a man or woman answers this question in the absence of revelation, he or she inevitably focuses on their own actions. For example, some people create their own gods and end up “serving the creature rather than the creator (Romans 1:25).” As a side effect, they get to do what they desire, certain that their god (themselves) will approve. Other people become bound up in endlessly striving for (and never achieving) perfection so that God will owe them His favor. Such eventually end up mired in hopeless legalism, fooling themselves into believing that they are good enough for God because they don’t violate those of His laws that they, themselves have decided are important. Still others turn God into someone who will tolerate evil as long as at the end the scale shows more good than evil (the concept of karma.) All such approaches have a fundamental flaw in that they make men and women the primary source of their own salvation, and God simply the paymaster who gives them their “due (Romans 4:4).”

In Romans, God fully reveals to Paul three points that destroy these concepts and place the focus of salvation in the perfect, with God. These points are:

- 1) Even though it is good, law can only bring death because of mankind’s weakness and his submission to sin (Romans 7:8b-11; Romans 3:23.) No one can be righteous or justified based on obedience to law (Romans 3:10; 3:20)
- 2) God, and only God has the ability to proclaim people righteous (Romans 4:1-8)
- 3) God’s crediting of righteousness is based on our faith in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:22; Romans 4:3) who died to justify us through His blood (Romans 5:6-11) resulting in reconciliation (Romans 5:11.)

It is this reconciliation through faith which then enables us to be “set free from sin and ... slaves to God.” resulting in “sanctification and its end, eternal life. (Romans 6:22-23)” Our study in Romans 11-14 will focus on those things that allows us to advance towards eternal life.

## Specifics

Written by: Paul (Romans 1:1)

Written to: Those (Christians) in Rome (Romans 1:7)

Written from: Corinth (probably) or elsewhere in Greece (Romans 15:25, 26 - Aid to Jerusalem from the Macedonians and Greeks combined with Acts 20 referring to his short trip to Greece)

Written when: Probably between 55-58 AD. The dates are bracketed by the two year term of Gallio as proconsul in Achaia (2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey ~ 53 AD) and the change from Felix to Festus in Syria (~ 59 AD.)

## **Brief Outline (Chapters 1-11)**

1. Both Gentile and Jew are justly condemned (1 – 3:20)
2. Cannot be justified by works of Law (3:20) – Law tells only standard and penalty
3. Can be justified (pronounced right) by God through faith in Christ Jesus (3:21-31)
  - a. Like Abraham (4)
  - b. Christ made peace through His death so that we could live through Him (5) and his grace reigns through righteousness
4. This fact does not encourage sin (6)
5. This fact does not condemn law (7) – merely makes it insufficient
  - a. Law cannot be kept because of our weakness (7)
  - b. No matter how badly I want to keep it, I fail – This is an observed truth not a necessary truth, Christ did NOT fail.
6. Faith in Christ Jesus (8)
  - a. Removes condemnation
  - b. Frees us from sin
  - c. Gives life in the spirit through the focus of our mind
  - d. Makes us debtors to God and requires us to live according to our adoption.
  - e. Resulting in our glorification
  - f. Providing us with a constant love
  - g. Allowing us to conquer
7. Salvation for all does not mean Israel is rejected but that they chose the way of law and not faith (9-11)
8. Conclusion (11:33-36)

## **Romans 12:1-15:13**

Having dealt with the fundamental FACT of our salvation, Paul moves on in these chapters to tell us how we should react to God's work of justification through Christ. To ask:

**How are we who are righteous (in right standing) with God to show righteousness (right living)?**

**How are we who are sanctified (set apart) by salvation as holy to pursue continuous holiness (sanctification) and become complete?**

### **Romans 12:1-2**

1. Upon what does Paul base his appeal in this section?
2. What are we to present?  
What are we to present these as?  
What does this mean?
3. What does it mean to make the sacrifice “holy?”  
What makes the (our) sacrifice “acceptable?”
4. What is meant by the phrase “your spiritual worship?”
5. What is the connection between vs. 2 and vs. 1?

6. To what are we not to be conformed?  
What does this mean?
7. What does it mean to be transformed?  
With what are we to renew our mind?  
What is the connection between testing and renewal?
8. What are we testing?  
How will this help us discern the will of God?  
  
What characteristics does the will of God have?

### **Romans 12:3-8**

1. Why does verse 3 begin with “for?”
2. What is Paul trying to emphasize with his preface, “by the grace given me?”
3. What has Paul said in Romans that would give us reason not to think too highly of ourselves?  
  
What does it mean to think of ourselves too highly?  
Where does “sober judgment” come from?  
What is its basis?
4. What is important about the description of the body in vss. 4-5?
5. What does it mean when it says “our gifts differ according to the grace given us?”  
  
What must we do with our gifts?
6. Why are each of the characteristics in vss. 6-8 important and how do they feed the church?

### **Romans 12:9-13**

1. What does it mean to let our love be genuine (without hypocrisy)?  
  
How does this statement relate to the previous verses?
2. How are the two phrases in verse 9 related?
3. How are we to love one another?  
Why is this important?
4. What does loving one another lead to (v. 10b)?

5. What does this verse say is necessary to serve the Lord?  
What does it mean to be slothful in zeal?

How would we demonstrate being fervent in spirit?

6. How do the three commands in verse 12 relate to one another?

What do they demand of us?

7. What are we to seek to show (v. 13?)  
What is hospitality?

In what way is showing hospitality similar to contributing to the needs of the saints?

How is it different from contributing to the needs of the saints?

### **Romans 12:14-21**

1. What is the general theme in these verses?
2. What are we to do to those who treat us harshly?

What are we not to do to those who treat us harshly?

3. Why are we not to take vengeance on those who mistreat us?  
Why are we to treat our enemies well?
4. What do we demonstrate when we rejoice or weep with others?

Why is this important?

How does rejoicing and weeping with others contribute to living in harmony with one another?

5. What warning is found in verse 16?  
What does haughtiness keep us from?
6. Why is being wise in our own thoughts a temptation?

How does it inhibit our service to others?

How do we avoid this?

### **Romans 13:1-7**

1. Summarize the argument Paul makes regarding why we are to be subject to “governing authorities,”
2. What is said about those who resist the authorities?  
Why should we not resist the authorities?
3. Under what circumstances should we not fear the authority?  
Why?  
  
Under what circumstances should we fear authority?
4. Why are we to be in subjection?  
What is involved in this subjection?
5. Which government is Paul talking about in this section?  
Given this fact, does the instruction vary with the “goodness” of the government?  
Why or why not?

### **Romans 13:8-10**

1. What debt must we continue to pay for our whole life?
2. What action allows us to fulfill the law?  
Why?
3. What does no wrong to a neighbor?  
What does this imply?

### **Romans 13:11-14**

1. What “hour” has come?  
Why is waking from sleep important?
2. What is far gone?  
What is at hand?  
What do day and night stand for in this context?
3. What are we to cast off as a result of day being at hand?  
What are we to put on?
4. What actions are included in putting on the armor of light?
5. When we put on our armor, who do we actually put on?  
What must we not do if we put on Christ?

### **Romans 14:1-12**

1. What are the two specific situations described in these verses?
2. Which of the two groups who disagree over eating is correct in their understanding?  
Why?

Does this imply that the other group is incorrect in their understanding?

What leads this group to their action?

What is this action?

3. In what way can the non-eater's faith be said to be "weak?"

Can you think of another example of a faith that is weak in this manner?

If yes, describe it.

4. What is the second disagreement in this text about?  
Is there a direct indication in the text of which position is correct?
5. For both of these disagreements, what thing(s) make(s) it ok for them to disagree and practice their faith anyway?

What are the essential items that make a divided situation like this workable?

6. In the circumstances described, what is specifically forbidden?  
What does "passing judgment" mean in this context?

Why is passing judgment on our brothers and sisters a problem for the Christian?

### **Romans 14:13-23**

1. What are we to do instead of "passing judgment" on our brothers and sisters?

What personal attitudes does this action require?

2. If we do put a stumbling block in another's way, what is the result (15-16?)
3. Of what is the kingdom of God not?  
Of what is the kingdom of God?  
What does verse 17 mean?

4. What is the overall goal of deferring our actions to another's weakness (v. 19?)

**Romans 14:13-23 (continued)**

5. What makes eating “clean food” wrong for the strong person?

What is it “good” to do?  
Why?

6. Why do you think we are told to keep our faith between ourselves and God?

7. How can eating “clean food” be wrong for the weak person?

**Romans 15:1-13**

1. What is the goal describe in this text?

2. List the ways in which this is to be accomplished?

3. Whose is the central example in this passage?  
What are we to do to follow this example?

4. With what will we abound when we achieve these actions?