

Teacher: Vinnie Angelo, M.A. | **Dates:** 9/13/15 - 12/13/15 | **Room:** W246/247 | **Time:** 10:55am

Class Description: *Romans: The power of God is the Gospel!*

This elective-class will study through the book of *Romans*, which has been called one of the most important books in the Bible. In this great letter Paul not only teaches us about Christian “theology,” but also how to establish a Christian “worldview” (meaning, how to *think* and *make sense* of the world in light of the God of Israel). And so we will explore themes like: *Justification by faith*, how Gentiles are now included into *Yahweh's covenantal promises*, and most importantly how *the Gospel* is the power of God for salvation!

Our class will also help train people (from new Christians to mature believers) in various Bible study methods, allowing for a stronger ability to read and interpret scripture!

TheologyClass.org will host files and resources for this class

Contact Vinnie: VinnieAngelo@gmail.com

Recommended reading during the class

Read through *Romans* each week

- Do this in at least three translations over the course of the class (e.g., ESV, NIV, NLT)

Observation Sheet (from TheologyClass.org)

Recommended commentaries on James:

"Romans" (Douglas Moo), The NIV Application Commentary, 2000

- Has a good balance of scholarly notes with practical application

"Romans For You" (Timothy Keller), 2014

- This is a two-volume commentary with a pastoral approach

Recommended tools for biblical studies

"Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary" by Tremper Longmann III (2013)

- A solid, contemporary, Bible dictionary that provides articles on historical and theological topics

"The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Context" by Gary M. Burge (2009)

- A great New Testament survey that focuses on the historic/cultural issues of the 1st century

Romans: Occasion

Rom 15:14-33

"From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum I have completed (or fulfilled) the gospel of Christ" (v. 19b)

"But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints" (v. 25a)

"But now...after many years, I have the desire to come to you [in Rome]...to be sent on my way to you" (v. 23)

"As I am going on to Spain" (v. 24a)

The Reasons for Romans

- **1. Personal and Theological:**
 - Explain and defend the Gospel
 - Spanish Mission
- **2. Pastoral**
 - Heal the Conflict in the Roman Congregation
- **3. Theological and Pastoral**
 - Help Roman Christians understand their place in Salvation History

(NIVAC-MOO)

I. The Letter Opening (1:1–17)

- A. Prescript (1:1–7)
- B. Thanksgiving and Occasion: Paul and the Romans (1:8–15)
- C. The Theme of the Letter (1:16–17)

II. The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith (1:18–4:25)

- A. The Universal Reign of Sin (1:18–3:20)
 - 1. All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin (1:18–32)
 - 2. Jews Are Accountable to God for Sin (2:1–3:8)
 - a. The Jews and the Judgment of God (2:1–16)
 - b. The Limitations of the Covenant (2:17–29)
 - c. God's Faithfulness and the Judgment of Jews (3:1–8)
 - 3. The Guilt of All Humanity (3:9–20)
- B. Justification by Faith (3:21–4:25)
 - 1. Justification and the Righteousness of God (3:21–26)
 - 2. "By Faith Alone" (3:27–4:25)
 - a. "By Faith Alone": Initial Statement (3:27–31)
 - b. "By Faith Alone": Abraham (4:1–25)

III. The Assurance Provided by the Gospel: The Hope of Salvation (5:1–8:39)

- A. The Hope of Glory (5:1–21)
 - 1. From Justification to Salvation (5:1–11)
 - 2. The Reign of Grace and Life (5:12–21)
- B. Freedom from Bondage to Sin (6:1–23)
 - 1. "Dead to Sin" Through Union with Christ (6:1–14)
 - 2. Freed from Sin's Power to Serve Righteousness (6:15–23)
- C. Freedom from Bondage to the Law (7:1–25)
 - 1. Released from the Law, Joined to Christ (7:1–6)
 - 2. The History and Experience of Jews under the Law (7:7–25)
 - a. The Coming of the Law (7:7–12)
 - b. Life Under the Law (7:13–25)
- D. Assurance of Eternal Life in the Spirit (8:1–30)
 - 1. The Spirit of Life (8:1–13)
 - 2. The Spirit of Adoption (8:14–17)
 - 3. The Spirit of Glory (8:18–30)
- E. The Believer's Security Celebrated (8:31–39)

IV. The Defense of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel (9:1–11:36)

- A. Introduction: The Tension Between God's Promises and Israel's Plight (9:1–5)
- B. Defining the Promise: God's Sovereign Election (9:6–29)
 - 1. The Israel Within Israel (9:6–13)

- 2. Objections Answered: The Freedom and Purpose of God (9:14–23)
- 3. God’s Calling of a New People: Israel and the Gentiles (9:24–29)
- C. Understanding Israel’s Plight: Christ as the Climax of Salvation History (9:30–10:21)
 - 1. Israel, the Gentiles, and the Righteousness of God (9:30–10:13)
 - 2. Israel’s Accountability (10:14–21)
- D. Summary: Israel, the “Elect,” and the “Hardened” (11:1–10)
- E. Defining the Promise (2): The Future of Israel (11:11–32)
 - 1. God’s Purpose in Israel’s Rejection (11:11–15)
 - 2. The Interrelationship of Jews and Gentiles: Warning to Gentiles (11:16–24)
 - 3. The Salvation of “All Israel” (11:25–32)
- F. Conclusion: Praise to God in Light of His Awesome Plan (11:33–36)

V. The Transforming Power of the Gospel: Christian Conduct (12:1–15:13)

- A. The Heart of the Matter: Total Transformation (12:1–2)
- B. Humility and Mutual Service (12:3–8)
- C. Love and Its Manifestations (12:9–21)
- D. The Christian and Secular Rulers (13:1–7)
- E. Love and the Law (13:8–10)
- F. Living in Light of the Day (13:11–14)
- G. A Plea for Unity (14:1–15:13)
 - 1. Do Not Condemn One Another! (14:1–12)
 - 2. Do Not Cause Your Brother or Sister to Stumble! (14:13–23)
 - 3. Put Other People First! (15:1–6)
 - 4. Receive One Another! (15:7–13)

VI. The Letter Closing (15:14–16:27)

- A. Paul’s Ministry and Travel Plans (15:14–33)
- B. Greetings (16:1–16)
- C. Closing Remarks and Doxology (16:17–27)

I. 1:1-17 The Letter Opening

A. 1:1-7 Prescript

(v3) ***A descendant of David***

- In the OT God promised that a descendant of David will have an eternal reign (2 Sam 7:12-16)

(v4) ***Declared with power to be the Son of God***

- (Cf. Ps 2:7)
- By virtue of his resurrection, Jesus is the Son of God in power
 - He didn't *become* the Son of God at his resurrection; He's moved into a new sphere of operation

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

B. 1:8-15 Thanksgiving and Occasion: Paul and the Romans

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

Romans: Appendix

Theological Terms

Antinomian: A term used to characterize believers in the early church who wrongly thought that salvation by faith in Jesus Christ freed them from all moral obligations and that they could sin with impunity (Gk *anti*, “against,” + *nomos*, “law”). The problem of antinomianism is addressed in such NT passages as Romans 6:1–11 and 1 John (cf. 1 Jn 1:9–10). Some scholars link this attitude to early forms of Gnosticism, where knowledge was placed above ethics.

Election: God does not foresee an action or condition on our part that induces Him to save us. Rather, election rests on God’s sovereign decision to save whomever He is pleased to save.

Eschatology: Derived from the Greek term meaning “last,” *eschaton* refers to the ultimate climax or end of history wherein Christ returns to earth to establish his eternal kingdom of righteousness and justice among all nations. Eschatology, then, is the theological study that seeks to understand the ultimate direction or purpose of history as it moves toward the future, both from an individual perspective (What happens when a person dies) and from a corporate perspective (Where is history going, and how will it end). *Realized eschatology* views the first coming of Jesus Christ itself as the full presence of the kingdom of God. *Inaugurated eschatology* sees the first coming of Christ as the beginning of the kingdom in the present, while acknowledging that the consummation or fulfillment of the kingdom of God is yet to come.

Exegesis: Literally, “drawing meaning out of” respectively. Exegesis is the process of seeking to understand what a text means or communicates on its own. *Eisegesis* is generally a derogatory term used to designate the practice of imposing a preconceived meaning onto a text, even if that meaning could not have been originally intended at the time of its writing.

Federal Headship: federalism has to do with representation, with one person acting on behalf of another. God has appointed two representatives in

history: Adam and Christ. Adam did not represent the race well; he disobeyed God. As a result, all of his descendants are born with an inclination to sin, and they all share in his guilt and suffer the same penalty he received—death.

Flesh (sinful nature): Not a reference to human “bones” or to “sexual sin,” but a condition (natural to people) in which God and the spiritual realm are left out of account. To be “in the flesh” is to be helplessly trapped in this situation. The “flesh” represents the old era that is passing away.

Foreknow: God created time, and therefore all events in time, when He created the world, so that He does not look down through history but looks at history as a complete whole. Romans 8:29 says that God foreknew certain people. A study of the idea of knowledge in the Bible will show that it usually involves a choice of intimate relations, as when Adam “knew” his wife Eve and she conceived. Romans 8:29 means that God “fore-loved” certain people, and predestinated them. He chose them; they did not choose Him.

Hermeneutics: Theories of interpretation. The term *hermeneutics* was first used with respect to interpretive methods and discussions of biblical interpretation; now the term has a broader use as the theory and art of interpreting any text.

Imputed Righteousness: God justifies sinners by seeing them as righteous on account of Christ’s righteousness reckoned/imputed to them. How does God justify the ungodly? By declaring an ungodly person as “righteous” based on the righteousness of someone else.

Jewish Christians. Jews who were disciples of Jesus or converted to Christianity by confessing Jesus as the Messiah and were baptized “into the name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38). Sometimes this group of early Jewish Christians is described as Palestinian Christians because the movement was largely confined to Palestine. It appears that Jewish Christians, under the leadership of James (Acts 15:1–35; 21:17–26), particularly those in and around Jerusalem, retained many of their Jewish traditions and beliefs—in other words, they continued to “live Jewishly” and saw no

need to cease being Jews because they converted to Christianity. It is likely that some of these Jewish/Palestinian Christians (Judaizers) insisted that Paul require Gentile converts to obey Jewish laws in addition to putting their faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 2–3).

Justification: A forensic (legal) term related to the idea of acquittal, *justification* refers to the divine act whereby God makes humans, who are sinful and therefore worthy of condemnation, acceptable before a God who is holy and righteous. More appropriately described as “justification by grace through faith,” this key doctrine of the Reformation asserts that a sinner is justified (pardoned from the punishment and condemnation of sin) and brought into relationship with God by faith in God’s grace alone.

Law: The *law* means variously the OT in general, the Torah (especially the Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible), the Ten Commandments or the several codes of conduct that identified Israel as set apart and in covenantal relationship with God. Jesus summarized the law with two commandments: to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Paul declares that the law is fulfilled in Jesus, who sets humans free from the law’s penalty of death. *Legalism* is the attitude that identifies morality with the strict observance of laws or that views adherence to moral codes as defining the boundaries of a community. Religious legalism focuses on obedience to laws or moral codes based on the (misguided) assumption that such obedience is a means of gaining divine favor.

Parousia: A Greek word used to refer to the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of history. Literally, the term means “presence.” Hence it designates Christ’s return as the point at which he will be fully present to the world or his presence will be fully revealed. The term was used of kings/dignitaries who would “come” into a kingdom.

Predestination: the doctrine that because God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and completely sovereign, he “from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass,”

Righteousness: An attribute of God’s being; God’s right and just character, actions and judgments. God’s righteousness as understood in a covenantal context includes God’s right judgment of both God’s own people and those who oppress them, as well as God’s salvation and mercy extended to those to whom the covenanting God has promised to be faithful. Righteousness and salvation are summed up in and provided for all those who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By extension, righteousness denotes the type of life that ought to characterize Jesus’ disciples. Believers are to “imitate” God and thereby become righteous in life just as God is righteous. *God’s Righteousness* also refers to the act by which God declares sinful people to be just in his sight.

Sin: Any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Spirit/Spiritual: Denotes the new era inaugurated by Christ’s work of redemption and marked by a new, powerful work of God’s Spirit.

Theology: *Theology* commonly refers to the ordered, systematic study or interpretation of the Christian faith and experience of God based on God’s divine self-revelation. Theology seeks to “harmonize” what the Bible (along with church history) has said about a particular topic (e.g., the Trinity; hell; baptism).

Theologizing: To speculate about theology; to render/insert a theological conclusion; to treat theologically, oftentimes at the expense of exegesis.

Torah: The first part of the Hebrew canon (Gen-Deut). It is traditionally translated “*law*” but is more literally the *instruction*. The term can also be used of the OT as a whole, so it comes to have the sense of God’s revelation as a whole and not just commands or laws. Instructive are passages such as Psalm 1:2, where the righteous “delight” in Torah, and Psalms 19 and 119, which are extended poems on the worth of Torah. Torah sets forth the fundamentals of Israelite faith and functions as the norm for judging all subsequent experiences of God.

I. 1:1-17 The Letter Opening

C. 1:16-17 The Theme of the Letter (The Gospel is God's Power!)

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

1. The Text

For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
for it is the power of God for salvation
To everyone who believes,
to the Jew first
and also to the Greek.
For in it the righteousness of God is revealed
from faith for faith,
as it is written,
"The righteous (one) shall live by faith."

What is the Gospel?

- 1 Cor 15:1-9

Sermons in Acts

(v16) ***Gospel***

in OT (to discuss God's saving intervention on behalf of his people) and the Roman World

- Is 40:9 -12 (Cf. Is 52:7; 61:1)

Paul's definitions

- It's power
 - Rom 1:16)
 - (1 Tim 1:11; Eph 1:13) (Rom 10:16; 2 Cor 11:4; 2 Thes 1:8)

It's that **Jesus is Messiah and Lord**

The Good News (Cf. 3-4) is not how individual humans are saved, but Jesus as Lord!

Salvation by faith = central message of the OT prophets (1: 17, citing Hab 2: 4, which is also cited at Gal 3: 11; cf. Rom 1: 1– 2)

(v16) ***First for the Jew, then for the Gentile***

(v17) ***A righteousness of God***

- "the right status" that God gives to the sinner who believes
 - 50+ times refers to "God's righteousness" of making things right in the last days
 - Cf. Is 46:13; 51:5-6, 8; Ps 50
- God's righteousness = his activity of establishing "right" in a world that has gone wrong
 - The act of God putting His people "in the right" (right standing)
 - This righteousness is not moral, but legal

(v17) ***The righteous will live by faith***

- *"the one who is righteous by faith will live"*

- Faith is essential to establish true righteousness and life
 - Cf. Gal 3:11

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

How are we ashamed?

1. The gospel, by telling us our salvation is free and undeserved, is really insulting!

2. The gospel is also really insulting by telling us that Jesus died for us.

3. The gospel, by telling us that trying to be good and spiritual isn't enough, thereby insists that no "good" person will be saved, but only those who come to God through Jesus.

4. The gospel tells us that our salvation was accomplished by Jesus' suffering and serving (not conquering and destroying), and that following him means to suffer and serve with him.

II. 1:18-4:25 The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith

A. 1:18-3:20 The Universal Reign of Sin

1. 1:18-32 All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin

(v18) ***The wrath of God***

II. 1:18-4:25 The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith

A. 1:18-3:20 The Universal Reign of Sin

1. 1:18-32 All Persons Are Accountable to God for Sin

God's wrath is in the present: IS BEING

(v18) *"ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth"*

- Suppressing (actively holding down)

(v32) *Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them*

EVERYONE WORSHIPS SOMETHING

When people refuse to acknowledge God as God we are changing the object of our worship

Moral Absolutes:

- If there is no God there are no moral absolutes
 - But no one LIVES as though there is no God

(v18) *The wrath of God*

- God reveals his wrath not just against sexual behavior, but anything that is idolatrous
 - **Gossip, Greed, Earning through morality**

(v23) ***exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles***

- Idolatry
 - The reference to the animal world has imagery of the creation account (Gen 1:24)

Paul looks at the history of humanity, and how humans exchange God for something lesser (in the created world)

- 1:23, 1:25, 1:26

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

2. 2:1-3:8 Jews Are Accountable to God for Sin

a. 2:1-16 The Jews and the Judgment of God

b. 2:17-29 The Limitations of the Covenant

Paul echoes Amos (ch 1-2)

Amos set a trap for the self-righteous people of the northern Kingdom of Israel

Paul uses the singular (you) to address a "person" (from the 3rd person plural "they")

- Diatribe
 - Jews are just like the Gentiles
- EVERYONE'S status before God (in judgment) is faulty
 - And we ALL fail the demands of the Law (Cf. ch 3:23)
 - Whoever judges the guilty Gentile sinners (from 1:20-32) is also judging him/herself
 - The self-righteous/religious pass judgment on others

The Law:

- Torah (Circumcision, Sabbath, Dietary)
- Gentiles have the law written on their hearts
 - And so Gentiles have a law, and are no better off than Israel...there's no difference

And so is Circumcision necessary for salvation? (Jer 31:31-34)

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

c. 3:1-8 God's Faithfulness and the Judgment of Jews

- God's judgment of the Jews is entirely in keeping with his covenant promises
 - (Cf. Ne 9:32-33; Lam 1:18)

(v5) God's righteousness

- 1:17 the "righteousness of God" = "*God's activity of putting sinners into right relationship with himself*"
- 3:4 "God's righteousness" is not "*saving righteousness*" but "*personal righteousness*"

(v23) ***exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles***

- This is speaking to idolatry
 - Idolatry = giving something the priority that God alone deserves to have
 - The reference to the animal world has imagery of the creation account
 - Gen 1:24

(v26) ***Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts***

- Paul moves from idolatry to sexual sin

Homosexuality in Romans

- The Torah background (of the Jewish Worldview of sexuality)
 - Gen 19:1-28; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Deut 23:17-18

Paul looks at the history of humanity, and how humans exchange God for something lesser (in the created world)

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

c. 3:1-8 God's Faithfulness and the Judgment of Jews

(v1) What advantage does the Jew have?

- Mere inclusion in the covenant won't save someone who's unfaithful/unrighteous
 - Cf. Ex 19:3-6 (Deut 7:6-13)
- This doesn't make God unfaithful to the Covenant

(v5) **God's righteousness**

- In 1:17 the "righteousness of God" referred to *"God's activity of putting sinners into right relationship with himself"*
- In 3:4 "God's righteousness" is not His *"saving righteousness"* but his *"personal righteousness"*
- Therefore: *"God's righteousness includes his always acting in accordance with his own nature"*

What does this mean for us? _____

3. 3:9-20 The Guilty of All Humanity

(v9) **"Under Sin"**

- Sin as a ruthless taskmaster, human beings as sin's helpless slaves
- A LEGAL concept
 - We are citizens of sin (this shows our citizenship: we're either citizens of sin, or grace)
 - Justification is a legal term
 - We are found to be righteous (legally) in front of God on judgment day

(v9b-10) **"None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God**

- Cf. Ps 14:1-8
- **Depravity**

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" - Jesus (John 6:44)

(v20) **"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law"**

- Observing the law (Cf. 3:28; Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10)
- Paul's use of the **"law"**
- **Popular view:** Be saved by doing more good works than bad
- **Scholarly view:** Were saved by God's grace, because God had chosen them

Scholars often break the Law into 3 sections:

- Moral
- Civil
- Ceremonial

How should we view the Law? **Threefold Use of the Law (RC Sproul)**

The first purpose of the law is to be a mirror.

A second purpose for the law is the restraint of evil.

The third purpose of the law is to reveal what is pleasing to God.

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

- Legally
- Our Minds
- Our Motives
- Our Wills
- Our Tongues
- Our Relationships
- Our Relationship with God

What does this mean for us? _____

B. 3:21-4:25 Justification by Faith

1. 3:21-26 Justification and the Righteousness of God

2. 3:27-4:25 "By Faith Alone"

a. 3:27-31 "By Faith Alone": Initial Statement

Law:

Righteousness:

Justify:

Universalism in 3:24?

(v24) ***"Through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"***

"Redemption" = _____ *through payment of a price*

(v25) ***"God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement"***

"Atonement" =

- Lev 16 describes the Day of Atonement ritual (place of atonement)
 - Cf. Lev 3:1, 13-15

What's Paul's topic? _____

b. 4:1-25 "By Faith Alone": Abraham

Gen 12:1-3 Founder of the "people of promise"

Gen 15:3-6 Abraham's belief was his righteousness

Gen 17:4-11 The OT calls circumcision a "sign of the covenant"

Abraham's promise: Gen 12:1 To inherit the "land"

Paul's interpretation: Rom 4:13 "His offspring would be heir of the world"

Galatians 3

What's Paul's topic?

What does Paul mean?

What does this mean for us?

III. 5:1 - 8:39 The Assurance Provided by the Gospel: The Hope of Salvation

A. 5:1-21 The Hope of Glory

1. 5:1-11 From Justification to Salvation

(Ch 5-6 Paraphrase: see the slides)

Righteousness: God's re-establishing 'right order' in the fallen world

- The biblical hope for righteousness embraces the rectifying of the whole created order
 - The new creation, in which righteousness dwells, has come in to being in Christ (Cf. 2 Cor 5:17-21; 2 Pet 3:13)

Ch 5 Negations:

Ch 6 Negations:

Ch 5 Affirmations:

Ch 6 Affirmations

(v1) ***"We have been justified by faith, we have peace with God"***

- **Past/Present/Future Salvation**
 - Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8; 1Cor. 1:18

(v5) ***"God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit"***

- the Anointed One
 - Is 42:1
- God would pour out his Spirit on the house of Israel
 - Ez 39:29
- Joel's prophecy (in the last days)
 - Joel 2:28-32
 - Pentecost Acts 2:17-21

(10-11) **Reconciliation**

- **Reconciled:** the exchange of _____ for a friendly _____
 - Cf. (Col 1:19-20) 2 Cor 5:18-20

B. 6:1-23 Freedom from Bondage to Sin

1. 6:1-14 "Dead to Sin" Through Union with Christ

(v1) ***"What shall we say then?"***

(v3) ***"All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death"***

- *"Baptized into Christ"*

(v6) ***"Our old self was crucified with him"***

- Cf. Eph 4:22-4; Col 3:9-11 for "old self/man" language
 - The old self = _____
 - The new self = _____

Two fields illustration:

(v14) ***"You are not under law, but under grace"***

- (Cf. Rom 12)
 - Law (for Paul) = _____

- The law of Moses was part of the old era (Cf. Gal 3:15-4:7)
 - (John 1:17)

2. 6:15-23 Freed from Sin's Power to Serve Righteousness

(v16) ***"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one you obey"***

(v18) ***"You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness"***

- Cf. Mt 6:24 (no one can serve two masters)

(v19) ***"Offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness"***

- holiness: _____

(v23) ***"The wages of sin is death"***

What's Paul's topic?

What does Paul mean?

What does this mean for us?

C. 7:1-25 Freedom from Bondage to the Law

1. 7:1-6 Released from the Law, Joined to Christ

Ch 7 parallels Ch 6

- believers:
 - die to sin (6:2)
 - are set free from it (6:6)
 - so they die to the law (7:4)
 - and are set free from it (7:6)
 - Freedom from sin leads to serving God & producing fruit pleasing to Him (6:18-22)
 - so freedom from the law leads to serving "in the new way of the Spirit" (7:6) and producing "fruit to God" (7:4)

7:2-4 Marriage:

(v5) ***"When we were controlled by the sinful nature"***

Sinful nature/flesh = *sarx*

- *Sarx* is difficult to translate into English

- Has the same sense as "*world*" in John

We are not under the law (Torah) (1 Cor 9:21)

2. 7:7-25 The History and Experience of Jews under the Law

a. 7:7-12 The Coming of the Law

(v7) ***"I would not have known what sin was except through the law"***

Know = *yada*

(v7) ***"Do not covet"***

10th commandment (Ex 20:17; Deut 5:21)

(v8) ***"Produced in me every kind of covetous desire"***

b. 7:13-25 Life Under the Law

(v15) ***"What I was to do I do not do, but what I hate I do"***

Three interpretations:

1. The normal/mature believer

- A sense of "already-not yet"

2. The immature Christian

3. Life as a Jew under the law

(v18) ***"That is, my sinful nature"***

- sinful nature = *sarx* (Cf. 7:5)

(v23) ***"I see another law at work in the members of my body"***

- Members:

Romans 7 is about _____

D. 8:1-30 Assurance of Eternal Life in the Spirit

1. 8:1-13 The Spirit of Life

(8:1-13) Flesh/Spirit

Flesh

Set free in Christ from the law of sin and death

- The law was weakened by the flesh (3)
- Jesus condemned sin in the flesh (3)
 - that we wouldn't walk according to the flesh but the Spirit (4)
 - Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on fleshly things (5)
 - The mind of the flesh is death (6)
 - The mind set on the flesh is hostile to God (7)
 - It (the mind set on the flesh) doesn't and can't submit to God's law (7)
 - Those in the flesh can't please God (8)
 - [But Christians aren't in the flesh - but in the Spirit (9)]
 - If you live according to the flesh you'll die (13)

Spirit

There's no condemnation for those in Christ (1)

- The law of the Spirit of life has set you free from death (2)
 - Christ came in the flesh to condemn flesh (3)
- Those who live according to the Spirit have life and peace (6)
 - And the Spirit of God dwells in all Christians (9)
 - The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ (9)
 - If Christ is in you your physical body is dead, you are alive because of righteousness (10)
 - If God's Spirit dwells in you, then your body will be raised from the dead, because the same Spirit raised Jesus (11)
 - The Spirit makes you alive! (13)

(v1) ***"In Christ Jesus"***

- Incorporation into Christ (similar teaching to 5:12-21)

(v4) ***"Who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit"***

- The early Christians = humans as a unity

(v5-6) ***"Have their minds set...the mind"***

(v6) ***"The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace"***

(v9) ***"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit"***

To be in the flesh = _____

To be in the Spirit = _____

What's Paul's topic?

What does Paul mean?

What does this mean for us?

"WORLD" - John's Ten Uses by Pastor John Samson

The word "world" (Greek: *kosmos*) appears 185 times in the New Testament:

78 times in John
8 in Matthew
3 in Mark
3 also in Luke

The vast majority of its occurrences are therefore in John's writings, as it is also found 24 times in John's three epistles, and just three times in Peter.

John uses the word "world" in ten different ways in his Gospel:

1. The Entire Universe - John 1:10; 1:3; 17:5
2. The Physical Earth - John 13:1; 16:33; 21:25
3. The World System - John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11 (see also similar usage in Gal 1:4)
4. All humanity minus believers - John 7:7; 15:18
5. A Big Group but less than all people everywhere - John 12:19
6. The Elect Only - John 3:17
7. The Non-Elect Only - John 17:9
8. The Realm of Mankind - John 1:10; (this is very probably the best understanding of the word "world" in John 3:16 also)
9. Jews and Gentiles (not just Israel but many Gentiles too) - John 4:42
10. The General Public (as distinguished from a private group) not those in small private groups - John 7:4

Seeing this list can be very helpful, especially when traditions reign supreme in some people's minds that "world" always means all people everywhere. Sometimes it does, but most of the time, it does not. It is a tradition that is very strong but one that cannot survive biblical scrutiny. It is the context that always establishes the meaning of words and their usage.

2. 8:14-17 The Spirit of Adoption

The Spirit and Adoption

(v14) "***Sons of God***"

(v15) "***The Spirit of sonship***" (adoption 15)

Sonship =

3. 8:18-30 The Spirit of Glory

The Environment/Creation

Gen 2:15

Work:

- work, serve, *performs acts of worship*
 - Nu 3:7-8 (the priests shall guard over the tabernacle)
 - Numerous other references in Torah to the priestly work

Keep:

- Ex 23:15 (Keep the Festivals)
- Dt 5:12 (Keep the Sabbath)
- Dt 29:9 (Keep the Covenant)

- Humanity's purpose:

Adam was the first _____

Jesus is the second _____

- John 19:41; 20:14-15

Arminian/Catholic:

Open Theist:

Reformed view (Calvin/Luther)

- Predestination:

Predestined:

- Cf. Rom 8:29, 30; Acts 4:28; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11

The Golden Chain of Redemption (Ordo Salutis) 8:29-30

Called, foreknew, predestined, justified, glorified

E. 8:31-39 The Believer's Security Celebrated

IV. 9:1 - 11:36 The Defense of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel

A. 9:1-5 Introduction: The Tension Between God's Promises and Israel's Plight

B. 9:6-29 Defining the Promise (1): God's Sovereign Election

1. 9:6-13 The Israel within Israel

In Ch 9 Paul enters a new phase of his argument

To Israel belongs (4-5):

- Adoption
- Glory
- Covenants
- Law
- Worship
- Promises
- Patriarchs
- Christ (lineage)
- Believers (Jew/Greek) are children of Abraham (Ch 4), children and heirs of God (8:14-17), destined for glory (8:18-30)

(v6) ***"Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel"***

Why was Esau rejected?

(v13) ***"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated"***

- Malachi 1:2-3
- To "love" and "hate" in Malachi are _____ terms

2. 9:14-23 Objections Answered: The Freedom and Purpose of God

(v20-21) ***"Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right...?"***

- Is 29:16 (Is 45:9)

Why God's choice most glorifies Him:

- 1. If ALL are chosen:
- 2. If NONE are chosen:
- 3. If SOME are chosen:

3. 9:24-29 God's Calling of a New People: Israel and the Gentiles

Citations:

- Hosea 2:23; 1:10; Is 10:22, 23; 1:9; Deut 29:23; Is 13:19; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11

What's Paul's topic? _____

What does Paul mean? _____

What does this mean for us? _____

E. 8:31-39 The Believer's Security Celebrated

8:31-39 Why can't anything come between God and His people?

- Christ died (and was raised), and now sits at God's right hand of power, taking care of the wrath God had for us (34)

(Cf. Col 1:15-20)

IV. 9:1 - 11:36 The Defense of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel

A. 9:1-5 Introduction: The Tension Between God's Promises and Israel's Plight

B. 9:6-29 Defining the Promise (1): God's Sovereign Election

1. 9:6-13 The Israel within Israel

The gospel of Jesus provides _____ for anyone who _____ (Ch 1-4)

To Israel belongs (4-5):

- Adoption
- Glory
- Covenants
- Law
- Worship
- Promises
- Patriarchs
- Christ (lineage)
- The blessings God promised to his people in the OT are now available for any Christian
 - For ALL who believe
 - Believers (Jew/Greek) are children of Abraham (Ch 4), children and heirs of God (8:14-17), destined for glory (8:18-30)

(v6) ***"Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel"***

The first occurrence of "Israel" refers to "_____ Israel"

- The second "Israel" has a more _____ significance
- The *true Israel* = _____
 - Cf. (Gal 3)

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C. 9:30-10:21 Understanding Israel's Plight: Christ as the Climax of Salvation History

1. 9:30-10:13 Israel, the Gentiles, and the Righteousness of God

(v32-33) ***"They stumbled over the 'stumbling stone.' As it is written..."***

- (Is 28:16, 8:14)
- Daniel 2:31-35, 44-45
 - **Mountain:** The Mountain is a symbol of _____
 - *Eden* (Ezek 28:13-16)
 - Mt. Sinai (Ex 3:1)
 - Moses to receive the Law (Ex 19:2)
 - Jerusalem/the Temple is on a mountain
 - Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5)
 - The New Jerusalem (Rev 21:11)

(v3) ***"Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own"***

- Cf. 1:16-17
- 1. **National righteousness:**
- 2. **Self-maintenance:**

(v4) ***"Christ is the end of the law"***

- End = *telos*

(v11) ***"Anyone who trusts in [me] will never be put to shame"***

- Is 28:16

(v13) ***"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"***

- Joel 2:32
 - The Lord in Joel is _____
 - Cf. 10:9

2. 10:14-21 Israel's Accountability

14-15 = the conditions that must be met

- **"call"** on the name of the Lord:
 - Messengers must be sent
 - The message must be **preached**
 - People must **hear** the message
 - Hearing must be met with **faith**

D. 11:1-10 Summary: Israel, the 'Elect' and the 'Hardened'

Despite Israel's _____ (10:21) God has not _____ his people (11:2)

Ch 11 flow:

1-6

- But now there is a _____ chosen by _____ (5)

7-10 Paul

- The elect - had obtained the _____,
- but the others were _____.

11-32

Because of the hardening that has come upon Israel "_____ has come to the Gentiles to make

Israel _____"

"All Israel will be saved" (26)

- Mark 1:5; Mt 21:10; 1 Tim 2:4

"All Israel"

(v17) "**Branches...wild olive shoot...olive root**"

- Cf. Jer 11:16; Hos 14:5-6

Who is Israel?

- **Christian Zionism** (literal)
 - **Replacement Theology** (spiritual/allegorical/symbolic)
 - **Jesus** (and the church)
 - *The Christian Zionist* ultimately rejects _____
 - *The Replacement Theologian* rejects _____
 - *Jesus fulfillment* interprets the OT in light of _____
-

(v36) ***"From him and through him and to him are all things"***

- Cf. Acts 17; Col 1

E. 11:11-32 Defining the Promise (2): The Future of Israel

1. 11:11-15 God's Purpose in Israel's Rejection

2. 11:16-24 The Interrelationship of Jews and Gentiles: Warning to Gentiles

3. 11:25-32 The Salvation of 'All Israel'

F. 11:33-36 Conclusion: Praise to God in Light of His Awesome Plan

“All Israel will be saved”: Establishing a basis for a valid interpretation

Kim Papaioannou

www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2015/11/israel

All Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).¹ Confronted with this statement, commentators usually ask, “Which Israel, physical or spiritual?” “Physical Israel” is Jews who are physical descendants of Abraham, considered by many to still be God’s chosen people. “Spiritual Israel” is believers in Jesus. Those who hold to a “spiritual Israel” concept will often believe that physical Israel was once God’s people, but their rejection of Jesus meant that God moved on. He offered the gospel to all the nations, and the community of faith in Jesus became “spiritual Israel”; spiritual in the sense that they have no physical ancestry in Abraham but are counted as God’s people by faith.

Physical Israel?

Is the concept of “physical Israel,” either now or in Old Testament times, biblical? I believe the answer is no.

Though Abraham had at least eight biological sons (Gen. 16:11; 21:3; 25:1, 2), one became part of the covenant, the others did not (Gen. 21:10; cf Gal. 4:30; Gen. 25:6). Conversely, others not biologically related to Abraham became part of the covenant: “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money *from any foreigner who is not your descendant* And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:12, 13, emphasis supplied).

Indeed, one of the reasons God chose Abraham was that he would teach not only his children but all people in his household irrespective of background: “ ‘For I have chosen him [Abraham], that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord’ ” (Gen. 18:19, ESV).

Abraham’s household was large, numbering probably over a thousand; on one occasion he armed 318 men “born in his own house” (Gen. 14:14) to liberate Lot. That his household may have shared his faith is indicated by the fact that he trusted one of his servants with finding a wife for Isaac and did so by having him swear “ ‘by the Lord’ ” (Gen. 24:1–3).

The direct physical descendants of Jacob who entered Egypt numbered 70 (Exod. 1:5). At the Exodus, Israel numbered 600,000 men of military age (Exod. 12:37; cf. Num. 1:46), plus women, children, and elderly men, making a total of somewhere between two million and three million people. No realistic biological growth rates could have produced such growth.

But if we understand Israel inclusively in the sense that Abraham's household was inclusive, then it is much easier to understand the amazing numerical growth. The two to three million who left Egypt then were not biological offspring of Abraham, but all attached to Israel's household, by joining the faith—wives, husbands, servants, helpers, of any and every national background.

Indeed, at the time they left Egypt, a mixed multitude joined Israel (Exod. 12:38), partaking fully of the covenant. The full integration of believing foreigners was evidenced by the fact that one of them, Caleb, became the leader of the largest tribe of Israel, the tribe of Judah (Num. 13:3, 6). There is no reason to assume that such accessions to Israel took place only during the Exodus and not before, albeit in smaller numbers.

When God renewed the covenant with Israel (Exod. 19–24), it was an open covenant. Participation was voluntary. Numerous individuals who had no direct descent from Abraham became part of the covenant. Joseph had married an Egyptian (Gen. 41:45); Moses a Midianite (Exod. 2:16–21); Caleb, already mentioned, was a Kennizite (Num. 32:12); Rahab a Canaanite (Josh. 2:1, 2); Ruth a Moabite (Ruth 1:4); Uriah a Hittite (2 Sam. 11:3). King David himself was only partially Israelite (Ruth 4:17).

Not only individuals but whole groups of foreigners joined the covenant. In addition to the “mixed multitude” already mentioned, Canaanites not destroyed or expelled were eventually integrated, with the Rechabites becoming especially respected for their fidelity to God (Jer. 35:1–19). David's elite bodyguards were Philistines (1 Chron. 18:17) who had presumably converted, for it is hard to imagine David's palace filled with pagans.

Throughout the monarchy there were thousands of foreigners in Israel (1 Chron. 22:2; 2 Chron. 30:25) whom the Septuagint (LXX) calls *prosēlutoi*, converts.² In Solomon's time their number was 153,600 (2 Chron. 2:17).

During Esther's time after the collapse of Haman's plot, “many of the people of the land became Jews” (Esther 8:17). Esther 9:27 indicates that this wave of conversions continued even after the momentous events described in the book. Artaxerxes authorized Ezra to appoint judges for the people in the province “beyond the River” who knew the law, and to teach “those who do not know” (Ezra 7:25), possibly an authorization to convert people of other nations.³

During the intertestamental period, the Jewish king, John Hyrcanus, converted the whole nation of the Idumeans (Edomites) to Judaism on the point of the sword.⁴ Out of them came the notorious family of Herod.⁵

In New Testament times, the Pharisees were known for their missionary zeal (Matt. 23:15).

Synagogues were filled with foreign converts or God-fearers (e.g. Acts 13:16, 26; 16:14; 17:17). Foreigners flocked to Jerusalem to worship during the feasts (John 12:20), with 15 nations mentioned, both “Jews and proselytes” (Acts 2:9–11), as participating in the feast of Pentecost.

God intended the covenant to be open to all nations: “ ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’ ” (Isa. 56:7). The fact that for a few such as the Moabites there were certain limitations on when they could enter the covenant (Deut. 23:3) indicates that for others access was unhindered.

Not only could any person of any background join the covenant, but those within it could opt out or be forcefully ejected. To be “cut off” from the people of Israel was a punishment for a number of sins (e.g. Exod. 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev. 7:20, 21, 25, 27). To what extent this was carried out we do not know, but the provision was there. The word *apostasy*, or “falling away from the faith,” is not uncommon in the LXX to describe Israel’s sometimes rebellious attitude towards God (e.g. Josh. 22:22; 2 Chron. 29:19).

It is evident, then, that any person of any background could join the covenant and hundreds of thousands (millions?) did so throughout Israel’s history; and that anyone of whatever background could choose to exit the covenant.

In today’s language we could say that Israel functioned in many ways like a church—people joining and people leaving. Indeed, *ekklēsia*, “church,” is the very word Peter chose to describe Israel of old: “This is he who was in the congregation [*ekklēsia*] in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). Lest one be tempted to consider this a lone example, the LXX uses *ekklēsia* 77 times, almost exclusively as a reference to Israel.

In light of the evidence above, it is unbiblical to speak of “physical Israel,” Abraham’s physical descendants. Though Israel did exist for much of its Old Testament history as a nation, in God’s eyes true membership of Israel depended not on ancestry but on faith (cf. Rom. 2:29). Paul acknowledges this when he points out that out of the whole nation of Israel during the time of Ahab, only 7,000 had remained faithful to God, a remnant, and it was they who constituted the true Israel (Rom. 11:1–5). Biblically therefore, Israel was a spiritual community to/ from which people were added and/ or removed with no consideration of ancestry or race.⁶

With such a background in mind, we can understand Paul’s statement that all Israel will be saved, and the context.

The parable of the olive tree

In Romans 11:16–24 Paul takes this concept of spiritual identity and develops this in order to explain the relationship between the nascent church and Jews who had rejected Jesus. He does so through the parable of the olive tree.

The parable draws from Jeremiah 11:16, 17, where Israel is compared to a “ ‘green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit’ ” (11:16, ESV). But because the people had done evil following after Baal, God would burn some of the branches with fire. Part of the reason for this punishment was that they had rejected the warning messages of Jeremiah (Jer. 11:17–23).

Paul employs this parable to explain the relationship between the nascent church and Jews who had rejected Jesus. The olive tree, representing Israel, a covenant community, was once beautiful and complete. But, like Israel rejected Jeremiah—that “gentle lamb” (Jer. 11:19, ESV)—so would they reject another much gentler and greater Lamb, the Lamb of God, Jesus, and lead Him to slaughter. Not only that, but after He rose from the dead and His disciples proclaimed the good news of the resur-rection, many Jews still rejected Him.

Paul compares the unbelieving branches in Jeremiah’s time that would burn, those Jews who had rejected Jesus, to olive branches “broken off” (Rom. 11:17) “because of unbelief” (11:20). To be broken off means to be excluded from the family of God (11:20, 21).

Two things are important here. First, only dead branches—individu-als who failed to believe—are broken off. The tree itself was not rejected; indeed, it continues to be holy (11:16), to nourish, and to support the remain-ing branches (11:18). Second, since the tree represents Israel and the unbeliev-ing branches are broken off, it follows that they are no longer part of the tree, no longer part of Israel. No unbelieving branch is part of the true Israel.

With its branches broken, the once beautiful tree now looks tattered. How does God deal with this problem? Branches from other olive trees, wild olive trees, are grafted onto the good olive tree. These branches are individu-als from all and any nations who come to have faith in Jesus, both then and now: “you [Christians of all nations], being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them” (11:17).

An important point needs to be noted here. God does not plant a new tree, the Christian Church. Rather, the once wild branches are grafted onto the same old tree (“grafted in *among them*” 11:17), which continues to exist and provide nourishment. Since the tree is Israel and the wild branches are

grafted onto Israel, they become part of biblical Israel; they are not a new Israel. In a sense, the Israel of the Old Testament that, as we saw, was a spiritual entity, continues to exist and thrive, after it has undergone a process of pruning through the cutting off of unbelieving branches and the adding on of new believing ones.

The tree was once beautiful and complete; then it became tattered because some branches were broken because of unbelief. Now that new branches have been grafted in, the tree is once again beautiful and complete. The new branches become the natural continuation of this wonderful tree.

The church has not replaced Israel. The church is the natural continuation of Israel, just like the branches are the natural continuation of a tree! Believers in Christ are the true Israel.

It is important to note that in taking such an approach, Paul was well within the thinking patterns of his time. The concept of “official” Judaism being in apostasy or “broken off” was not uncommon in the turbulent times of the turn of the era. The Pharisees, who eventually dominated the theological development of Judaism, emerged from pious Jews who rejected the adoption of the high priesthood by the Hasmoneans in the second century Bc and considered themselves as separating from the outlook of the ruling elite.⁷

Indeed, the name *Pharisee* derives from the Aramaic, *perisa*, meaning, “set apart, separated.”⁸ Likewise, the Essenes, who were contemporaries of Jesus and Paul, considered the Jerusalem temple and its priesthood apostate and themselves to be the true Israel. They separated from mainstream Judaism, not only theologically and ceremonially but also physically, by forming the well-known commune in Qumran.⁹ When Paul therefore considered Jews who had rejected Jesus to be broken branches and believers in Jesus to be the true branches, he was operating within theological grounds that were very familiar to his contemporaries.

Moreover, at this early stage Paul did not anticipate, or at least discuss, the sharp break between Christians and Judaism that began maturing a generation later. At this early stage, Christians were mostly of Jewish background and operating within the context of the synagogue and Judaism. So to see some participants of the synagogue service as healthy branches and others as broken off would be a familiar concept. That Christians and Jews eventually went completely separate ways perhaps serves to reinforce the paradigm Paul was espousing.

“All Israel will be saved”

Paul concludes his parable of the olive tree with the statement with which we began this study—a statement that is often discussed and nearly always misunderstood: “all Israel will be saved” (11:26).

The question that is usually asked is, which Israel will be saved, “physical” or “spiritual?”

The key to understand this actually very simple text is to interpret the words in harmony with the parable of the olive tree of which they form the conclusion.

Israel, God’s people, was once beautiful and complete. But then “blindness” (NKJV) or a “hardening” (ESV) came in part to Israel (11:25). In other words, some of God’s people hardened their hearts (cf. Heb. 4:7).¹⁰ They refused to accept the saving work of God in Christ Jesus. The hardening of the hearts parallels the breaking off of some of the branches. So the once beautiful and complete Israel is now tattered, exactly as was the case with the olive tree. The failure of Israel as an Abrahamic covenant community in the rejection of Jesus turned God’s expectation of the olive tree into a disappointment. But God’s intention for the olive tree is that it should bear fruit—fruit from faith in the grace of God manifested through the cross for the redemption of humanity— cannot and must not fail. How does God deal with this? He brings in “the fullness of the Gentiles” (11:25). Brings into where? Into Israel, of course, to fill the void left by those whose hearts were hardened. The Greek word *plērōma*, “fullness,” is a verbal noun that indicates something that is partially empty or void being filled up.¹¹ So, the void left by those who failed to believe is filled by the Gentiles who come in and take their place. Paul argues that Gentiles—the wild olive branches, strangers to the covenant—are grafted in, and behold the Christian community of faith—a fruit-bearing tree, gathering in the entire human race.

Paul then announces: “And so all Israel will be saved” (11:26). The words “and so” indicate a concluding statement. Israel was complete; some fell off because of unbelief; others came in to fill their place; so now Israel is complete again. Paul can happily declare that all Israel will be saved.

“All Israel” therefore does not refer to “physical Israel,” a concept we saw as problematic. “All Israel” refers to all believers of all the ages, from the patriarchs of the Old Testament to believers today; to put it another way, from the roots of the olive tree in the Old Testament, to its last and tiniest branch, believing Christians today. All Israel refers to the totality of the people of God throughout the ages.

Summary and implications

This study has endeavored to establish two main points. First, the term *Israel* in the Bible is not a referent to physical descent but a term denoting those committed in faith to God; a spiritual, not racial, community.

Second, according to Romans 9, this spiritual Israel has never been rejected. True, the death,

resurrection, and rejection of Jesus by members of Israel marked a major turning point in God's dealings with humanity (cf. Dan. 9:24–27; Matt. 21:43). But it was individuals who were rejected. Israel as a referent of God's people continues to exist. It is made up of anyone and everyone who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior irrespective of ancestry or race. Believers in Jesus are the true children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7).

What are the implications? Several, but we will mention three:

- 1 With regard to modern Jews, there is absolutely no room for anti-Semitism. Their Scripture is part of our Scripture, their biblical heritage our heritage. They are not a rejected nation. They are broken branches, brothers and sisters who have failed to believe, and our call is to love them to faith, as we should all fellow humans.
- 2 But neither are they God's chosen people. God chose and nurtures the tree. The branches that were broken off are no longer part of the tree. They can be reintegrated, but only through faith (Rom. 11:23). God's purposes will be fulfilled in the tree—believers in Jesus—not the broken branches.
- 3 Christians would do well to re-explore the roots of biblical Israel, including the biblical Sabbath, and see it as fully, not indirectly, our heritage. The sharp break between biblical Israel and the church, which is part of many theologies today, is arbitrary and unbiblical. It has robbed the Christian church of much that is valuable. The church is the natural continuation of Israel just like the branches are the natural continuation of the tree. A fuller rediscovery of our roots can enhance our spirituality and worship.

References:

1 Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture passages are from the New King James Version.

2 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v.

“*prosēlutoi*” (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1945).

3 Commentators usually understand this text as authorization to minister to lapsed Jews, for they consider it unlikely that Artaxerxes would have authorized open evangelization of pagans. However, the fact that in Ezra 7:23 Artaxerxes recognized God as the “God of heaven” could indicate that the directive had broader application, including a permission to convert non-Jews.

4 Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.9.1. See also Bernard M. Zlotowitz, “Sincere Conversion and Ulterior Motives,” in *Conversion to Judaism in Jewish Law: Essays and Responses*, ed. Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer (Pittsburgh, PA: Rodef Shalom, 1994), 67.

5 E.g., Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.1.3.

6 Jews today understand this very clearly. Any person who converts to Judaism is considered a full Jew and receives full rights to immigrate to Israel; by contrast, Jews of noble heritage who, say, accept Jesus as their Savior, are no longer considered Jews and lose the right to immigrate to Israel.

7 See Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 514.

8 Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*perisa*.”

9 Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 521–531.

10 The Greek *apo merous* that relates to the hardening can be interpreted either (a) that the hardening was “partial” or (b) that the hardening came to “a part” of Israel as opposed to the whole. The second option is preferred for three reasons. First, the noun *meros* most naturally refers to one part of a bigger whole. Second, the word for “hardening” is *pōrōsis*, a strong word that in the two other instances it is used implies rejection of God (Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:18). So it is difficult to speak of a partial hardening (contrast *pōrōsis* with the softer *sklēros* and derivatives, often used for hardening that, nonetheless, does not imply rejection). Third, context requires that the hardening came to a part of Israel (the branches that did not believe) as opposed to all branches suffering a partial hardening.

11 Liddell and Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, sv *plērōma*. Cf. LXX Psalms 23:1; 49:12; 88:12; Jer. 8:16; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 10:26.

V. 12:1-15:13 The Transforming Power of the Gospel: Christian Conduct

A. We are great **sinner**s

- But God is infinitely _____ and _____

B. That we are under his **wrath** and **condemnation**

- But that God, in his great _____ has sent his Son Jesus Christ... whose perfect obedience and death in our place, makes it possible for God to _____ — to declare righteous — all who trust in Christ...
 - ...so that there is **no** _____ for those who are in Christ Jesus

C. Then we arrive at **chapter 12**:

- ***The Gospel in action***..."how does the Body - the Church - engage each other, and the world?"
 - This is what it means to be The People of God

A. 12:1-2 The Heart of the Matter: Total Transformation

B. 12:3-8 Humility and Mutual Service

C. 12:9-21 Love and Its Manifestations

THEREFORE (explanatory conjunction *oun*)

Chapter 12 is properly understanding in light of _____

Romans 1:18-32

chapter 12 should be seen as his _____ to the problematic criticism of the Gentiles

Romans 12 Parallels with Romans 1

Passage	Romans 1	Romans 12	Passage
1:18	For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven	never avenge yourself, but leave it to the wrath of God	12:19
1:21	but they became futile in their thinking	but be transformed by the renewal of your mind	12:2
1:24	to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves	For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.	12:4-5
1:25	worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator	present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship	12:1
1:27	men committing shameless acts with men...	repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all	12:17
1:28	God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done	Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind	12:2
1:29	covetousness	if your enemy is hungry/thirsty feed them/ give them drink	12:20

Passage	Romans 1	Romans 12	Passage
1:30	Slanderers	the one who exhorts , in his exhortation; love one another with brotherly affection	12:8, 10
1:30	haughty	Do not be haughty , but associate with the lowly	12:16
1:30	boastful	the one who exhorts , in his exhortation	12:8
1:30	inventors of evil	do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.	12:21
1:31	foolish	Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind	12:2
1:32	Though they know God's decree	by testing you may discern what is the will of God , what is good and acceptable and perfect	12:2
1:32	but give approval to those who practice them	Abhor what is evil , hold fast to what is good	12:9

A. Living Sacrifice (v1)

Worship =

- Worship is _____, a perpetual ongoing progressive action

Do's and Don'ts of Romans 12

“Don'ts” (10)	“Do's” (29)	
Do not be conformed to this world (2)	Present your bodies as a living sacrifice (1)	Rejoice in Hope (12)
Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think (3)	Be transformed by the renewal of your mind (2)	Be patient in tribulation (12)
Abhor what is evil (9)	Think of yourself with sober judgment [not too highly] (3)	Be constant in prayer (12)
Do not be slothful (11)	Prophecy (6)	Contribute to the needs of the saints (13)
Do not curse those who persecute you (14)	Serve (7)	Seek to show hospitality (13)
Do not be haughty (16)	Teach (7)	Bless those who persecute you (14)
Do not be conceited (16)	Exhort (8)	Rejoice with those who rejoice (15)
Repay no one evil for evil (18)	Contribute/Be generous (8)	Weep with those who weep (15)
Never avenge yourself (19)	Lead with Zeal (8)	Associate with the lowly (16)
Do not be overcome by evil (21)	Do acts of mercy with cheerfulness (8)	Do what is honorable in the sight of all (17)
	Hold Fast to what is good (9)	Live peaceably with all (18)
	Love one another with brotherly affection (10) Outdo one another in showing honor (10)	Leave vengeance to the wrath of God (19) Feed your enemy (20)
	Serve the Lord (11)	Give your enemy something to drink (20)
		Overcome evil with good (21)

this isn't a list of things to do to _____

The renewed mind is characterized by _____

- The renewed mind is also characterized by _____

C. Let Love be genuine (v9-10)

- Paul is describing what Jesus taught in John 13:35

D. How to respond to opposition, to enemies of the Church/Gospel (v14-21)

- *"heaping burning coals on his head"* (20)
 - Prov 25:21-22

What's Paul's topic?

What does Paul mean?

What does this mean for us?

D. 13:1-7 The Christian and Secular Rulers

E. 13:8-10 Love and the Law

F. 13:11-14 Living in Light of the Day

Christians must submit:

- 1. It is _____
- 2. It is _____
- 3. It is _____

Therefore, don't _____ against the authorities

- Acts 5:29
 - Disobedience is always done with an attitude of _____
- What do we do in the face of opposition?
 - _____ those in authority
 - Respect means we don't need to _____ those who don't share our views

(v8) **Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.**

- Christians overcome the evil of our society by _____ and by

G. 14:1-15:13 A Plea for Unity

1. 14:1-12 Do Not Condemn One Another

2. 14:13-23 Do Not Cause Your Brother or Sister to Stumble!

The issue in Rome: Christians were _____ on another

(v2) **One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.**

(v5) **One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike**

The weak person:

- Has lost focus on the _____

The strong person:

- Someone who knows they are _____
- The strong must not _____ on the weaker brother

Since all Christians are justified by faith, it's important that we do not _____

- to "judge" someone... that we can't _____ other Christians

(v22) The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves

- Paul is saying "keep your _____ to yourself" on matters that are

3. 15:1-6 Put Other People First

4. 15:7-13 Receive One Another

VI. 15:14-16:27 The Letter Closing

A. 15:14-33 Paul's Ministry and Travel Plans

(much of the background of Ch 15 was went over in week 1)

The longest closing of any of Paul's letters

Paul continues his chapter 14 plea of unity

Therefore _____ one another as Christ has _____ you,
for the glory of God.

How Paul thinks we can love our neighbor (according to Keller)

- **Finances:**

- **Church Leadership:**

- **Relationships:**

- **Choice of residence:**

- **Relationships in the church:**

B. 16:1-16 Greetings

Phoebe

- *diakonos* =
 - (Cf. 1 Tim 3:8-12; Phil 1:1)

Holy Kiss

Three facets of the early church (Moo):

- It's _____
- It's _____

- The _____
 - Phoebe [vv. 1–2]
 - Priscilla [v. 3]
 - Junias [v. 7]
 - Tryphena, [v. 12]
 - Tryphosa [v. 12]
 - Persis [v. 12])
 - Junia is a “commissioned missionary”

C. 16:17-27 Closing Remarks and Doxology

Avoid divisions (like ch 14)

Paul's "ministry team"

- Timothy
- Lucius (v 21)
 -
- Jason
- Sosipater
- Tertius (v22)
- Gaius (v23)
- Erastus

(v20) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

How do we know that we understand the Gospel?

Doxology

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Gender and Ethnic Identification of Romans 16

Jewish Men		Gentile Men	Jewish Women	Gentile Women	Unnamed people
Andronicus		Ampliatius	Mary	Julia	all the saints who are with them (Olympas)
Apelles		Aquila (slave)	Rufus' mother	Junia	family of Aristobulus
Herodion		Aristobulus	Tryphaena	Nereus' sister	family of Narcissus
Patrobas?		Asyncritus?	Tryphosa	Persis (freed slave)	the brothers who are with them (v14)
Rufus (slave)		Epaenetus (slave/freed)		Phoebe	
		Hermas?		Prisca	
		Hermes?			
		Narcissus (freed slave)			
		Nereus			
		Olympas			
		Philologus			
		Phlegon?			
		Stachys			
		Urbanus (slave)			
Total	5	14	4	6	29

D. A. Carson. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1–19)." A lightly edited transcript of a sermon preached on May 23, 2007 at The Gospel Coalition's conference in Deerfield, IL. Available at http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/resources/a/what_is_the_gospel_1.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–19)

Many have commented on the fact that the church in the western world is going through a time of remarkable fragmentation. This fragmentation extends to our understanding of the gospel.

1. For some Christians, "the gospel" is a narrow set of teachings about Jesus and his death and resurrection which, rightly believed, tip people into the kingdom. After that, real discipleship and personal transformation begin, but none of that is integrally related to "the gospel." This is a far cry from the dominant New Testament emphasis that understands "the gospel" to be the embracing category that holds much of the Bible together, and takes Christians from lostness and alienation from God all the way through conversion and discipleship to the consummation, to resurrection bodies, and to the new heaven and the new earth.

2. Other voices identify the gospel with the first and second commandments—the commandments to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. These commandments are so central that Jesus himself insists that all the prophets and the law hang on them (Matthew 22:34–40)—but most emphatically they are not the gospel.

3. A third option today is to treat the ethical teaching of Jesus found in the Gospels as the gospel—yet it is the ethical teaching of Jesus abstracted from the passion and resurrection narrative found in each Gospel. This approach depends on two disastrous mistakes.

First, it overlooks the fact that in the first century, there was no "Gospel of Matthew," "Gospel of Mark," and so forth. Our four Gospels were called, respectively, "*The Gospel According to Matthew*," "*The Gospel According to Mark*," and so forth. In other words, there was only one gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, *according to* Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This one gospel, this message of news that was simultaneously threatening and promising, concerned the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the long-awaited King, and included something about his origins, the ministry of his forerunner, his brief ministry of teaching and miraculous transformation, climaxing in his death and resurrection. These elements are not independent pearls on a string that constitutes the life and times of Jesus the Messiah. Rather, they are elements tightly tied together. Accounts of Jesus' teaching cannot be rightly understood unless we discern how they flow toward and point toward Jesus' death and resurrection. All of this together is the *one* gospel of Jesus Christ, to which the canonical Gospels bear witness. To study the teaching of Jesus without simultaneously reflecting on his passion and resurrection is far worse than assessing the life and times of George Washington without reflecting on the

American Revolution, or than evaluating Hitler's *Mein Kampf* without thinking about what he did and how he died.

Second, we shall soon see that to focus on Jesus' teaching while making the cross peripheral reduces the glorious good news to mere religion, the joy of forgiveness to mere ethical conformity, the highest motives for obedience to mere duty. The price is catastrophic.

4. Perhaps more common yet is the tendency to *assume* the gospel, whatever that is, while devoting creative energy and passion to other issues—marriage, happiness, prosperity, evangelism, the poor, wrestling with Islam, wrestling with the pressures of secularization, bioethics, dangers on the left, dangers on the right—the list is endless. This overlooks the fact that our hearers inevitably are drawn toward that about which we are most passionate. Every teacher knows that. My students are unlikely to learn all that I teach them; they are most likely to learn that about which I am most excited. If the gospel is merely assumed, while relatively peripheral issues ignite our passion, we will train a new generation to downplay the gospel and focus zeal on the periphery. It is easy to *sound* prophetic from the margins; what is urgently needed is to *be* prophetic from the center. What is to be feared, in the famous words of W. B. Yeats in "The Second Coming," is that "the centre does not hold." Moreover, if in fact we focus on the gospel, we shall soon see that this gospel, rightly understood, directs us how to think about, and what to do about, a substantial array of other issues. These issues, if they are analyzed on their own, as important as they are, remain *relatively* peripheral; ironically, if the gospel itself is deeply pondered and remains at the center of our thinking and living, it powerfully addresses and wrestles with all these other issues.

There are many biblical texts and themes we could usefully explore to think more clearly about the gospel. But for our purposes we shall focus primarily on 1 Cor 15:1–19.

I shall try to bring things to clarity by focusing on eight summarizing words (six of which were first suggested by John Stott), five clarifying sentences, and one evocative summary.

1. Eight Summarizing Words

What Paul is going to talk about in these verses, he says, is "the gospel": "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the *gospel* I preached to you" (v. 1). "By this *gospel* you were saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you" (v. 2). Indeed, what Paul had passed on to them was "of first importance"—a rhetorically powerful way of telling his readers to pay attention, for what he is going to say about *the gospel* lies at its very center. These prefatory remarks completed, the first word that appears in Paul's summary is "Christ": "I passed on to you as of first importance that *Christ* died for our sins" and so forth. That brings me to the first of my eight summarizing words.

1.1. Christological

The gospel is *Christological*; it is *Christ-centered*. The gospel is not a bland theism, still less an impersonal pantheism. The gospel is irrevocably Christ-centered. The point is powerfully

articulated in every major New Testament book and corpus. In Matthew's Gospel, for instance, Christ himself is Emmanuel, God with us; he is the long-promised Davidic king who will bring in the kingdom of God. By his death and resurrection he becomes the mediatorial monarch who insists that all authority in heaven and earth is his alone. In John, Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except through him, for it is the Father's solemn intent that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. In the sermons reported in Acts, there is no name but Jesus given under heaven by which we must be saved. In Romans and Galatians and Ephesians, Jesus is the last Adam, the one to whom the law and the prophets bear witness, the one who by God's own design propitiates God's wrath and reconciles Jews and Gentiles to his heavenly Father and thus also to each other. In the great vision of Revelation 4–5, the Son alone, emerging from the very throne of God Almighty, is simultaneously the lion and the lamb, and he alone is qualified to open the seals of the scroll in the right hand of God, and thus bring about all of God's matchless purposes for judgment and blessing. So also here: the gospel is *Christological*. John Stott is right: "The gospel is not preached if Christ is not preached."

Yet this Christological stance does not focus exclusively on Christ's *person*; it embraces with equal fervor his death and resurrection. As a matter of first importance, Paul writes, "Christ died for our sins" (15:3). Earlier in this letter, Paul does not tell his readers, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ"; rather, he says, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ *and him crucified*" (1 Cor 2:2). Moreover, Paul here ties Jesus' death to his resurrection, as the rest of the chapter makes clear. This is the gospel of Christ crucified and risen again.

In other words, it is not enough to make a splash of Christmas and downplay Good Friday and Easter. When we insist that as a matter of first importance, the gospel is Christological, we are not thinking of Christ as a cypher, or simply as the God-man who comes along and helps us like a nice insurance agent: "Jesus is a nice God-man, he's a very, very nice God-man, and when you break down, he comes along and fixes you." The gospel is Christological in a more robust sense: Jesus is the promised Messiah who died and rose again.

1.2. Theological

The gospel is *theological*. This is a short-hand way of affirming two things. *First*, as 1 Corinthians 15 repeatedly affirms, *God* raised Christ Jesus from the dead (e.g., 15:15). More broadly, New Testament documents insist that *God* sent the Son into the world, and the Son obediently went to the cross because this was *his Father's* will. It makes no sense to pit the mission of the Son against the sovereign purpose of the Father. If the gospel is centrally Christological, it is no less centrally theological.

Second, the text does not simply say that Christ died and rose again; rather, it asserts that "Christ died *for our sins*" and rose again. The cross and resurrection are not nakedly historical events; they are historical events with the deepest *theological* weight.

We can glimpse the power of this claim only if we remind ourselves how sin and death are related to God in Scripture. In recent years it has become popular to sketch the Bible's storyline something like this: Ever since the fall, God has been active to reverse the effects of sin. He takes action to limit sin's damage; he calls out a new nation, the Israelites, to mediate his teaching and his grace to others; he promises that one day he will send the promised Davidic king to overthrow sin and death and all their wretched effects. This is what Jesus does: he conquers death, inaugurates the kingdom of righteousness, and calls his followers to live out that righteousness now in prospect of the consummation still to come.

Much of this description of the Bible's storyline, of course, is true. Yet it is so painfully reductionistic that it introduces a major distortion. It collapses human rebellion, God's wrath, and assorted disasters into one construct, namely, the degradation of human life, while depersonalizing the wrath of God. It thus fails to wrestle with the fact that from the beginning, sin is an offense *against God*. God himself pronounces the sentence of death (Gen 2–3). This is scarcely surprising, since God is the source of all life, so if his image bearers spit in his face and insist on going their own way and becoming their own gods, they cut themselves off from their Maker, from the One who gives life. What is there, then, but death? Moreover, when we sin in any way, God himself is invariably the most offended party. That is made clear from David's experience. After he has sinned by seducing Bathsheba and arranging the execution of her husband, David is confronted by the prophet Nathan. In deep contrition, he pens Psalm 51. There he addresses God and says, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (51:4). At one level, of course, that is a load of codswollop. After all, David has certainly sinned against Bathsheba. He has sinned horribly against her husband. He has sinned against the military high command by corrupting it, against his own family, against the baby in Bathsheba's womb, against the nation as a whole, which expects him to act with integrity. In fact, it is difficult to think of anyone against whom David did *not* sin. Yet here he says, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." In the most profound sense, that is exactly right. What makes sin *sin*, what makes it so vile, what gives it its horrific transcendental vileness, is that it is sin against God. In all our sinning, God is invariably the most offended party. That is why we must have his forgiveness, or we have nothing. The God the Bible portrays as resolved to intervene and save is also the God portrayed as full of wrath because of our sustained idolatry. As much as he intervenes to save us, he stands over against us as Judge, an offended Judge with fearsome jealousy.

Nor is this a matter of Old Testament theology alone. When Jesus announced the imminence of the dawning of the kingdom, like John the Baptist he cried, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt 4:17; cf. Mark 1:15). Repentance is necessary, because the coming of the King promises judgment as well as blessing. The sermon on the mount, which encourages Jesus' disciples to turn the other cheek, repeatedly warns them to flee the condemnation to the gehenna of fire. The sermon warns the hearers not to follow the broad road that leads to destruction, and pictures Jesus pronouncing final judgment with the words, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" (7:23). The parables are replete with warnings of

final judgment; a significant percentage of them demonstrate the essential divisiveness of the dawning of the kingdom. Images of hell—outer darkness, furnace of fire, weeping and gnashing of teeth, undying worms, eternal fire—are too ghastly to contemplate long, but we must not avoid the fact that Jesus himself uses all of them. After Jesus’ resurrection, when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, he aims to convince his hearers that Jesus is the promised Messiah, that his death and resurrection are the fulfillment of Scripture, and that God “has made this Jesus, whom you crucified [he tells them], both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). That is every bit as much threat as promise: the hearers are “cut to the heart” and cry, “What shall we do?” (2:37). That is what elicits Peter’s “Repent and believe” (3:38). When Peter preaches to Cornelius and his household, the climax of his moving address is that in fulfillment of Scripture God appointed Jesus “as judge of the living and the dead”—and thus not of Jews only. Those who believe in him receive “forgiveness of sins through his name”: transparently, that is what is essential if we are to face the judge and emerge unscathed. When he preaches to the Athenian pagan intellectuals, Paul, as we all know, fills in some of the great truths that constitute the matrix in which alone Jesus makes sense: monotheism, creation, who human beings are, God’s aseity and providential sovereignty, the wretchedness and danger of idolatry. Before he is interrupted, however, Paul gets to the place in his argument where he insists that God has set a day “when he will judge the world with justice”—and his appointed judge is Jesus, whose authoritative status is established by his resurrection from the dead. When Felix invites the apostle to speak “about faith in Christ Jesus” (Acts 24:24), Paul, we are told, discourses “on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come” (24:15): apparently such themes are an irreducible part of faithful gospel preaching. Small wonder, then, that Felix was terrified (24:25). How often when we preach the gospel are people terrified? The Letter to the Romans, which many rightly take to be, at very least, a core summary of the apostle’s understanding of the gospel, finds Paul insisting that judgment takes place “on the day when God will judge everyone’s secrets through Jesus Christ, *as my gospel declares*” (Rom 2:16). Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds us that Jesus “rescues us from the coming wrath” (1 Thess 1:10). This Jesus will be “revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the *gospel* of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed” (2 Thess 1:7–10). We await “a Savior from [heaven], the Lord Jesus Christ”—and what this Savior saves us from (the context of Phil 3:19–20 shows) is the destiny of destruction. “Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath” (Eph 2:3), for we gratified “the cravings of our sinful nature . . . following its desires and thoughts” (2:3)—but now we have been *saved* by grace through faith, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Eph 2:8–10). This grace thus saves us both from sins and from their otherwise inevitable result, the wrath to come. Jesus himself is our peace (Eph 2; Acts 10:36). “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Rom 1:18). But God “presented Christ as a propitiation in his blood” (3:25), and now “we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand” (5:1–2).

Time and space fail to reflect on how the sacrifice of Christ in the Letter to the Hebrews is what alone enables us to escape the terror of those who fall into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire, or on how the Apocalypse presents the Lamb as the slaughtered sacrifice, even while warning of the danger of falling under the wrath of the Lamb.

This nexus of themes—God, sin, wrath, death, judgment—is what makes the simple words of 1 Cor 15:3 so profoundly *theological*: as a matter of first importance, “Christ died for our sins.” Parallel texts instantly leap to mind: “[Christ] was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification” (Rom 4:25). “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom 5:6). The Lord Jesus Christ “gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age” (Gal 1:4). “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (1 Pet 3:18). Or, as Paul puts it here in 1 Corinthians 15:2, “By this gospel you are *saved*.” To be saved from our sins is to be saved not only from their chaining power but from their consequences—and the consequences are profoundly bound up with God’s solemn sentence, with God’s holy wrath. Once you see this, you cannot fail to see that whatever else the cross achieves, it must rightly set aside God’s sentence, it must rightly satisfy God’s wrath, or it achieves nothing. The gospel is *theological*.

1.3. Biblical

The gospel is *biblical*. “Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, . . . he was buried, . . . he was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures*” (15:3–4). What biblical texts Paul has in mind, he does not say. He may have had the kind of thing Jesus himself taught, after his resurrection, when “he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27; cf. vv. 44–46). Perhaps he was thinking of texts such as Ps 16 and Isa 53, used by Peter on the day of Pentecost, or Ps 2, used by Paul himself in Pisidian Antioch, whose interpretation depends on a deeply evocative but quite traceable typology. Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians Paul alludes to Christ as “our Passover . . . sacrificed for us” (5:5)—so perhaps he could have replicated the reasoning of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, who elegantly traces out some of the ways in which the Old Testament Scriptures, laid out in a salvation-historical grid, announce the obsolescence of the old covenant and the dawning of the new covenant, complete with a better tabernacle, a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice. What is in any case very striking is that the apostle grounds the gospel, the matters of first importance, in the Scriptures—and of course he has what we call the Old Testament in mind—and then in the witness of the apostles—and thus what we call the New Testament. The gospel is *biblical*.

1.4. Apostolic

The gospel is thus *apostolic*. Of course, Paul cheerfully insists that there were more than five hundred eyewitnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless he repeatedly draws attention to the apostles: Jesus “appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve” (15:5); “he

appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me” (15:8), “the least of the apostles” (15:9). Listen carefully to the sequence of pronouns in 15:11: “Whether, then, it was *I* or *they*, this is what *we* preach, and this is what *you* believed” (15:11). The sequence of pronouns, *I*, *they*, *we*, *you*, becomes a powerful way of connecting the witness and teaching of the apostles with the faith of all subsequent Christians. The gospel is *apostolic*.

1.5. Historical

The gospel is *historical*. Here four things must be said.

First, 1 Cor 15 specifies both Jesus’ burial and his resurrection. The burial testifies to Jesus’ death, since (normally!) we bury only those who have died; the appearances testify to Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus’ death and his resurrection are tied together *in history*: the one who was crucified is the one who was resurrected; the body that came out of the tomb, as Thomas wanted to have demonstrated, had the wounds of the body that went into the tomb. This resurrection took place *on the third day*: it is in datable sequence from the death. The cross and the resurrection are irrefragably tied together. Any approach, theological or evangelistic, that attempts to pit Jesus’ death and Jesus’ resurrection against each other, is not much more than silly. Perhaps one or the other might have to be especially emphasized to combat some particular denial or need, but to sacrifice one on the altar of the other is to step away from the manner in which both the cross and resurrection are *historically* tied together.

Second, the manner by which we have access to the historical events of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, is exactly the same as that by which we have access to almost any historical event: through the witness and remains of those who were there, by means of the records they left behind. That is why Paul enumerates the witnesses, mentions that many of them are still alive at his time of writing and therefore could still be checked out, and recognizes the importance of their reliability. In God’s mercy, this Bible is, among many other things, a written record, an inscripturation, of those first witnesses.

Third, we must see that, unlike other religions, the central Christian claims are irreducibly historical. If somehow—I have no idea how—you could prove that Gautama the Buddha never lived, would you destroy the credibility of Buddhism? No, of course not. The plausibility and credibility of Buddhism depends on the internal coherence and attractiveness of Buddhism as a system with all its variations. It depends not a whit on any historical claim. If somehow—I have no idea how—you could prove that the great Hindu god Krishna never existed, would you destroy Hinduism? No, of course not. If the ancient Greeks had thousands of gods, Hindus have millions, and the complex vision of Hinduism in which all reality is enmeshed in one truth with its infinite variations and its karmic system of retribution and cyclic advance and falling away depends in no way on the existence of any one of them. If Krishna were to disappear from the Hindu pantheon, you could always go down the street to a Shiva temple instead. Suppose, then, that you approach your friendly neighborhood mullah and seek to explore how tightly Islam is tied to historical claims. You will discover that history is important in Islam, but not the same way in which it is important in biblically faithful Christianity. You might ask the mullah, “Could

Allah, had he chosen to do so, given his final revelation to someone other than Muhammed?” Perhaps the mullah will initially misunderstand your question. He might reply, “We believe that God gave great revelation to his prophet Abraham, and great revelation to his prophet Moses, and great revelation to his prophet Jesus. But we believe Allah gave his greatest and final revelation to Muhammed.” You might reply, “With respect, sir, I understand that that is what Islam teaches; and of course you will understand that I as a Christian do not see things quite that way. But that is not my question. I am not asking if Muslims believe that God gave his greatest and final revelation to Muhammed: of course you believe that. I am asking, rather, a hypothetical question: Could God have given his greatest and final revelation to someone other than Muhammed, had he chosen to do so?” Your thoughtful Mullah will doubtless say, “Of course! Allah, blessed be he, is sovereign. He can do whatever he wishes. The revelation is not Muhammed! Revelation is entirely in the gift of Allah. Allah could have given it to anyone to whom he chose to give it. But we believe that in fact Allah gave it to Muhammed.”

In other words, although it is important to Muslims to believe and teach that the ultimate revelation of Allah was given, in history, to Muhammed, and Islam’s historical claims regarding Muhammed are part and parcel of its apologetic to justify Muhammed’s crucial place as the final prophet, there is nothing intrinsic to *Muhammed himself* that is bound up with the *theological* vision of Islam. Otherwise put, a Muslim must confess that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammed is his prophet, but Muhammed’s historical existence does not, in itself, determine the Muslim’s understanding of God.

But suppose you were to ask a similar question of an informed Christian pastor: “Do you believe that the God of the Bible might have given his final revelation to someone other than Jesus of Nazareth?” The question is not even coherent—for Jesus *is* the revelation, the revelation that entered *history* in the incarnation. As John puts it in his first Letter, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it” (1 John 1:1–2). This is an *historical* revelation. Moreover, there are specific *historical events* in Jesus’ life that are *essential* to the most elementary grasp of Christianity—and here, pride of place goes to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

A little over two years ago, a reporter put a crucial question to the then Anglican Archbishop of Perth, at the time the Anglican Primate of Australia. The reporter asked, “If we discovered the tomb of Jesus, and could somehow prove that the remains in the tomb were Jesus’ remains, what would that do to your faith?” The Archbishop replied that it wouldn’t do anything to his faith: Jesus Christ has risen in his heart. The apostle Paul understands the issues with much more straightforward clarity: if Christ has not risen, your faith is futile (1 Cor 15:17). In other words, part of the validation of faith is the truthfulness of faith’s object—in this case, Jesus’ resurrection. If Jesus has not risen, they can believe it ‘till the cows come home, but it is still a futile belief that makes them look silly: they “are to be pitied more than all men” (15:17). There is no point getting angry with the former Archbishop of Perth: he and his opinions on this matter are painfully pitiful.

Many in our culture believe that the word “faith” is either a synonym for “religion” (e.g., “there are many *faiths*” means “there are many *religions*”), or it refers to a personal, subjective, religious choice. It has nothing to do with *truth*. But in this passage, Paul insists that if Christ is not risen, then faith that *believes* Christ is risen is merely futile. Part of the validation of genuine faith is the reliability, the truthfulness, of faith’s object. If you believe something is true when in reality it is not true, your faith is not commendable; rather, it is futile, valueless, worthless, and you yourself are to be pitied. Part of the validation of faith is the truthfulness of faith’s object—and in this case, the object is an *historical* event, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible never asks us to believe what is not true. By the same token, one of the principal ways the Bible has of increasing and strengthening faith is by articulating and defending the truth.

There is another way of clarifying the relationship between a biblically faithful Christianity and history. Not too long ago, the members of the NT Department here at Trinity were interviewing a possible addition to our Department. The candidate was a fine man with years of fruitful pastoral ministry behind him, and an excellent theological education. A problem came to light, however, when we inquired how he would respond to students raising questions about a variety of perceived historical difficulties in the Gospels. In every case, he thought the way forward was to talk about the theological themes of Matthew, or the biblical theology of Mark, or the literary structure of Luke, and so forth. He simply set aside the historical questions; he ignored them, preferring to talk exclusively in terms of literary and theological themes. In due course we told him that he did not have a ghost of a chance of joining our Department as long as he held to such an approach. For although it is entirely right to work out the theology of Matthew’s Gospel, that *must not* be at the expense of refusing to talk about the *historical* person of Jesus Christ. The candidate’s procedure gives the impression we are saved by theological ideas about Christ; it is an intellectualist approach, almost a gnostic approach, to salvation. But we are not saved by theological ideas about Christ; we are saved *by Christ himself*. The Christ who saves us is certainly characterized by the theological realities embraced by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but this Christ is *extra-textual*; he is the *historical* God-man to whom the text bears witness.

Fourth, we must face the fact that in contemporary discussion the word “historical” is sometimes invested with a number of slippery assumptions. For some who are heavily invested in philosophical naturalism, the word “historical” can be applied only to those events that have causes and effects entirely located in the ordinary or “natural” or time-based stream of sequence of events. If that is the definition of “historical,” then Jesus’ resurrection was not historical, for such a definition excludes the miraculous, the spectacular intervention of the power of God. But it is far better to think that “historical” rightly refers to events that take place within the continuum of space and time, regardless of whether God has brought about those events by ordinary causes, or by a supernatural explosion of power. We insist that in this sense, the resurrection is *historical*: it takes place in history, even if it was caused by God’s spectacular power when he raised the man Christ Jesus from the dead, giving him a resurrection body that had genuine continuity with the body that went into the tomb. This resurrection body could be

seen, touched, handled; it could eat ordinary food. Nevertheless, it is a body that could suddenly appear in a locked room, a body that Paul finds hard to describe, ultimately calling it a spiritual body or a heavenly body (1 Cor 15:35–44). And that body was raised from the tomb by the spectacular, supernatural, power of God—operating *in history*.

In short, the gospel is *historical*.

1.6. Personal

The gospel is *personal*. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not merely historical events; the gospel is not merely theological in the sense that it organizes a lot of theological precepts. It sets out the way of individual salvation, of personal salvation. “Now, brothers,” Paul writes at the beginning of this chapter, “I want to remind you of the *gospel* I preached to you, *which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved*” (1 Cor 15:1–2). An historical gospel that is not personal and powerful is merely antiquarian; a theological gospel that is not received by faith and found to be transforming is merely abstract. In reality, the gospel is *personal*.

1.7. Universal

The gospel is *universal*. If we step farther into 1 Corinthians 15, we find Paul demonstrating that Christ is the new Adam (vv. 22, 47–50). In this context, Paul does not develop the move from Jew to Gentile, or from the Israelites as a national locus of the people of God to the church as an international community of the elect. Nevertheless, Christ as the new Adam alludes to a comprehensive vision. The new humanity in him draws in people from every tongue and tribe and people and nation. The gospel is *universal* in this sense. It is not universal in the sense that it transforms and saves everyone without exception, for in reality, those whose existence is connected exclusively to the old Adam are not included. Yet this gospel is gloriously universal in its comprehensive sweep. There is not a trace of racism here. The gospel is *universal*.

1.8. Eschatological

The gospel is *eschatological*. This could be teased out in many ways, for the gospel is eschatological in more ways than one. For instance, some of the blessings Christians receive today are essentially eschatological blessings, blessings belonging to the end, even if they have been brought back into time and are *already* ours. *Already* God declares his blood-bought, Spirit-regenerated people to be *justified*: the final declarative sentence from the end of the age has *already* been pronounced on Christ’s people, because of what Jesus Christ has done. We are *already* justified—and so the gospel is in that sense eschatological.

Yet there is another sense in which this gospel is eschatological. In the chapter before us, Paul focuses on the *final* transformation: “I declare to you, brothers,” he says in vv. 50 and following, “that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be

changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ It is not enough to focus narrowly on the blessings Christians enjoy in Christ in this age: the gospel is *eschatological*.

So what Paul preaches, as a matter of first importance, is that the gospel is Christological, theological, biblical, apostolic, historical, personal, universal, and eschatological.

2. Five Clarifying Sentences

Now the passage in front of us includes several wonderful truths that further unpack this gospel before our eyes. I can summarize them in five clarifying sentences.

2.1. This gospel is normally disseminated in proclamation.

This gospel, Paul says, “*I preached to you*” (1 Cor 15:1), and then adds that it is “the *word I preached to you*” (15:2). This way of describing the dissemination of the gospel is typical of the New Testament. The gospel that was *preached* was what the Corinthians believed (15:11). Look up every instance of the word “gospel” and discover how often, how overwhelmingly often, this news of Jesus Christ is made known through proclamation, through preaching. Earlier in this same letter Paul insists that in God’s unfathomable wisdom “God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1:21). The content was “*what was preached*”; the mode of delivery was “*what was preached*.” There are plenty of texts that talk about the importance of being salt and light, of course, or of doing good to all people, especially those of the household of God, or of seeking the good of the city. Yet when dissemination of *the gospel* is in view, overwhelmingly the Bible specifies proclamation. The good news must be announced, heralded, explained; God himself visits and revisits human beings through his word. *This gospel is normally disseminated in proclamation.*

2.2. This gospel is fruitfully received in authentic, persevering faith.

“[T]his is what we preach,” Paul writes, “and this is what you believed” (1 Cor 15:11). Toward the beginning of the chapter, Paul tells the Corinthians, “By this gospel you are saved, *if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain*” (15:2). In other words, their faith in the word Paul preached, in the gospel, must be of the persevering type. Many other passages carry the same emphasis. For instance, Paul tells the Colossians, “[God] has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if *you continue in your faith, established and firm*,

not moved from the hope held out in the gospel” (Col 1:22–23). This gospel is fruitfully received in authentic, persevering faith.

2.3. This gospel is properly disclosed in personal self-humiliation.

When the gospel is properly understood and received in persevering faith, people properly respond the way the apostle does. Yes, the risen Christ appeared last of all to him (15:8). Yet far from becoming a source of pride, this final resurrection appearance evokes in Paul a sense of his own unworthiness: “For I am the least of the apostles,” he writes, “and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am” (15:9–10). How could it be otherwise? Jesus had purchased Paul’s redemption at the cost of his own blood, he had graciously forgiven him of his sins, including the sin of persecuting the church of God, he had confronted the apostle on the Damascus Road and revealed himself to him at the very moment Paul was expanding his efforts to damage Christ’s people! Even if in the wake of his conversion, Paul confesses he has worked harder than the other apostles, he insists that this can only be true because of the grace of God that was with him (15:10). Humility, gratitude, dependence on Christ, contrition—these are the characteristic attitudes of the truly converted, the matrix out of which Christians experience joy and love. When the gospel truly does its work, “proud Christian” is an unthinkable oxymoron. *This gospel is properly disclosed in personal self-humiliation.*

2.4. This gospel is rightly asserted to be the central confession of the whole church.

At numerous points in 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds his readers that the Corinthian church is not the only church—or, better put, that there are many other churches with common beliefs and practices, such that at some point the independence of the Corinthians, far from being a virtue, is merely evidence that they are out of step. In 4:17, Paul tells them that Timothy will remind the Corinthians of Paul’s way of life, “which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.” When he is dealing with marriage and divorce, Paul stipulates, “This is the rule I lay down in every church” (7:17). After laying down what believers are to think about headship and relationships between men and women, Paul closes his discussion with the words, “If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God” (11:16). However we understand the restriction found in 14:34, Paul introduces it with the words, “As in all the congregations of the saints” (14:33). There is no explicit formula of this sort in 1 Corinthians 15. Nevertheless, Paul repeatedly alludes to what he preaches everywhere, not just in Corinth. Passive expressions like “if it is preached” (15:11) give the impression that this is the common content, not something that was reserved for Corinth—as also Paul’s reference to his service in Ephesus for the sake of this same gospel (15:32), and his many earlier references to his common practices in preaching the gospel (esp. chaps. 1–2).

Of course, what “the whole church” or “all the churches” are doing is not necessarily right: just ask Athanasius or Luther. One must test everything by Scripture. Moreover, one must grimly admit that there is a kind of traditionalism that loses its way, that preserves form while sacrificing authenticity and power. In Corinth, however, that does not seem to have been the problem. Corinth speaks to the lust for endless innovation that casually cuts a swath away from the practices and beliefs of other churches, while quietly side-stepping the careful instruction of the apostle. Paul insists that the gospel is rightly asserted to be the central confession of the whole church. Always be suspicious of churches that proudly flaunt how different they are from what has gone before.

2.5. The gospel is boldly advancing under the contested reign and inevitable victory of Jesus the king.

This side of Jesus’ death and resurrection, all of God’s sovereignty is mediated exclusively through King Jesus. That is amply taught elsewhere in the New Testament, of course. Matthew concludes with Jesus’ claim, “All authority is given to me in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:20). Philippians rejoices that “the name that is above every name” has been given to him (Phil 2:9–11). So also—and dramatically—here: Christ “must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor 15:25). That presupposes the reign is still contested, and still advances. This is of a piece with Jesus’ claim, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18). But one day, the final enemy, death itself, will die, and Jesus’ mediatorial kingship will end. God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

It is in the light of this gospel—all that the death and resurrection of Jesus have achieved, all that the advancing kingdom of King Jesus is accomplishing, all that we will inherit in resurrection existence on the last day—that Paul writes to these Corinthian believers, and to us, and says, “Therefore my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (15:58). *The gospel is boldly advancing under the contested reign and inevitable victory of Jesus the king.*

3. An Evocative Summary

It is time to take stock. One of the striking results of this summary of the gospel—eight defining words and five clarifying sentences, all emerging from one New Testament chapter—is how cognitive the gospel is. Here is what is to be understood, believed, obeyed; here is what is promised, taught, explained. All of this must be said, loudly and repeatedly, in a generation that feels slightly embarrassed when it has to deal with the cognitive and the propositional.

Yet something else must also be said. This chapter comes at the end of a book that repeatedly shows how the gospel rightly works out in the massive transformation of attitudes, morals, relationships, and cultural interactions. As everyone knows, Calvin insists that justification is by faith alone, but genuine faith is never alone; we might add that the gospel

focuses on a message of what God has done and is doing, and must be cast in cognitive truths to be believed and obeyed, but this gospel never properly remains exclusively cognitive.

Thus in the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians, the gospel, the word of the cross, is not only God's wisdom which the world judges to be folly, but it is God's power which the world judges to be weakness. The first four chapters find Paul pained at the divisions in the Corinthian church, different factions associating themselves exclusively with one hero or another—Peter, Apollos, Paul, and, probably the most sanctimonious of the lot, the “I follow Christ” party. What the apostle works out is how this is a betrayal of the gospel, a misunderstanding of the nature of Christian leadership, a tragic and bitter diminution of the exclusive place of Christ, the crucified Christ who is the focus of the gospel. Chapter four shows in a spectacular way that there is no place for triumphalism in the church of the blood-bought, in the church led by apostles who eat everyone's dirt at the end of the procession.

In chapters 5 and 6, the gospel of Christ the Passover lamb prescribes that believers must, in line with Passover, get rid of all “yeast”—and this works out in terms of church discipline where there is grievous sexual sin. Where the gospel triumphs, relationships are transformed, with the result that lawsuits bringing brothers into conflict with each other before pagan courts becomes almost unthinkable, and casual sex is recognized as a massive denial of Christ's lordship. In chap. 7, complex questions about divorce and remarriage are worked out in the context of the priorities of the gospel and the transformed vision brought about by the dawning of the eschatological age and the anticipation of the end.

Chapters 8–10 wrestle with how believers must interact with the broader pagan culture over the matter of food offered to idols, with the central example of the apostle Paul himself demonstrating in dramatic fashion what cheerful and voluntary self-restraint for the sake of the advance of the gospel actually looks like—and even how such a stance is tied to a proper understanding of the relationship between the new covenant and the old.

Relationships between men and women are tied, in 1 Cor 11:2–16, not only to relationships in the Godhead, but also to what it means to live “in the Lord”—and thus in the gospel. The blistering condemnation of Corinthian practices at the Lord's Supper (“In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good,” 11:17) is tied not only to the barbarous insensitivity some Christians were displaying toward other Christians, but also to the massive failure to take the cross seriously and use this Christ-given rite as an occasion for self-examination and repentance.

The ways in which the χαρίσματα or πνευματικά of 1 Cor 12–14 are to be exercised is finally predicated on the fact that all believers confess that Jesus is Lord, all believers have been baptized in one Spirit into one body, and above all that the most excellent “way” mandated of all believers without exception is the way of love. Love is the most important member of the Pauline triad of faith, hope, and love—this triplet of virtues that are deeply intrinsic to the working out of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A Christianity where believers are not patient and kind, a Christianity where believers characteristically envy, are proud and boastful, rude, easily angered, and keep a record of wrongs, is no Christianity at all. What does this say, in concrete

terms, about the communion of saints, the urgent need to create a Christian community that is profoundly counter-cultural? What will this say about inter-generational relationships? About race? About how we treat one another in the local church? About how we think of brothers and sisters in highly diverse corners of our heavenly Father's world?

Just as Paul found it necessary to hammer away at the outworking of the gospel in every domain of the lives of the Corinthians, so we must do the same today. Recently at Trinity, a very wise worker on an Ivy League campus told us what, in her experience drives most of the young women whom she disciples every week. She mentioned three things. *First*, from parents, never get less than an A. Of course, this is an Ivy League campus! Still, even on an Ivy League campus, grades are distributed on a bell curve, so this expectation introduces competition among the students. *Second*, partly from parents, partly from the ambient culture, be yourself, enjoy yourself, live a rich and full life, and include in this some altruism such as helping victims of Katrina. *Third*, from peers, from Madison avenue, from the media, be hot—and this, too, is competitive, and affects dress, relationships, what you look for in the opposite sex, what you want them to look for in you. These demands drum away incessantly. There is no margin, no room for letting up; there is only room for failure. The result is that about 80% of women during their undergraduate years will suffer eating disorders; close to the same percentage will at some point be clinically depressed. The world keeps telling them that they can do anything, and soon this is transmuted into the demand that they must do everything, or be a failure both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Even when they become Christians, it is not long before they feel the pressure to become the *best* Christians, as measured by attendance at Bible studies, leading prayer meetings, faithfully recording their daily devotions.

But where is the human flourishing that springs from the gospel of grace, God's image-bearers happily justified before God on the ground of what Christ has done, powerfully regenerated so that they respond in faith, obedience, joy, and gratitude? The conventions and expectations of the world are pervasive and enslaving. The gospel must be worked out for these women, and demonstrated in the life of the church, so that it issues in liberation from the wretched chains of idolatry too subtle to be named and too intoxicating to escape, apart from the powerful word of the cross.

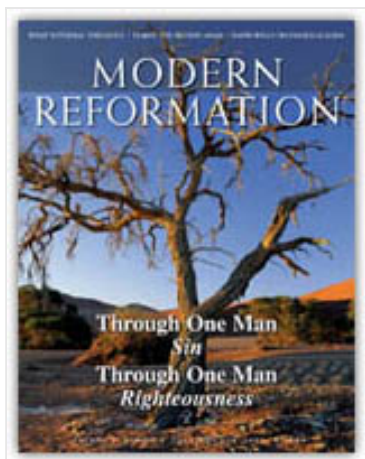
Of course, I have picked on one small demographic. It does not take much to think through how the gospel must also transform the business practices and priorities of Christians in commerce, the priorities of young men steeped in indecisive but relentless narcissism, the lonely anguish and often the guilty pleasures of single folk who pursue pleasure but who cannot find happiness, the tired despair of those living on the margins, and much more. And this must be done, not by attempting to abstract social principles *from* the gospel, still less by endless focus on the periphery in a vain effort to sound prophetic, but precisely by preaching and teaching and living out in our churches the glorious gospel of our blessed Redeemer.

"Therefore my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (15:58).

Romans 5 on the Federal Headship of Adam and Christ

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Covenant Theology Illustrated



Understanding Covenant Theology

Let me make a bold assertion about Covenant theology: It is not incidental to Reformed theology-it is Reformed theology. In the United States, the debate with Dispensationalism in the twentieth century led many to define Covenant theology more narrowly as "Not-Dispensationalism." Consequently, Covenant theology's scope for many was narrowed to the relation of Old Testament Israel with the New Testament church. But it is much more extensive and, frankly, more interesting than this.

Covenant theology is as vast as any systematic theology, touching on all the standard theological *loci* (topics), because it is simply systematic theology focused on the Bible's own organizing principle of covenant. Nineteenth century Reformed theologian and Princeton professor, Charles Hodge, points out the benefits of this approach:

The covenant of works was a covenant imposing personal obligation upon Adam....In the covenant of grace, however, the essential character is substitution of the Mediator who himself fulfills its terms exactly and takes upon himself the curses of the broken covenant on behalf of others.

As this [covenant] is the Scriptural mode of representation, it is of great importance that it should be retained in theology. Our only security for retaining the truths of the Bible, is to adhere to the Scriptures as closely as possible in our mode of presenting the doctrines therein revealed. (1)

Notice that covenant is a "mode of presenting ... doctrines" for Hodge, not just one doctrine among many. Other theologies display the structure of more parochial interests-for example, liberation theology or feminist theologies-but Covenant theology is an attempt to capture the theology of the whole of Scripture.

Covenant, then, is not itself a *locus* (topic) of our theology like the Trinity, Christology, or justification. Rather, covenant is a main *organizing principle* of our theology and correlates with all-or nearly all-the *loci*. While covenant's most direct impact is in soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), it extends far beyond this. For example, the economical doctrine of the Trinity is described in classic Covenant theology in terms of an eternal, intra-Trinitarian covenant, commonly called the *pactum salutis* (or, covenant of

redemption). (2) The Scriptures themselves can be seen as having the form of binding covenant documents (e.g., Rev. 22:18-19). This does not even speak of the doctrines of the person and work of Christ (i.e., Emmanuel, "God with Us"-a covenant formula), the Church, and the Sacraments, which are all addressed within the biblical rubric of covenant.

Hence, Covenant theologians see the concept of covenant operating in scriptural passages where there are no explicit references to the word "covenant." Fundamental theological principles often give shape to biblical material without being explicitly stated. For instance, there are no *explicit* references to Trinity in the Bible, but every orthodox Christian affirms that the biblical material is shaped by-and thereby attests to-a Trinitarian concept of God. (3) We could also point to the Davidic covenant. The word "covenant" does not occur when God makes his covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 (parallel in 1 Chron. 17:1-14), but Scripture explicitly calls this a covenant later (Ps. 89:30-36; Jer. 33: 21). In such cases, it is sufficient to show that the *concepts* that define covenant are necessarily operating in a passage to see covenant at work much as we all do with many other doctrines of Scripture.

The Two-Covenant Schema

Integral to all Covenant theology is the two-covenant schema of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. These two overarching covenants are classically expressed in the *Westminster Larger Catechism* of 1648 (*WLC*), which is still used today as an expression of faith and instruction by Reformed communions worldwide.

Q. 20. *What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?*

A. The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death [emphasis added].

Q. 30. *Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

A. God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the *covenant of works*; but of his mere love and mercy delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second

covenant, commonly called the *covenant of grace*.

Q. 32. *How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant [emphasis added]?*

A. The grace of God is manifested in the *second covenant*, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation [emphasis added].

Q. 33. *Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner [emphasis added]?*

A. The *covenant of grace* was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New [emphasis added]. (4)

The catechism teaches that there was a covenant of works (or covenant of life) with Adam, which required of him, particularly *personal* obedience sanctioned by the curse of death (Gen. 2:17; 3:23-24). (5) When Adam broke this covenant, God immediately instituted a promissory covenant, which the *WLC* calls the "second covenant," and the "covenant of grace" (Gen. 3:15; cf. Eph. 2:12). This covenant of grace was administered differently under the different dispensations (e.g., "from Adam until Moses"; Rom. 5:14), but its substance was the same in every epoch after Adam's fall in that it focused on a covenant mediator. (6)

The essential difference between the covenant of works and covenant of grace is well expressed by Herman Witsius, a prominent seventeenth century Dutch theologian:

In the covenant of works there was no mediator: in that of grace, there is the mediator Christ Jesus.... In the covenant of works, the condition of perfect obedience was required, to be performed by man himself, who had consented to it. In that of grace, the same condition is proposed, as to be, or as already performed, by a mediator. And this substitution of the person, consists the principal and essential difference of the covenants. (7)

Keep in mind that the covenant of works was a covenant imposing *personal obligation* upon Adam. He was bound to its stipulations and its curses fell on him for breaking it. Under the covenant of grace, however-whether in its administration before the coming of Christ or after Christ, for its effects are eternal

and benefit both the Old Testament and New Testament household of God together (e.g., Heb. 3:5-6; 9:15; 11:39-40; 13:20)-the essential character is the *substitution* of the Mediator and Guarantor who himself fulfills its terms exactly and takes upon himself the curses of the broken covenant on behalf of others.

Furthermore, in the covenant of works, Adam was a "publik person." The more modern term is that Adam was the "federal head" of the human race. (8) As covenantal or federal head, Adam acted on *behalf of* his whole race in the covenant of works. This is not entirely without analogies today. For example, when the president of the United States signs a treaty, it binds all the citizens he represents to uphold that treaty. Should the president break the treaty through his official actions, the whole country may be accountable. The covenant of grace has as its head, the "second man," and the "Last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:47, 45), the Lord Jesus Christ.

Federal Headship in Romans 5

Let's see how Covenant theology illumines a particular passage, Romans 5:12-21, one of the more profound passages in a book full of profundities. This is the centerpiece for Paul's exposition of the federal headship of Christ. It is rightly regarded by confessional Lutherans as a clear exposition of forensic justification, but what Covenant theology contributes to this essential Protestant viewpoint is that imputation works within the biblical structure of covenant. Justification is not forensic in an abstract sort of way. Neither is Paul appropriating principles from Greco-Roman jurisprudence, which are foreign to the biblical conceptions. What is working here is covenant jurisprudence and goes back to the beginnings of God's revelation, indeed, to Adam himself and the Adamic covenant of works.

The passage opens referring to what precedes it: "*Therefore*, just as sin entered the world." (9) Some commentators take this Greek conjunctive phrase (*dia touto*), rendered "therefore" or "for this reason," as relating what Paul says in Romans 5:12-21 to all of what he has said from Romans 1:18 up to this point, particularly to his indictment of both Jews and Greeks (a comprehensive division of mankind) under the divine condemnation (e.g., Rom. 3:9-20). The basis of this view is that the "therefore" normally identifies the preceding thoughts as forming the rationale for something that follows: "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him.... *Therefore* God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity...." (Rom. 1:21, 24). The connection here answers the question, "Why did God give them over? The rationale: because they refused to glorify him." (10)

Although the preceding view on the "therefore" in Romans 5:12 has some merit, I believe that Paul, in his own inimitable way, is actually connecting Romans 5:12-21 more narrowly to one point that he had been stressing in the immediately preceding passage. It is a fundamental point of the Pauline Gospel: that

Christ died *on our behalf* while we were weak and helpless (5:6), guilty sinners (5:8), and God's rebellious enemies (5:10). Christ hardly died because we were personally righteous and, therefore, deserving of acquittal at his judgment seat (cf. 5:7), nor did he die only after our renovation. The question should arise in our minds from this "on our behalf"-as it does in Paul's-how can there be this kind of exchange? How can Christ die in the place of someone else? "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him-the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough" (Ps. 49:7-8). (11)

How is it then that Christ *could* give his life in exchange for ours when no one else can do this for another? How can Jesus Christ act as our Substitute? This is the thread in Romans 5:6-11, which Romans 5:12-21 picks up and answers, and the "therefore" in verse 12 makes the connection: Christ died *on our behalf*, therefore, we must see that the workings of this exchange is just as in Adam ... so also in Christ. In biblical theology, this substitution is the act of a federal representative, or using biblical terms, a "Mediator" or "Guarantor of the new covenant" (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5).

What then is the precise basis for this great exchange of Christ for us? Paul answers in Romans 5:12-21 by introducing Christ as the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), summarized briefly in other letters: "[O]ne died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). But how can one die for all? Paul's answer: "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21-22). His answer then is that Christ functions as covenant representative in a way analogous with Adam (granting certain ways in which the analogy breaks down, which he mentions in Romans 5:15-17). This is the substance of the issue and the answer that Paul provides in a little more detail in Romans 5:12-21 than elsewhere in his writings.

The Adam-Christ Comparison

When you read through Romans 5:12-21, it is clear that Paul's main topic is the Adam-Christ comparison. He introduces the comparison in verse 12, "just as through one man," but then breaks off in mid-comparison to make some important qualifying statements about the workings of covenant law and imputation in redemptive history (vv. 13-14). (12) Some interpreters do not believe that Paul breaks off his comparison of Adam with Christ in verse 12 and instead mistakenly think that Paul is comparing Adam with *us*, the "all" and "the many" descendants of Adam. In its pure form, this is a Pelagian teaching: "As long as people sin as Adam sinned, they likewise die." (13) In other words, just as Adam sinned, so also we all sin. Adam stands in this schema as merely a symbol for Everyman and death comes to us all only because we all personally sin.

The Pelagian reading of Romans 5:12 fails for several reasons, most importantly, because of what Paul says in the passage. Paul does not say "just as Adam ... *so also* everyone ..." in verse 12, which would indicate the second half of a comparison (as in Rom. 5:18-19, 21; 6:4; 1 Cor. 11:12; Gal. 4:29; Eph. 5:29; Col. 3:13; etc.). Instead, the words rendered "and in this way" (NIV) in verse 12 introduce the result of Adam's sin for "all men" not part of a comparison. Paul is not comparing the "one man" with "all men," but asserting that Adam's sin was itself the sin of all people. (14)

Furthermore, the Pelagian interpretation of verse 12 must ignore other verses in the passage. Paul repeatedly shows in verses 15-21 that he is not comparing *us* with Adam, but *Christ* with Adam and that the cause of our death was not *our* trespass, but Adam's. Paul is not ambiguous if you read the whole passage. For instance: "Sin entered the world through one man ... in this way death came to all men ... the many died by the trespass of the one man ... judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation ... by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man ... the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men ... through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners" (vv. 12, 15-19; NIV).

And finally, Paul explicitly denies the comparison of Adam's sin with our sin (I paraphrase): "death reigned ... even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam did, by breaking a curse-sanctioned commandment" (v. 14). (15) All sin is law-breaking (1 John 3:4), but our sin is not comparable with Adam's because he was the federal representative of the whole race in whom all fell, and we are not.

Adam as Federal Representative

Paul carefully distinguishes between "sin" and "transgression" in Romans 5:14, which directly relates to a covenantal reading. Those who died from Adam until Moses did sin (v. 14; cf. e.g., Gen. 6:5, 11-12), but it was not like the *transgression* of Adam, because Adam was under a covenant of works sanctioned by a curse for disobedience: "In the day you eat of that tree you will die." That is the distinction between the pre-Fall Adamic period and afterward-the covenantal arrangement was different. (16)

This covenant with Adam demanded of him *personal* obedience and personally obligated him to keep all of God's holy law written on his heart as a creature made in the divine image (cf. Rom 2:14-15) and the special probationary commandment not to eat of the one tree. Adam was already the natural head of the race by the creation order (1 Cor. 11:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13), but by issuing the commandment sanctioned by a curse for disobedience, God was displaying Adam as a special federal representative of the whole race. To a Jewish audience, the issuing of a death-sanctioned commandment was tantamount to the issuing of a covenant: "For the *covenant* from of old is 'You will surely die'" (Wisdom of Ben Sirach 14:17; II cent. b.c.;

emphasis added). (17)

Adam as Type of Christ

Paul profoundly shows the interrelationship of Christ with Adam in Romans 5:14 when he says that Adam "was a pattern [Greek *typos*] of the one to come." Paul could have said that Adam was a "pattern of *Christ*," since this is what he means. Instead, he reveals in a subtle way that Christ was already in view when Adam was set up as federal representative of his race: Adam was a "pattern for the [Last] Adam to come" who was destined to serve as the head over all things in the future. (18) In other words, though Adam was first in time, Christ's headship in the new covenant was already in view in God's counsel. This is the link that validates Paul's comparing Adam's transgression with Christ's act of obedience and their respective outcomes.

So far we've focused on the covenant of works and the Adamic connection with the race and how Paul interrelates Adam and Christ, but it should be emphasized that Paul's overriding purpose here-as always!-is the overwhelming glory of grace (i.e., the point of vv. 15-17). The comparison between Adam and Christ underscores the fact that if Adam's *covenant disobedience* (v. 19) had real consequences leading to condemnation (v. 18) because all were judicially constituted sinners by the transgression of Adam (v. 19), then in an analogous fashion Christ's *covenant obedience* (v. 19) had real consequences, too. In Christ, the newly re-created covenant people (Eph. 2:14-18) are judicially constituted righteous (v. 19)-even though they are not righteous in themselves (Rom. 5:7; cf. 1 Pet. 3:18)-and, therefore, they are justified by the covenant obedience of their Surety and Mediator. All who reject Christ, must themselves bear the full obligation to keep the whole law personally (especially Gal. 5:2-3). Yet in Adam they are already condemned by the "eternal covenant" (Isa. 24:5-6).

Given that this threatened curse of God's law is ever in the background (e.g., Deut. 27:15-26; Gal. 3:10-14), the Old Testament prophets looked ahead to forgiveness of sins and eternal communion with God in the new covenant (e.g., Jer. 31:31ff.; Ezek. 16:61-63; Zech. 9:11). With the coming of Christ, God has now displayed the judicial basis for the fulfillment of the new covenant promises: the exchange of his incarnate Son's life for the life of his people who would otherwise fall under the inexorable curse of his covenant law for the transgression of Adam as well as for their own sins (Rom. 3:25-26; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:14-15). And all of the preliminary manifestations of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament displayed this primary fact: that by the one the many receive the promised inheritance. The covenant with Noah brought deliverance from the flood-judgment to his whole household (Gen. 6:18; Heb. 11:7); the Israelites received the typological inheritance of Palestine because of God's covenant with Abraham (e.g.,

Exod. 3:6-7; Lev. 26:42); when Phinehas received God's "covenant of peace" his descendants benefited with a perpetual priesthood (Num. 25:12-13) and the heirs of the Davidic covenant inherited special treatment as sons of God (2 Sam. 7:8-16; cf. Rev. 21:7). (19)

The "covenant of peace" extended to Phinehas is particularly interesting because it is later interpreted in Psalm 106 as being tantamount to receiving imputed righteousness: "This was *credited to him as righteousness* for endless generations to come" (Ps. 106:31; emphasis added). These are the same terms used of Abraham who was credited as righteous by faith (Gen. 15:6) and shows the organic connection of thought between imputation and covenant in the Bible that Paul is developing in Romans 5:12-21.

The Importance of Covenant

Covenant is the fabric of the whole Bible. Once this fundamental schema of covenant in the Scriptures comes clear, all the patterns of God's relations with the sons and daughters of Adam unfolds into a rich tapestry unifying the Scriptures.

We have seen that Adam in Romans 5:12-21 was the federal representative of his race under the covenant of works. Some theologians reject this understanding of Paul's teaching outright, because it "violates all sense of justice." (20) But if we are to use our "sense of justice" as an ultimate criterion for judging the truths of Scripture, then shouldn't we deny all covenant imputation as well? If sin cannot be imputed from one to many, conversely it cannot be imputed from many to one. Under this method, how can we maintain that "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" "the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; cf. Isa. 53)? Shouldn't this violate our sense of justice, too? And if our sins were not imputed to Christ, neither can his righteousness become ours (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). Then we would all be cut off from Christ and *personally* obligated (as was Adam), to keep all of God's holy law ourselves (Gal. 5:2-3 again).

In contrast to this grim prospect, Covenant theology offers a fresh restatement of classic Protestant insights into the essential truths of justification as the imputed righteousness of Christ by grace alone and received by faith alone. What makes imputation work is covenant, for covenant is the forensic instrument by which God faithfully extends his blessings to the heirs of the covenant of grace. The curse on Adam was not the last word on covenant in the Bible. This is what excites Paul in Romans 5:12-21 and what excites covenant theologians as well:

God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many (v. 15) ... the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification (v. 16) ... those who

receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ (v. 17) ... the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men (v. 18) ... through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous (v. 19) ... grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (v. 21; NIV).

Editors' note: Some of the New Testament texts have been translated from the Greek by the author.

1 [Back] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981 [repr.]), 2:355.

2 [Back] Cf., for example, Ps. 110:4; Gal. 3:18-20; John 17. Not all covenant theologians today believe that the Scriptures teach an intra-Trinitarian *pactum*, but it is a classic doctrine held by such notable theologians as Oecolampadius, Olevianus, Cocceius, Owen, Witsius, C. Hodge, Bavinck, and Berkhof, to name a few.

3 [Back] The argument against Covenant theology's method is like questioning an analysis of the U.S. Constitution as being shaped by "democracy" or, more accurately, "republicanism," because neither of these words appears in the Constitution. No one doubts the importance of these *concepts* for shaping the Constitution, even though the words do not appear.

4 [Back] Other questions and answers in the *WLC* relating to Covenant theology are: 22, 31-32, 34-36, 57, 79, 97, 101, 162-66, 174-76; and cf. the related *Westminster Confession of Faith* (*WCF*), especially chapters VII and XIX.

5 [Back] The biblical notion of covenant involves a bond, which has been solemnly secured, usually with stipulations fleshing out the nature of the relationship and sanctions to be imposed should one party breach the relationship. Modern Old Testament scholars have confirmed that personal obligation is sometimes a central significance of "covenant"; e.g., M. Weinfeld: "[*B*]erith [Hebrew for "covenant"] implies first and foremost the notion of 'imposition,' 'liability,' or 'obligation'" (*TDOT*, 2:255).

6 [Back] Modern covenant theologians are not alone in reading Romans 5 as teaching an Adamic covenant. The idea is clearly taught by the great fifth century church father, Augustine (*City of God*, 16:27). Augustine uses the Latin word *testamentum* for "covenant," but this was the normal Vulgate word used for Hebrew and Greek "covenant" (hence *Old Testament* and *New Testament*, not simply "last will and testament" as it sounds in modern English, but covenant). The nearly synonymous Latin words for "covenant," *foedus* and *pactum* (treaty, compact), became more common in later theological writings. I am not sure how fully Augustine integrated this covenantal viewpoint of Adam into the rest of his anthropology, but he is clearly part of the ancestry of modern Covenant theology in his reading of Romans 5 and the Adamic covenant.

7 [Back] Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, 2 vols. (Escondido: den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990; repr. of 1822 translation), 1:49. Witsius is an excellent example of a classic covenant theologian; another is Francis Turretin in his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (G. Giger trans.; J. Dennison, ed.; Phillipsburg: P&R, 1994), 2:169-269.

8 [Back] The term "federal" simply means "covenantal" being derived from *foedus*, a Latin term for "covenant."

9 [Back] I will be using either the New International Version or my own translation.

10 [Back] See Rom. 4:16 and 13:6 for some other places where the conjunctive phrase *dia touto* is also used.

11 [Back] If I seem to have belabored a simple point here, it is because perplexing sections of Paul's writings are often greatly illumined after working to get a clear view of what question Paul is trying to answer. Otherwise, his profoundly connected arguments may seem disjointed and rambling. They are not!

12 [Back] Paul indicates that he is resuming the broken off comparison in verse 18 by saying in effect, "so then (back to the point) ..." and then repeating the substance of the comparison of verse 12.

13 [Back] Pelagius, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, T. de Bruyn, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 92.

14 [Back] Paul's teaching on Adam is in line with common Jewish interpretations of the period: "And you laid upon him [Adam] one commandment of yours; but he transgressed it, and immediately you appointed death for him and for his descendants" (4 Ezra 3:7); "O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants" (4 Ezra 7:48 [118]); "For when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who were to be born, the multitude of those who would be born was numbered" (2 Baruch 23:4).

15 [Back] More literally verse 14 reads: "death reigned ... even over those who did not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam." The NIV reads: "death reigned ... even over those who did not sin by breaking a command" (v. 14).

16 [Back] For more on the phrase "from Adam until Moses" see especially Meredith G. Kline, "Gospel until the Law: Rom. 5:13-14 and the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34 (1991), 433-46.

17 [Back] This is just part of the rationale for reading the Adamic arrangement as a covenantal phenomenon. See also, for instance, Hosea 6:7: "Like Adam, they have broken the covenant" (NIV), which clearly implies an Adamic covenant. This reading has been challenged by some through the years, but a good analysis is still: B. B. Warfield, "Hosea VI. 7: Adam or Man?" in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, Vol. 1 (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1970), 116-29.

18 [Back] Cf. Col. 1:18-20. The Greek translated "the one to come" can also be rendered "the future one" or "the destined one" depending on context. The same form is used for "future things" as opposed to "present things" (Rom. 8:38; 1 Cor. 3:22), and is used in two interesting passages (Col. 2:17 and 1 Tim. 1:16), which parallel Romans 5:14 grammatically.

19 [Back] For other examples of curse and blessing flowing from one to many, see: Gen. 9:25-27; 19:12, 16, 26; Num. 16:32; Josh. 6:22-25; 7:24-26; 2 Sam. 12:13-14; and Lam. 5:7.

20 [Back] H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1958), 2:116-17.

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