**Romans Part 2**

***How to be a Christian without Being Religious!***

**Lesson 2: Salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!**

**REVIEW OF ROMANS 6-9**

**(CHALLENGE: This is a long lesson. But it is so important! Please give it all you have. It will please your Heavenly Father to see you study His Word!)**

In chapters 1-5, Paul explained, theologically, what it means to be a Christian without being religious. True Christianity is not a religion. All religions are manmade and teach, in some way, that man must do something (deeds/works) to earn the favor and acceptance of God. Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that man can do nothing to earn God’s favor. However, in Christianity, God has provided a way, actually, to have a relationship with Him, and that way is justification through faith in Christ Jesus. By faith, a man can enter into a lasting relationship with God. The moment God sees biblical faith in a man’s heart, He declares him righteous. The result? Man has peace with God, stands in the grace of God, and has great hope in the coming glory of God.

 Also in chapters 1-5, Paul wrote, at length, about the believer’s secure position in Christ. This secure position includes blessings and privileges that accrue when a man places his faith in Jesus Christ and, thereby, enters a new relationship with God. Paul provides a lot of theological information about the believer’s status but, until now, he has not provided any practical teaching about Christian life, growth, or discipleship, which leads to chapters 6 – 8 of Romans. In these three chapters, Paul explains:

* How to live this new life in Christ (chapter 6)
* The Christian life will always involve a struggle with sin (chapter 7)
* Strength to live this new life is in and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (chapter 8)

In Romans, not only does Paul play the role of prosecutor in God’s courtroom, he also fulfills the role of an apologist (one who defends the faith). As Paul begins this section of his letter to the Romans, he anticipates another accusation. Chapter 6 begins, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (v.1). Remember, Paul has just written “where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (5:20). Therefore, he’s prepared for accusers who will say believers must have a license to sin since their sins are all forgiven. Based on what Paul has written about God’s grace, can’t Christians just do as they please? What is his answer? Paul responds,

*By no means*! *We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer*? *Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.* (6:2-4)

Paul uses water baptism as an analogy to explain what happens to a man the moment he believes. Remember, Jesus is our federal head—our representative. Just as Adam represented us, so also Jesus represented those of us who believe. Whatever Adam did, all of mankind did by physical birth. Likewise, whatever Christ did, all believers did by both faith and spiritual birth.

 Water baptism does not, cannot, and never will save anyone. In the New Testament, water baptism always occurs after faith is born and confessed publicly (Acts 8:26-38). For this reason, water baptism is *symbolic* of what happens, spiritually, to a believer who, by faith, is in Christ. Water baptism depicts two events—death and resurrection—in Jesus’ life and, thus, in the life of every believer. Jesus died for us, paid the penalty for our sin, arose from the grave, and conquered death. It is crucial to understand that by faith, whatever Jesus did, the believer did. Thus, in Christ, a believer dies to his old life and arises to live a new life—the Christian life. How does this work? Paul explains,

*If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin*. (6:5-7)

The key concept here is union with Christ. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he uses the phrase “in Christ” or “in Him” more than thirty times. Why? Because it is an integral concept of biblical truth. A believer is united with Christ, meaning he is “in Christ,” the moment he believes. In that instant, the Holy Spirit begins to live in the heart of the believer. This union conveys all of the actions of Christ—His death and resurrection—to the believer, so that whatever is true of Christ is legally true of the believer. In other words, legally, before God, our sin debt is paid because we are in Christ. Accordingly, Paul says, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2). The believer died when Christ died, and he arose when Christ arose to live this new life.

How great is this? When a man places his trust in Jesus Christ, he is “united to Him” by faith in both His death and resurrection. So, whatever Jesus accomplished on the cross and by His resurrection is also accomplished by every believer. Are you beginning to see that nothing we do—baptism, confirmation, church membership, tithes and offerings—saves us? We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This is what it means to be a Christian. And, it has nothing to do with being religious. Now, don’t get me wrong. Church attendance and baptism are very important. It’s just that these actions cannot save anyone. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes… For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that IS BY FAITH!” This is what the disciples were taught by Jesus. This is what the apostle Paul knew to be true. This is what the early church fathers believed. This is what led the Reformers to change the course of the Church. And, this is what true believers believe. Why? Because this is what the Bible teaches. Salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! Never lose sight of this truth.

**DAY 1:** Read Romans Chapter 6

1. How are we united with Christ in His death and resurrection? Use the following verses to help answer this question.
	1. John 1:12
	2. Ephesians 1:13-14
2. Positionally, a believer is in Christ and dead to sin. Now, God begins the process of sanctification and enables the believer to experience this new life (what he already has positionally).
	1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Have you experienced this?
	2. Read Philippians 1:6. Can you see evidence of this in your life?

Keller writes,

*Through these verses, Paul has repeatedly said we “know” or “believe” (v 3, 6, 8, 9). This shows that any Christian who continues to sin or falls back into sin has failed to “know” or think out the implications of what has happened to him or her in Christ. How can we use this approach on our sin?*

*We need to realize that we are not to be stoics when it comes to sin: Just say NO! Paul is showing us here that sinning comes not so much from a lack of willpower, as from a lack of understanding our position and a lack of reflection and rejoicing.*

*So the key is to know, to remember, and to think like this:*

* *I am bought with Christ’s blood…*
* *I have been delivered out of the “dominion” of sin…We are children of God, and we can exercise our authority over our sinful desires.*
* *I was saved by Christ specifically so I would not sin…All the suffering and torture of Jesus was for that purpose; any Christian who gives in to sin is forgetting that. We should ask: Will I defile the heart Christ died to wash; trample on the very purpose of his pain; thwart the very goal of his suffering?*

Keller continues,

*So we see that the gospel gives us a new and different incentive for godly living than we had when we were under the law as a system for salvation. When we were using the law to save ourselves, our motives for being obedient were fear and self-confidence. Now, however, we know that Jesus died for us so that we wouldn’t sin. When we realize the purpose of Christ’s death and as we think of it in gratitude, we find a new incentive to be holy! We long to, and we love to, be those who “offer yourselves to God,” because we know we are “those who have been brought from death to life” (Romans 6:13).[[1]](#footnote-1)*

1. Read Titus 2:11-14
	1. What does the grace of God teach us?
	2. What do we, as believers, await? How might this help us live more godly lives?
	3. Verses 13-14 say: “While we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”
2. According to these two verses, who is Jesus Christ?
3. From what have we been redeemed?
4. What does Jesus desire to do for those of us who belong to Him, who “are his very own?” What does this mean to you?

**DAY 2** Read Romans Chapter 7

**THE GREAT INTERNAL CIVIL WAR!**

 In the last half of chapter 7, Paul begins to share his personal experience as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ. Theologians have debated for centuries, wondering: Is Paul writing about his life before or after his conversion? I believe Paul is describing the ongoing civil war that takes place in the heart of every believer from the moment of conversion. This has certainly been my experience. Before a man places his trust in Jesus Christ, he belongs to Satan, and he is under Satan’s control. The apostle John reminds us, “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). On the other hand, the moment a man hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and believes, he is sealed (indwelt) by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14). From this point on, there is a power within the believer working against the power of the evil one. These two powers are at war with one another. Hence, a battle rages within the hearts and minds of all believers.

 The Christian life is not easy. We have an enemy who seeks to destroy us, and the moment we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, Satan comes after us. He already has unbelievers, so he doesn’t have to worry too much about them. However, believers are a threat to his kingdom. Thus, we are on his radar and need to be aware and prepared. For this reason, we are told, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

 Chapter 7 concludes with Paul’s description of the internal civil war. He says,

*So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin* (vv. 21-25).

**A Personal Word:**

As a believer, I have experienced God’s grace and mercy. In addition, I know the Holy Spirit lives in me, and I have eternal life. I know Jesus personally as my Lord and Savior. He’s been my friend (John 15:14-15) since I invited him into my heart when I was about ten years old. However, from that moment, a battle has raged within me. I wish I could say it gets easier as I get older, but that has not been the case. My heart and spirit want so much to obey God, but Satan has proved to be a mighty warrior. As time goes on, I become more and more aware of the sin that still exists in my heart. I totally understand how Paul must have felt. What a wretched man I am at times. Like Paul, sometimes I cry out, “Who will rescue me from this body of death?” And I know the answer is Jesus Christ my Lord! When all is said and done, I know this truth: In His sight, I am forgiven. He has cleansed me completely. When God sees me, he sees the righteousness of His Son in me and covering me. I am reminded of the words of Isaiah: “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness” *(*61:10).

One day, I will see Jesus. In that day, I will be like him. Oh, how I long for that day! In the meantime, I am trying to live more and more for Christ, and the only way that is possible is by living each day in the power that is available to me. That power is the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. And this is what Romans 8 is all about—life through the Spirit. Unbelievers have no choice. They are controlled by their sinful minds. But, if you are in Christ, you have a choice.

1. Verses 14-20 deal with the struggle that takes place in Paul’s life. Do you think Paul is describing his life before or after his Damascus road conversion (before Christ or after Christ)? Explain your answer.
2. A non-believer has only one nature, a sinful nature. A Christian (believer) has two natures. What are they (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:5-8; Ephesians 1:13; 2 Peter 1:4)?
3. Read Galatians 5:16-26.
	1. Explain how the sinful nature and the Spirit are in conflict with one another.
	2. Have you experienced this internal battle? What are you doing to win the battle?
4. To whom did Paul look to rescue him from this “body of death?” How does Jesus give us victory over sin?

CONCLUSION:

In Romans 8, we will study the key to victory over sin. Warren Wiersbe says, “The old (sinful) nature knows no law and the new nature needs no law.”[[2]](#footnote-2) The best is yet to come! Chapter 8 of Romans explains the work of the Holy Spirit to overcome the bad and produce good. Have you been rescued from this battle that is waged between the old, sinful nature and the new, spiritual nature? Can you say, along with Paul, “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ (my) Lord?”

**DAYS 3 and 4** Read Romans Chapter 8

**THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT!!!**

 Chapter 8 begins with a word that we have seen before—“therefore.” Remember, when you see “therefore,” you should ask, “What is it there for?” It is there to point the believer back to the first seven chapters. Assuming the reader has come to God the only possible way, through faith in Christ Jesus, Paul now declares one of the greatest truths found in the Bible: *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (verse 1). No condemnation—this means that no matter what you have done, are doing, or are going to do, all condemnation has been removed forever. God has declared you righteous in his courtroom…forever! You are totally and eternally forgiven. Why? Because of God’s grace. However, grace doesn’t give the believer license to sin. On the contrary, our love for Christ drives us to sin no more. Jude 4 states, “They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

 How is it possible that believers are no longer under condemnation? Paul explains,

*Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.* (Romans 8:2).

Jesus sets the believer free from the power of sin and death. How? First, believers are set free from the legal demands of the law because Christ paid the price for their sins. The key phrase is “through Christ.” Furthermore, God sent His Son into the world to die in our place. Jesus became our substitute (Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24). Thus, through Christ, believers died on the cross. Remember—*the wages of sin is death* (6:23). Jesus’ death paid the price for us.

 Next, Paul reveals how the battle to live by the Spirit takes place in the mind. The mind is the battlefield. Consequently, Paul writes,

*Those who live according to the sinful nature have their* ***minds*** *set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their* ***minds*** *set on what the Spirit desires. The* ***mind*** *of sinful man is death, but the* ***mind*** *controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful* ***mind*** *is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God* (verses 5-8).

Unbelievers are not indwelt by the Spirit. Thus, their minds are controlled by their sinful natures. They have no choice. Their minds are constantly flooded with sinful thoughts, e.g. lust, greed, pride, hate, envy, and bitterness. All of these thoughts are destructive and result in broken lives and broken relationships. Those whose minds are controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. It is impossible. While unbelievers are capable of many “good deeds,” they are done with no consideration for God. Unbelievers do not glorify God with their lives; their thinking has become futile and their hearts have become darkened (Romans 1:21). It is ironic to realize there is no battle for the mind of the unbeliever. His mind is totally controlled by his sinful nature. He has no other nature. Thus, there is no conflict.

 On the other hand, believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Understand that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit, and nothing else, in the “heart” of a man that makes him a Christian. Not baptism, morality, ritual nor church membership can make a person a child of God. Only the presence of the Spirit marks a man as one of God’s children, and salvation is entirely a work of God (John 1:13). Paul wrote to the Ephesians,

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession* (1:13-14).

From that second, the man who trusts in Jesus has not only His Spirit in him but also the power of the Spirit available to him. The presence of the Spirit presents the believer with a daily, even hourly, choice. Either his mind is set and focused on the things of the Spirit or the things of the flesh (sinful nature). And, this is where the conflict occurs. Each day, the believer’s mind becomes a battlefield for the war between his sinful nature and new spiritual nature. Due to this conflict, Paul exhorts believers,

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:1-3).

If you are in Christ and the Spirit is in you, you are to set your minds on things that please the Spirit rather than your sinful nature. The believer is to be under the control of the Spirit at all times. Paul continues in Romans,

*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you* (verses 9-11).

What a joy it should be for believers to know they are possessed by the Spirit of God! God identifies His children by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the seal that denotes ownership. In other words, believers are possessed and owned by God. And, once God owns you, He neither can nor will disown you. You belong to Him forever!! Even though your physical body is dying, your spirit is alive and will live forever. For this reason, the great hope of every believer is the day his physical body is resurrected. Stott writes, “The resurrection body will be the perfect vehicle of our redeemed personality.”[[3]](#footnote-3) In that day, the believer will be like Jesus and live with him forever in a restored earth. Wow!!!

1. In Romans 8:15-17, Paul writes: *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his suffering in order that we may also share in his glory*.
	1. When a man places his trust in Jesus and is sealed with the Spirit, what does he become to God (John 1:12-13; Galatians 4:4-7)? What does this mean to you?
	2. As God’s children, believers are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Explain.
	3. One day believers will share in Christ’s glory. As a man chooses to follow Jesus in this world, what will he likely encounter (John 15:18-21)?
	4. Read Philippians 3:10-11. Do you want to live in the power of His resurrection? Do you really want to know Christ more intimately?

**THE COMING GLORY!!**

In the next section of Romans 8, Paul moves from his discussion on living in the power of the Holy Spirit to the coming glory that will be revealed in believers. Believers are led by the Spirit because they are the true sons of God. Why? Because those who are in Christ have been adopted into God’s family. He is their heavenly Father, “Abba,” Daddy. Believers have the assurance and security of knowing they belong to God as the Spirit “testifies” with their spirit concerning this reality. As adopted “sons,” they are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. What a privileged position, which merits an additional comment from theologian Sinclair Ferguson:

*The notion that we are children of God, his own sons and daughters…is the mainspring of Christian living…Our sonship to God is the apex of creation and the goal of redemption*.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Paul concludes the first section of Romans 8 with a subtle reminder that believers still live in a fallen world that is in rebellion against God. For this reason, they should expect to suffer just as Jesus suffered. Scripture confirms, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, **if indeed we share in his sufferings** in order that we may also share in his glory” (verse 17). Jesus warned His followers that the world would hate them just as it hated Him (John 15:18). And, because of this hatred, Jesus warned followers to expect persecution (John 15:20) and trouble in this world (John 16:33). But, Paul also encourages believers by reminding them of this certain hope—just as they shared in the sufferings of Christ, they will also, one day, share in his glory. This promise of coming glory, for which believers long, is foremost in Paul’s mind as he begins the next section of Romans, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us”(verse 18).

We cannot conjure up the glory of God, even in our wildest imagination. It is beyond us. All we can do is wait—in hope—and imagine. With this great hope, believers are to live each day knowing that despite the severity of their trials, glory is coming. So, believers are to shift their eyes away from what is seen to what is unseen. Not only will God’s glory be revealed in and through believers but also the glory of God will be revealed in and through creation. Paul continues,

*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God* (verses 19-21).

Wow! Paul speaks about creation as if it were a person standing on tip toes and looking into the future. For what does creation wait? For the “sons of God” to be revealed. Nowadays, it is often difficult to determine whether or not people are truly God’s children. For instance, many unbelievers act nicer than believers, and many believers live according to their sinful nature; thus, they don’t look or act like children of God. As a result, it can be extremely difficult to distinguish between believers and unbelievers. But one day, when Jesus returns to earth, He will separate the sheep from the goats, and those who belong to Him will be seen clearly by a surprised, watching world.

In the meantime, creation waits. It has been waiting for a long time, from the very beginning when it was “subjected to frustration.” Creation is not what it ought to be. It lives under the curse of God. When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the world in many ways. People began to die. Women began to experience pain during labor. Relationships became fractured. Work became toilsome and frustrating. The ground began to produce thorns and thistles. Decay and rot became commonplace. The whole universe began to decline and, slowly, to disintegrate. This was not creation’s choice. However, there is hope that one day creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay. Creation will be set free to flourish and, ultimately, to be enjoyed by the children of God.

In addition, believers will, one day, be given glorious, heavenly bodies (1 Corinthians 15:35-57). And, on that day, Jesus will return and restore this old dying earth to its former glory or perhaps an even greater glory. The glory of God will be revealed in his children, who will shine forever like the brightest stars in the galaxies. Scripture reveals,

*Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true”* (Revelation 21:3-5).

This is the day for which Paul yearned as should all believers. Believers need to know and understand that their present sufferings cannot begin to compare with the glory that will be revealed in them. God’s glory is coming!

If you are really quiet, you will hear creation groaning. A tree in the forest eventually gives way to decay and a large thud is heard as it hits the ground. A car crashes into a pole. A baby cries. A bullet hits its target. A tornado rips through a community. Lightning strikes a home. The sounds of groaning are all around us, sounds that have been heard since a barricade was placed at the entrance to Eden. And, they continue right up to this moment. At the same time, believers around the world enter their prayer chambers, fall to their knees and begin to weep. The sounds of groaning are heard everywhere—on earth and in heaven. Yes, God hears, and I believe he weeps (John 11:35). The Spirit groans on our behalf. Every created thing, every believer, and even God Himself, groans as the universe awaits the final adoption of God’s sons. What an incredible day that will be!

You may be curious, saying: “I thought believers had already been adopted by God!” Well, they have. Stott explains,

*“We have, of course, already been adopted by God (v 15), and the Spirit assures us that we are his children (v 16). Yet there is an even deeper and richer child-Father relationship to come when we are fully ‘revealed’ as his children (v 19) and ‘conformed to the likeness of his Son’ (v 29). Again, we have already been redeemed, but not yet our bodies. Already our spirits are alive (v 10), but one day the Spirit will also give life to our bodies (v 11). More than that, our bodies will be changed by Christ to be ‘like his glorious body.’ ‘Bondage to decay’ will be replaced by the ‘freedom of glory’” (v 21).*[[5]](#footnote-5)

This is the great hope of every believer—the hope of glory—the hope that fills our hearts and minds as the day steadily approaches. We are weak and fallen, but as Christians, God’s true children, we are indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus (John 14:18; Acts 16:7). His Spirit helps us in our fallen and weakened condition. Even when we don’t know how or what to pray, we simply kneel silently before our heavenly Father, and His Spirit in us prays for us. The Holy Spirit actually intercedes on our behalf! Are you getting the picture? The believer, though weak, finds strength in God’s Spirit. While we long to be liberated from this body of death and as we wait for the world to be restored, we confidently place our hope in the promises of God. We know the glory of God is coming. In the meantime, we watch and pray, knowing that One greater than we are prays with and through us.

1. Verses 24-25: “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”
	1. What is one of a believer’s greatest hopes?
	2. Read Hebrews 11:8-16.
2. To what was Abraham looking forward?
3. What do you think it means that “All these people…did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance?”
4. For what did all these people long?
	1. Do you have this hope and are you willing to wait patiently for God’s promises to become reality?

**WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?**

In these verses, Paul reminds believers that we should have no doubt about things God has promised to “work out” for His children. How can there be any doubt? If God is for us, who can stand against us? No one! If God was willing to give that which was most precious to Him, His very own son, how much more willing is He to give us all the things He has promised—eternal life, a home in heaven, glorified bodies, and Himself, forever? And who can bring any charge against us? Yes, there is an accuser (Revelation 12:10), and his name is Satan. But consider this, we have an Advocate, and His name is Jesus. 1 John 2:1 states, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” I am so thankful that Jesus stands before the Father in heaven as my Advocate to defend me when Satan makes accusations against me. All Jesus has to say to his Father is this: “I paid the price. His sins are covered, and I remember them no more.” Whenever you are overwhelmed by guilt due to some past sin that you have truly confessed, you need to remember the words of Paul, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Furthermore, those who are in Christ Jesus belong to God. He is our Abba, Father. And nothing can ever separate us from His love. Nothing! Not trouble! Not hardship! Not famine! Not nakedness! Neither danger nor sword! And not even sin! Though believers face persecution and death in this world, neither can separate us from the love of God. Even in the face of death, believers are victorious. Chapter 8 concludes with this blessing,

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Verses 37-39)

With God for us and with us, who can stand against us? No one! Thus, we are more than conquerors. Consider this; we have the same power in us that raised Jesus from the dead! Jesus said, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Therefore, we should never be afraid. God is with us and, one day, Jesus is coming back for us. We should live each day with confidence in His Word and in the hope that soon we will be with Him and be like Him forever. Do you have this hope? Are you living as a conqueror? Are you convinced that nothing can separate you from the love of God? If not, read His promises and know that if you have been called by God, one day, you will stand, glorified, before Him.

**DAY 5** Read Romans Chapter 9

 We must approach Romans 9-11 with great humility. Remember, God is God, and we are not. We must humbly accept some truths that we *do not* and *will not* understand until heaven. And so, let’s begin to swim in the deep end.

If anyone should have recognized Jesus when He appeared on the world stage, it was the Jews. They had been given every benefit. First, they were chosen from among all the people groups in the world to be God’s very own people. Deuteronomy 14:2 confirms, “Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession.” In addition, God’s Shekinah glory (the manifestation of His presence) was with the Israelites as they fled from Egypt and, later, as they wandered throughout the desert for forty years. Furthermore, God’s glory was present in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple (Exodus 16:7, 10; 29:42-46; 1 Kings 8:10-11). Moreover, God established covenants with their ancestors, Abraham (Genesis 15:17-21; 17:1-8), Moses (Exodus 19:5; 24:1-4), and David (2 Samuel 7; 23:5), thereby establishing a relationship with them. Many OT prophecies and promises were given to the Jews concerning the coming of a Messiah (Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Psalm 2:2-7; 16:9-10; 22; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Micah 5:2). This Messiah, the Christ, came from the very line of Abraham. Thus, Jesus was Jewish. And yet, when Jesus lived among the Jews, they rejected Him. We read, “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11). How could this be? Here in Romans 9, Paul expresses great sorrow over the fact that his very own people, the Jews, did not believe Jesus was who He claimed to be. And Paul, perhaps more than anyone else, understood because at one time he had not believed. Now Paul was willing to give up his own salvation if only his Jewish brothers would believe. But most would not!

What in the world does Paul mean by *God’s purpose in election*? Well, he means exactly what he wrote. Remember, Paul, like all other writers of the New Testament, wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Paul’s words were God’s words (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Through Paul, God informs us that He chose Jacob over Esau to belong to Him before either had been born. Thus, his election (choosing of Jacob) had nothing to do with anything Jacob had or had not done. The phrase *not by works but by him who calls* may seem unfair, so Paul responds,

*What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?* (Verses 14-21)

The bottom line is: God is God, and we are not! God can do whatever He desires. Paul explains that the basis for election is His mercy. In other words, the only reason any of us is saved is because of God’s mercy. Our salvation has nothing to do with justice. If we got what we deserved, no one would be saved. But God chose to act in eternity past when, out of his mercy, He called (elected) some to become His true children—those who believe as did Abraham, thus, become Abraham’s true children. If you have a problem with this, remember He is the potter, and we are the clay. Stott explains,

*So God is not unjust. The fact is, as Paul demonstrated in the early chapters of his letter, that all human beings are sinful and guilty in God’s sight (3:9, 19), so that nobody deserves to be saved. If therefore God hardens some, he is not being unjust, for that is what their sin deserves. If, on the other hand, he has compassion on some, he is not being unjust, for he is dealing with them in mercy. The wonder is not that some are saved and others not, but that anybody is saved at all. For we deserve nothing at God’s hand but judgment. If we receive what we deserve (which is judgment), or if we receive what we do not deserve (which is mercy), in neither case is God unjust. If therefore anybody is lost, the blame is theirs, but if anybody is saved, the credit is God’s. This antinomy* [a contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles] *contains a mystery which our present knowledge cannot solve; but it is consistent with Scripture, history and experience. [[6]](#footnote-6)*

The mystery of God’s divine election will never be understood this side of heaven. So, don’t get too bogged down with this. We can go only as far as the limits set by Scripture.

(There are no questions for chapter 9. Just read and digest it. It forms a section, chapters 9-11, that deals with the nation of Israel, Abraham’s descendants, the Jews. Stay tuned!)

1. Keller,147-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary Volume,* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Chariot Victor

 Publishing, 1989), 538. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stott, 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sinclair Ferguson, *Children of the Living God,* (May 1989): 5-6, quoted in Tim Keller, *Romans 8-16 for*

*You* (Purcellville, VA: The Good Book Company, 2015), 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Stott, 243. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Stott, 269-270. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)