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World Bible Translation Center
P.O. Box 820648
Fort Worth, Texas 76182, USA
Telephone: 1-817-595-1664
Toll-Free in US: 1-888-54-BIBLE
E-Mail: info@wbtc.com
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Romans

1 Greetings from Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. God called me to be an apostle.* I was chosen to tell God's Good News* to all people.

2 God promised long ago to give this Good News to his people. God used his prophets* to promise this. That promise is written in the Holy Scriptures.* **3-4** The Good News is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a person, he was born from the family of David.* But through the Spirit of holiness* Jesus was shown to be God's Son. He was shown to be God's Son with great power by rising from death. **5** Through Christ, God gave me the special work of an apostle.* God gave me this work to lead people of all nations to believe and obey God. And I do this work for Christ. **6** And you people in Rome were also called to belong to Jesus Christ.

7 This letter is to all of you in Rome that God has called to be his holy people.* You are people that God loves.

Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Prayer of Thanks

8 First I want to say that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. I thank God because people everywhere in the world are talking about your great faith. **9-10** Every time I pray I always remember you. God

knows this is true. God is the One I worship (*serve*) in my spirit by telling people the Good News* about his Son. I pray that I will be allowed to come to you. It will happen if God wants it. **11** I want very much to see you. I want to give you some spiritual gift to make you strong. **12** I mean that I want us to help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you. **13** Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned many times to come to you. But I have not been allowed to come to you. I wanted to come so that I could help you grow spiritually. I want to help you like I have helped the other non-Jewish people.

14 I must serve all people—Greeks and non-Greeks, wise people and foolish people. **15** That is why I want so much to tell the Good News* to you there in Rome.

16 I am proud of the Good News. The Good News is the power God uses to save every person that believes—to save the Jews first, and also to save the non-Jews. **17** The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. God's way of making people right begins and ends with faith. Like the Scripture* says, "The person that is right with God by faith will live forever."*

All People Have Done Wrong

18 God shows his anger from heaven against all the evil and wrong things that people do. They have the truth, but by their evil lives they hide it. **19** God shows his anger, because everything that is known about God has been made clear to them. Yes, God has clearly shown people everything that is known about

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Spirit of holiness Probably the Holy Spirit.

holy people Literally, "saints" or "holy ones." God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

"The person ... forever" Quote from Hab. 2:4.

him. ²⁰There are things about God that people cannot see—his eternal power and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy for people to understand. Those things are made clear in the things that God has made. So people have no excuse for the bad things they do. ²¹People knew God. But they did not give glory to God, and they did not thank him. Their ideas were all useless. There was not one good thought left in their foolish minds. ²²People said they were wise, and they became fools. ²³They gave up the glory of God who lives forever. People traded that glory for the worship of idols* made to look like earthly people. People traded God's glory for things that look like birds, animals, and snakes.

²⁴People were full of sin, wanting only to do evil things. So God left them and let them go their sinful way. And so they became full of sexual sins, using their bodies wrongly with each other. ²⁵Those people traded the truth of God for a lie. Those people worshiped and served things that were made. But people did not worship and serve the God who made those things. God should be praised forever. Amen.

²⁶Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex with men. They started having sex with other women. ²⁷In the same way, men stopped having natural sex with women. The men began wanting each other all the time. Men did shameful things with other men. And in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrong things they did.

²⁸People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God left them and allowed those people to have their own worthless thinking. And so those people do the things that they should not do. ²⁹Those people are filled with every kind of sin, evil, greed, and hatred. Those people are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst things about each other. Those people gossip ³⁰and say evil things about each

other. Those people hate God. They are rude and conceited and boast about themselves. Those people invent ways of doing evil. They don't obey their parents, ³¹they are foolish, they don't keep their promises, and they show no kindness or mercy to other people. ³²Those people know God's law. They know God's law says that people who live like that should die. But they continue to do those wrong things. And they say that people who do those things are doing right.

Let God Be the Judge

2 So do you think that you can judge those other people? You are wrong. You too are guilty of sin. You judge those people, but you do the same bad things they do. So when you judge them, you are really judging yourself guilty. ²God judges the people that do those wrong things. And we know that God's judgment is right. ³You also judge the people that do those wrong things. But you do those wrong things too. So surely you understand that God will judge you. You will not be able to escape. ⁴God has been very kind to you. And he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his kindness. Maybe you don't understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives. ⁵But you people are hard and stubborn. You refuse to change. So you are making your own punishment greater and greater. You will get that punishment on the day when God will show his anger. On that day people will see God's right judgments. ⁶God will reward or punish every person for the things that person has done. ⁷Some people live for God's glory, for honor, and for life that cannot be destroyed. Those people live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give life forever to those people. ⁸But other people are selfish and refuse to follow truth. Those people follow evil. God will give those people his punishment and anger. ⁹God will give trouble and suffering to every person that does evil—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. ¹⁰But God will give glory, honor, and peace to every person that does good—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. ¹¹God judges all people the same.

idols Statues made from wood, stone, or metal that people worshiped like gods.

¹²People that have the law* and people that have never heard of the law are all the same when they sin. People that don't have the law and are sinners will be lost. And, in the same way, people that have the law and are sinners will be judged by the law. ¹³Hearing the law does not make people right with God. The law makes people right with God only if those people always obey everything the law says. ¹⁴(The non-Jews don't have the law. But when they naturally do things that the law commands without even knowing the law, then they are their own law. This is true even though they don't have the written law. ¹⁵They show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong, the same as the law commands. And those people also show this by the way they feel about right and wrong. Sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did wrong, and this makes them guilty. And sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did right, and this makes them not guilty.) ¹⁶All these things will happen on the day when God will judge the secret things inside of people. The Good News* that I tell people says that God will judge people through Christ Jesus.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷What about you? You say you are a Jew. You trust in the law and boast that you are close to God. ¹⁸You know what God wants you to do. And you know the things that are important, because you have learned the law. ¹⁹You think you are a guide for people that don't know the right way. You think you are a light for people that are in darkness (*sin*). ²⁰You think you can show foolish people what is right. And you think you are a teacher for people that still need to learn. You have the law and so you think that you know everything and have all truth. ²¹You teach other people. So why don't you teach yourself? You tell people not to steal. But you yourselves steal. ²²You say that people must not do the sin of adultery.* But you yourselves are guilty of that

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

sin. You hate idols.* But you steal from temples.* ²³You boast about God's law. But you bring shame to God by breaking his law. ²⁴It is written in the Scriptures*: "The non-Jews say bad things about God because of you [Jews]."*

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

²⁸A person is not a true Jew if he is only a Jew in his physical body. True circumcision* is not only on the outside of the body. ²⁹A person is a true Jew only if he is a Jew inside. True circumcision is done in the heart. It is done by the Spirit,* not by the written law. And a person that is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit gets praise from God, not from people.

3 So, do Jews have anything that other people don't have? Is there anything special about being circumcised*? ²Yes, the Jews have many special things. The most important thing is this: God trusted the Jews with his teachings. ³It is true that some Jews were not faithful to God. But will that stop God from doing what he promised? ⁴No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. Like the Scriptures* say:

“You will be proved right in your words,
and you will win when you
are being judged.” *Psalm 51:4*

⁵When we do wrong, that shows more clearly that God is right. So can we say that

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worship.

temples Places where people worship.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“The non-Jews ... Jews” Quote from Isa. 52:5.

circumcision, circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

God does wrong when he punishes us? (I am using an idea that some people might have.)
⁶No! If God could not punish us, then God could not judge the world.

⁷A person might say, “When I lie, it really gives God glory, because my lie shows God’s truth. So why am I judged a sinner?” ⁸It would be the same to say, “We should do evil so that good will come.” Many people criticize us and say that we teach those things. People that say those things are wrong, and they should be condemned.

All People Are Guilty

⁹So are we Jews better than other people? No! We have already said that Jews and non-Jews are the same. They are all guilty of sin.

¹⁰Like the Scriptures* say:

- “There is no person without sin. None!
¹¹ There is no person that understands.
 There is no person that is trying
 to be with God.
¹² All people have turned away,
 and all people have become worthless.
 There is no person that does good. None!”
Psalm 14:1-3
- ¹³ “People’s mouths are like open graves;
 they use their tongues for telling lies.”
Psalm 5:9
- “The things they say are like the poison
 of snakes;” *Psalm 140:3*
- ¹⁴ “their mouths are full of cursing and
 bitterness.” *Psalm 10:7*
- ¹⁵ “People are always ready to hurt and kill;
¹⁶ everywhere they go they cause ruin
 and sadness.
¹⁷ People don’t know the way of peace.”
Isaiah 59:7-8
- ¹⁸ “They have no fear or respect for God.”
Psalm 36:1

¹⁹These things the law* says are for the people that are under the law. This stops all

Jewish people from making excuses and brings the whole world (*Jews and non-Jews*) under God’s judgment. ²⁰Why? Because no person can be made right with God by following the law. The law only shows us our sin.

How God Makes People Right

²¹But God has a way to make people right without the law. And God has now shown us that new way. The law and the prophets* told us about this new way. ²²God makes people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this for all people that believe in Christ. All people are the same. ²³All people have sinned and are not good enough for God’s glory. ²⁴People are made right with God by his grace (*kindness*). This is a free gift. People are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. ²⁵God gave Jesus as a way to forgive people’s sins through faith. God forgives by the blood (*death*) of Jesus. God gave Jesus to show that he always does what is right and fair. God was right in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. ²⁶And God gave Jesus to show today that God does what is right. God did this so that he could judge rightly and also make right any person that has faith in Jesus.

²⁷So do we have a reason to boast about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all boasting, not the way of following the law. ²⁸Why? Because a person is made right with God through faith, not through the things he has done to follow the law. This is what we believe. ²⁹God is not only the God of the Jews. He is also the God of the non-Jews. ³⁰There is only one God. He will make Jews* right with him by their faith. And he will also make non-Jews* right with him through their faith. ³¹So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Jews Literally, “circumcision.”

non-Jews Literally, “uncircumcision.”

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

law God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

The Example of Abraham

4 So what can we say about Abraham,* the father of our people? What did he learn about faith? **2** If Abraham was made right by the things he did, then he had a reason to boast. But Abraham could not boast before God. **3** The Scripture* says, “Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham’s faith. That made Abraham right with God.”*

4 When a person works, his pay is not given to him as a gift. He earns the pay he gets. **5** But a person cannot do any work that will make him right with God. So that person must trust in God. Then God accepts that person’s faith (*trust*), and that makes him right with God. God is the One who makes even evil people right. **6** David* said the same thing. David said that a person is truly happy when God does not look at the things that person has done but accepts him like a good person:

- 7** “People are truly blessed (*happy*)
when their wrongs are forgiven,
and when their sins are covered!
8 And when the Lord accepts a person
like he was without sin,
that person is truly blessed!”

Psalm 32:1–2

9 Is this happiness only for those people that are circumcised* (*the Jews*)? Or is this happiness also for people that are not circumcised (*non-Jews*)? We have already said that God accepted Abraham’s faith, and that faith made him right with God. **10** So how did this happen? Did God accept Abraham* before or after he was circumcised? God accepted him before his circumcision.* **11** Abraham was circumcised later to show that God accepted him. His circumcision was proof that he was right with God through faith before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all people that believe but are not circumcised. Those people believe and are accepted like

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“Abraham ... God” Quote from Gen. 15:6.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

circumcised, circumcision To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham. Read Gen. 17:9–14.

people that are right with God. **12** And Abraham is also the father of people that have been circumcised. But it is not their circumcision that makes Abraham their father. He is their father only if they live following the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

God’s Promise Received Through Faith

13 Abraham* and his descendants* received the promise that they would get the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise because he followed the law.* Abraham received that promise because he was right with God through his faith. **14** If people could get the things that God promised by following the law, then faith is worthless. And God’s promise to Abraham is worthless. **15** Why? Because the law can only bring God’s anger ↓ when the law is not obeyed. But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey.

16 So people get God’s promise by having faith. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham’s* people can have that promise. The promise is not only for those people that live under the law ↓ (of Moses). The promise is for any person that lives with faith like Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all. **17** Like it is written ↓ in the Scriptures* “I have made you (*Abraham*) a father of many nations.”* This is true before God. Abraham believed in God—the God who gives life to dead people and decides that things will happen that have not yet happened.

18 There was no hope ↓ that Abraham* would have children. But Abraham believed God and continued hoping. And that is why he became the father of many nations. Like God told him, “You will have many descendants (*children*).”* **19** Abraham was almost 100 years old, so his body was much past the age for having children. Also, Sarah could not have children. Abraham thought about this. But his

descendants A person’s children and all their future families.

law God’s law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

“I ... nations” Quote from Gen. 17:5.

“You ... descendants” Quote from Gen. 15:5.

faith in God did not become weak. ²⁰Abraham never doubted that God would do the thing that God promised. Abraham never stopped believing. He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God. ²¹Abraham felt sure that God was able to do the thing that God promised. ²²So, “God accepted Abraham’s faith. That made him right with God.”* ²³Those words (“God accepted Abraham’s faith”) were written not only for Abraham. ²⁴Those words were also written for us. God will also accept us because we believe. We believe in the One (*God*) that raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵Jesus was given to die for our sins. And he was raised from death to make us right with God.

Right With God

5 We have been made right with God because of our faith. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through our faith, Christ has brought us into that blessing of God’s grace (*kindness*) that we now enjoy. And we are very happy because of the hope we have of sharing God’s glory. ³And we are also happy with the troubles we have. Why are we happy with troubles? Because we know that these troubles make us more patient. ⁴And this patience is proof that we are strong. And this proof gives us hope. ⁵And this hope will never disappoint us—it will never fail. Why? Because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit.* That Holy Spirit was a gift to us from God.

⁶Christ died for us while we were still weak people. We were living against God, but at the right time, Christ died for us. ⁷Very few people will die to save the life of another person, even if that other person is a good person. If the person is a very good person, then someone might be willing to die for that person. ⁸But Christ died for us while we were still sinners. In that way God showed us that he loves us very much.

“God accepted ... God” *Quote from Gen. 15:6.*
Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

⁹We have been made right with God by Christ’s blood (*death*). So through Christ we will surely be saved from God’s anger. ¹⁰I mean that while we were God’s enemies, God made friends with us through the death of his Son. So surely, now that we are God’s friends, God will save us through his Son’s life. ¹¹And not only will we be saved, but we are also very happy now. We are happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that we are now God’s friends.

Adam and Christ

¹²Sin came into the world because of what one man (*Adam*) did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because all people sinned. ¹³Sin was in the world before the law [of Moses]. But God does not make people guilty for sin if there is no law. ¹⁴But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, all people had to die. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying God’s command. But even those people that did not sin the way Adam sinned had to die.

Adam was like the One (*Christ*) who was coming in the future. ¹⁵But God’s free gift is not like Adam’s sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man (*Adam*). But the grace (*kindness*) that people received from God was much greater. Many people received God’s gift [of life] by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶After Adam sinned once, he was judged guilty. But the gift of God is different. God’s free gift came after many sins. And the gift makes people right with God. ¹⁷One man sinned, and so death ruled all people because of that one man. But now some people accept God’s full grace (*kindness*) and his great gift of being made right. Surely those people will have true life and rule through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸So one sin [of Adam] brought the punishment [of death] to all people. But in the same way, one good thing [that Christ did] makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for those people. ¹⁹One man (*Adam*) disobeyed God and many people became sinners. But in the same way, one man (*Christ*) obeyed God and many people will be made right. ²⁰The law came to make people

have more sin. But when people had more sin, God gave them more of his grace (*kindness*).²¹ Sin once used death to rule us. But God gave people more of his grace so that grace could rule by making people right with him. This brings life forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 So do you think that we should continue sinning so that God will give us more and more grace (*kindness*)? ²No! We died to (*quit living*) our old sinful lives. So how can we continue living with sin? ³Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ Jesus when we were baptized*? We shared his death in our baptism.* ⁴So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with Christ so that we could be raised up and live a new life. This happened the same as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.

⁵Christ died, and we have been joined with Christ by dying too. So we will also be joined with him by rising from death like Christ rose from death. ⁶We know that our old life died with Christ on the cross. This happened so that our sinful selves would have no power over us. And then we would not be slaves to sin. ⁷Any person that has died is made free from sin's control (*power*).

⁸If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. ⁹Christ was raised from death. And we know that he cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. ¹⁰Yes, when Christ died, he died to defeat the power of sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and his new life is with God. ¹¹In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin. And see yourselves as being alive for God through Christ Jesus.

¹²But don't let sin control you in your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do. ¹³Don't offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Don't use your bodies as things to do evil with. But you should offer yourselves to God.

baptized, baptism Greek words meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Be like people that have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good. ¹⁴Sin will not be your master. Why? Because you are not under law. You now live under God's grace (*kindness*).

Slaves of Goodness

¹⁵So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace (*kindness*) and not under law? No! ¹⁶Surely you know that when you give yourselves like slaves to obey someone, then you are really slaves of that person. The person you obey is your master. You can follow sin, or obey God. Sin brings spiritual death. But obeying God makes you right with him. ¹⁷In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you fully obeyed the things that were taught to you. ¹⁸You were made free from sin. And now you are slaves to goodness (*right living*). ¹⁹I explain this by using an example that people know. I explain it this way because it is hard for you to understand. In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to sin and evil. You lived only for evil. In the same way now you must give yourselves to be slaves of goodness. Then you will live only for God.

²⁰In the past you were slaves to sin, and goodness (*right living*) did not control you. ²¹You did evil things. Now you are ashamed of those things. Did those things help you? No. Those things only bring [spiritual] death. ²²But now you are free from sin. You are now slaves of God. And this brings you a life that is only for God. And from that you will get life forever. ²³When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Example from Marriage

7 Brothers and sisters, you all understand the law [of Moses]. So surely you know that the law rules over a person only while he is alive. ²[I will give you an example:] A woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, then she is made free from the law of marriage. ³But if that woman marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law

says she is guilty of adultery.* But if the woman's husband dies, then that woman is made free from the law of marriage. So if that woman marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.

⁴In the same way, my brothers and sisters, your old selves died and you became free from the law* through the body of Christ. Now you belong to someone else. You belong to the One (*Christ*) that was raised from death. We belong to Christ so that we can be used in service to God. ⁵In the past, we were ruled by our sinful selves. The law made us want to do sinful things. And those sinful things we wanted to do controlled our bodies, so that the things we did were only bringing us spiritual death. ⁶In the past, the law held us like prisoners. But our old selves died and we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way, not in the old way with the written rules. Now we serve God in the new way with the Spirit.*

Our Fight Against Sin

⁷You might think that I am saying that sin and the law* are the same thing. That is not true. But the law was the only way I could learn what sin means. I would never have known what it means to want something wrong. But the law said, "You must not want things that belong to other people."* ⁸And sin found a way to use that command and make me want every kind of wrong thing. So sin came to me because of that command. But without the law, sin has no power. ⁹I was alive without the law before I knew the law. But when the law's command came to me, then sin began to live. ¹⁰And I died [spiritually] because of sin. The command was meant to bring life, but for me that command brought death. ¹¹Sin found a way to fool me by using the command. Sin used the command to make me die [spiritually].

¹²So the law* is holy, and the command is holy and right and good. ¹³Does this mean that

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

law God's law. Here, it is the law of Moses.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

"You ... people" Quote from Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

something that is good brought death to me? No! But sin used something that is good to bring death to me. This happened so that I could see what sin is really like. It happened to show that sin is something very, very bad. And the command was used to show this.

The Conflict in Man

¹⁴We know that the law* is spiritual. But I am not spiritual. Sin rules me like I am its slave. ¹⁵I don't understand the things I do. I don't do the [good] things I want to do. And I do the [bad] things I hate to do. ¹⁶And if I don't want to do the [bad] things I do, then that means that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But I am not really the one doing these [bad] things. It is sin living in me that does these things. ¹⁸Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is not spiritual. I want to do the things that are good. But I don't do those things. ¹⁹I don't do the good things that I want to do. I do the bad things that I don't want to do. ²⁰So if I do things I don't want to do, then it is not really me doing those things. It is sin living in me that does those bad things.

²¹So I have learned this rule: When I want to do good, evil is there with me. ²²In my mind, I am happy with God's law. ²³But I see another law working in my body. That law makes war against the law that my mind accepts. That other law working in my body is the law of sin, and that law makes me its prisoner. ²⁴This is terrible! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? ²⁵God [will save me]! I thank him [for his salvation] through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So in my mind I am a slave to God's law. But in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 So now people that are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty. ²Why? Because in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit* that brings life made you* free. It made you* free from the law that brings sin and death. ³The law* was without power because the law was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do. God sent his own Son to earth with the same human life that other

you Some Greek copies have "me."

people use for sin. God sent his Son to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to condemn (*destroy*) sin. ⁴God did this so that we could be right like the law said we must be. Now we don't live following our sinful selves. We live following the Spirit.

⁵People that live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But those people that live following the Spirit* are thinking about the things that the Spirit wants them to do. ⁶If a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then there is spiritual death. But if a person's thinking is controlled by the Spirit, then there is life and peace. ⁷Why is this true? Because if a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then that person is against God. That person refuses to obey God's law. And really that person is not able to obey God's law. ⁸Those people that are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God.

⁹But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit,* if that Spirit of God really lives in you. But if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ, then that person does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰Your body will always be dead because of sin. But if Christ is in you, then the Spirit gives you life, because Christ made you right with God. ¹¹God raised Jesus from death. And if God's Spirit is living in you, then he will also give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from death. And he will give life to your bodies through his Spirit that lives in you.

¹²So, my brothers and sisters, we must not be ruled by our sinful selves. We must not live the way our sinful selves want. ¹³If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, then you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit's* help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, then you will have true life.

¹⁴The true children of God are those people that let God's Spirit lead them. ¹⁵The Spirit* that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit

that we have makes us God's chosen children. And with that Spirit we say, "*Abba*,"* Father." ¹⁶And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say we are God's children. ¹⁷If we are God's children, then we will get the blessings God has for his people. We will get these things from God. God will give us all that he has given Christ. But we must suffer like Christ suffered. Then we will be able to share his glory.

We Will Have Glory in the Future

¹⁸We have sufferings now. But the sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us. ¹⁹Everything that God made is waiting with excitement for the time when God will show the world who his children are. The whole world wants very much for that to happen. ²⁰Everything God made was changed to be like it was worth nothing. It did not want to change, but God decided to change it. But there was this hope: ²¹That everything God made would be made free from ruin (*decay*). There was hope that everything God made would have the freedom and glory that belong to God's children.

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

²⁶Also, the Spirit* helps us. We are very weak, but the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We don't know how to pray like we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us. The Spirit begs God for us. The Spirit speaks to God with deep feelings that words cannot explain. ²⁷God can see what is in people's hearts. And God knows what is in the

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Abba An Aramaic word. Jewish children called their fathers "*Abba*."

mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way that God wants.

²⁸We know that in everything God works for the good of those people that love him. These are the people God called (*chose*), because that was his plan. ²⁹God knew those people before he made the world. And God decided that those people would be like his Son (*Jesus*). Then Jesus would be the firstborn* of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰God planned for those people to be like his Son. And he called (*chose*) those people. God called those people and made them right with him. And God gave his glory to those people that he made right.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹So what should we say about this? If God is for us, then no person can stand against us. And God is with us. ³²He even let his own Son suffer for us. God gave his Son for us all. So with Jesus now, God will surely give us all things. ³³Who can accuse the people that God has chosen? No one! God is the One who makes his people right. ³⁴Who can say that God's people are guilty? No one! Christ Jesus died [for us], but that is not all. He was also raised from death. And now he is at God's right side and is begging God for us. ³⁵Can anything separate us from Christ's love? No! Can trouble separate us from Christ's love? No! Can problems or persecution* separate us from Christ's love? No! If we have no food or clothes, will that separate us from Christ's love? No! Will danger or even death separate us from Christ's love? No! ³⁶Like it is written in the Scriptures*:

“For you (*Christ*) we are in danger of death all the time.

People think we are worth no more than sheep to be killed.” *Psalm 44:22*

³⁷But in all these things we have full victory through God who showed his love for us. ^{38–39}Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not death, not life, not angels or ruling spirits. I am sure that nothing

firstborn The first male child in a family. Here, it probably means that Christ was the first in God's family to share God's glory.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by Christ's enemies.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us or nothing below us—nothing in the whole created world—will ever be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and the Jewish People

9I am in Christ and I am telling you the truth. I don't lie. My deepest feelings are ruled by the Holy Spirit.* And those feelings tell me that I am not lying: ²I have great sorrow and always feel much sadness [for the Jewish people]. ³They are my brothers and sisters, my earthly family. I wish I could help them. I would even have a curse on me and cut myself off from Christ if that would help them. ⁴They are the people of Israel.* Those people (*the Jews*) are God's chosen children. Those people have the glory of God and the agreements that God made between himself and his people. God gave them the law [of Moses] and the [temple] worship. And God gave his promises to those people (*the Jews*). ⁵Those people are the descendants* of our great fathers.* And they are the earthly family of Christ. Christ is God over all things. Praise him forever!* Amen.

⁶[Yes, I feel sorry for the Jewish people.] I don't mean that God failed to keep his promise to them. But only some of the people of Israel (*the Jews*) are truly God's people.* ⁷And only some of Abraham's* descendants* are true children of Abraham (*God's people*). [This is what God said to Abraham:] “Isaac will be your only legal son.”* ⁸This means that not all of Abraham's descendants are God's true children. Abraham's true children are those people that become God's children because of the promise God made to Abraham. ⁹God's

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

Christ ... forever This can also mean, “May God, who rules over all things, be praised forever!”

God's people Literally, “Israel,” the people God chose to bring his blessings to the world.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

“Isaac ... son” Quote from Gen. 21:12.

promise to Abraham was like this: “At the right time I will come back, and Sarah will have a son.”*

¹⁰And that is not all. Rebecca also had sons. And those sons had the same father. He is our father* Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹²But before the two sons were born, God told Rebecca, “The older son will serve the younger.”* This was before the boys had done anything good or bad. God said this before they were born so that the boy God chose would be chosen because of God’s own plan. He was chosen because he was the one God wanted to call, not because of anything the boys did. ¹³Like the Scripture* says, “I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau.”*

¹⁴So what should we say about this? Is God not fair? We cannot say that. ¹⁵God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to the person that I want to show mercy to. I will show pity to the person that I want to show pity to.”* ¹⁶So God will choose the person he decides to show mercy to. And his choice does not depend on what people want or try to do. ¹⁷In the Scripture* God says to Pharaoh*: “I made you king so you could do this for me. I wanted to show my power in you. I wanted my name to be announced in all the world.”* ¹⁸So God shows mercy to the people he wants to show mercy to. And God makes the people stubborn that he wants to make stubborn.

¹⁹So one of you will ask me: “If God controls the things we do, then why does God blame us [for our sins]?” ²⁰[Don’t ask that.] You are only people. And people have no right to question God. A clay jar does not question the man that made it. The jar does not say, “Why did you make me like this?” ²¹The man that makes the jar can make anything he wants to make. He can use the same clay to make different things. He can make one thing for special purposes and another thing for daily use.

“At the right time ... son” Quote from Gen. 18:10,14.

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews.

“The older ... younger” Quote from Gen. 25:23.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“I ... Esau” Quote from Mal. 1:2-3.

“I will show ... show pity to” Quote from Ex. 33:19.

Pharaoh The title of the king of Egypt.

“I made ... world” Quote from Ex. 9:16.

²²It is the same way with what God has done. God wanted to show his anger and to let people see his power. But God endured patiently those people he was angry with—people that were ready to be destroyed. ²³God waited with patience so that he could make known his rich glory. God wanted to give that glory to the people that receive his mercy. God has prepared these people to have his glory. ²⁴We are those people. We are the people God called (*chose*). God called us from the Jews and from the non-Jews. ²⁵Like the Scripture* says in [the book of] Hosea:

“The people that are not mine—
I will say that they are my people.
And the people that I did not love—
I will say that they are the people I love.”

Hosea 2:23

²⁶ “And in the same place that God said,
‘You are not my people’—
in that place they will be called
sons of the living God.” *Hosea 1:10*

²⁷And Isaiah cries out about Israel*:

“There are so many people of Israel that they are like the grains of sand by the sea. But only a few of those people will be saved. ²⁸Yes, the Lord will quickly finish judging the people on the earth.”*

²⁹It is like Isaiah said:

“The Lord has all power. The Lord saved some of his people for us. If he had not done that, then we would now be like Sodom,* and we would now be like Gomorrah.*”*

³⁰So what does all this mean? It means this: That the non-Jews were not trying to make themselves right with God. But they were made right with God. They became right because of their faith. ³¹And the people of Israel* tried to follow a law to make themselves

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

“There are ... earth” Quote from Isa. 10:22-23.

Sodom, Gomorrah Cities where evil people lived. God punished them by destroying their cities.

“The Lord ... Gomorrah” Quote from Isa. 1:9.

right with God. But they did not succeed. ³²Why not? Because they tried to make themselves right by the things they did. They did not trust in God to make them right. They fell over the stone that makes people fall. ³³The Scripture* talks about that stone:

“Look, I put in Zion* a stone
that will make people stumble.
It is a rock that will make people fall.
But any person that trusts in that rock
will never be disappointed.”

Isaiah 8:14; 28:16

10 Brothers and sisters, the thing I want most is for all the Jews to be saved. That is my prayer to God. ²I can say this about the Jews: They really try to follow God. But they don’t know the right way. ³They did not know the way that God makes people right with him. And they tried to make themselves right in their own way. So they did not accept God’s way of making people right. ⁴Christ ended the law so that every person that believes in him is made right with God.

⁵Moses writes about being made right by following the law. Moses says, “A person that wants to find life by following these things (*the law*) must do the things the law says.”* ⁶But this is what the Scripture* says about being made right through faith: “Don’t say to yourself, ‘Who will go up into heaven?’”* (That means, “Who will go up to heaven to get Christ and bring him down to earth?”) ⁷“And don’t say, ‘Who will go down into the world below?’”* (That means, “Who will go down to get Christ and bring him up from death?”) ⁸This is what the Scripture says: “God’s teaching is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.”* That teaching is the teaching of faith that we tell people. ⁹If you openly say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. ¹⁰Yes, we believe with our heart, and so we are made right with God. And we use our mouth to say that we believe, and so we are saved. ¹¹Yes, the Scripture* says,

“Any person that trusts in him (*Christ*) will never be disappointed.”* ¹²That Scripture says “any person” because there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. The same Lord is the Lord of all people. The Lord gives many blessings to all people that trust in him. ¹³Yes, [the Scripture says,] “Every person that trusts in the Lord will be saved.”*

¹⁴But before people can trust in the Lord for help, they must believe in him. And before people can believe in the Lord, they must hear about him. And for people to hear about the Lord, another person must tell them. ¹⁵And before a person can go and tell them, that person must be sent. Like the Scriptures* say, “Beautiful are the feet of those people that come to tell good news.”*

¹⁶But not all [the Jews] accepted that good news. Isaiah said, “Lord, who believed the things we told them?”* ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing [the Good News*]. And people hear [the Good News] when a person tells them about Christ.

¹⁸But I ask, “Did people not hear [the Good News]?” Yes, they heard—[like the Scripture* says,]

“Their voices went out all around the world.
Their words went everywhere
in the world.”

Psalms 19:4

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

“I will use a people that is not really a nation
to make you jealous.
I will use a nation that does not
understand
to make you angry.”

Deuteronomy 32:21

²⁰Then Isaiah is bold enough to say this [for God]:

“Any person ... disappointed” Quote from Isa. 28:16.

“Every person ... saved” Quote from Joel 2:32.

“Beautiful ... good news” Quote from Isa. 52:7.

“Lord ... them” Quote from Isa. 53:1.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Zion Another name for Jerusalem, the city of God’s people.

“A person ... says” Quote from Lev. 18:5.

Verses 6–8 Quotes from Deut. 30:12–14.

“The people that were not looking for me—
those people found me.
I showed myself to people that did not
ask for me.” *Isaiah 65:1*

²¹God said this through Isaiah about the non-Jewish people. But about the Jewish people God says, “All day long I have waited for those people, but they refuse to obey and refuse to follow me.”*

God Has Not Forgotten His People

11 So I ask, “Did God throw out his people?” No! I myself am an Israelite (*Jew*). I am from the family of Abraham,* from the family group of Benjamin. ²God chose the Israelites to be his people before [they were born]. And God did not throw out those people. Surely you know what the Scripture* says about Elijah.* The Scripture tells about Elijah praying to God against the people of Israel. Elijah said, ³“Lord, the people have killed your prophets* and destroyed your altars.* I am the only prophet still living. And the people are trying to kill me now.”* ⁴But what answer did God give Elijah? God said, “I have kept for myself 7,000 men that still worship me. These 7,000 men have not given worship to Baal.*”* ⁵It is the same now. There are a few people that God has chosen by his grace (*kindness*). ⁶And if God chose his people by grace, then it is not the things they have done that made them God’s people. If they could be made God’s people by the things they did, then God’s gift of grace would not really be a gift.

⁷So this is what has happened: The people of Israel (*the Jews*) tried [to be right with God]. But they did not succeed. But the people God chose did [become right with him]. The other people became hard and refused to listen to God. ⁸Like it is written [in the Scriptures*]:

“All day ... follow me” *Quote from Isa. 65:2.*

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Elijah A prophet that lived about 850 B.C.

prophets People that spoke for God.

altars An altar is a place where sacrifices are offered.

“Lord ... now” *Quote from 1 Kings 19:10, 14.*

Baal The name of a false god.

“I have ... Baal” *Quote from 1 Kings 19:18.*

“God caused the people to fall asleep.”
Isaiah 29:10

“God closed their eyes so that
they could not see [the truth],
and God closed their ears so that
they could not hear [the truth].
This continues until now.”

Deuteronomy 29:4

⁹And David says:

“Let those people be caught and trapped
at their own feasts.
Let those people fall and be punished.
¹⁰ Let their eyes be closed so they
cannot see [the truth].
And let them be troubled forever.”

Psalms 69:22–23

¹¹So I ask: When the Jews fell, did that fall destroy them? No! But their mistake brought salvation to the non-Jews. This happened to make the Jews jealous. ¹²The Jews’ mistake brought rich blessings for the world. And what the Jews lost brought rich blessings for the non-Jewish people. So surely the world will get much richer blessings when enough Jews become the kind of people God wants.

¹³Now I am speaking to you people that are not Jews. I am an apostle* to the non-Jews. So while I have that work, I will do the best I can. ¹⁴I hope I can make my own people (*the Jews*) jealous. That way, maybe I can help some of them to be saved. ¹⁵God turned away from the Jews. When that happened, God became friends with the other people in the world. So when God accepts the Jews, then surely that will bring to people life after death. ¹⁶If the first piece of bread is offered to God, then the whole loaf is made holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, then the tree’s branches are holy too.

¹⁷[It is like] some of the branches from an olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to that first tree. You non-Jews are the same as that wild branch, and you now share the strength and life of the first tree (*the Jews*). ¹⁸So don’t boast about those branches that were broken off. You have no reason to boast.

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

Why? You don't give life to the root. The root gives life to you. ¹⁹You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree." ²⁰That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe. And you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Don't be proud, but be afraid. ²¹If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, then he will not let you stay [if you don't believe].

²²So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. God punishes those people that stop following him. But God is kind to you, if you continue following in his kindness. If you don't continue following him, you will be cut off [from the tree]. ²³And if the Jews will believe in God again, then God will accept the Jews back again. God is able to put them back where they were. ²⁴It is not natural for a wild branch to become part of a good tree. But you non-Jews are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.

²⁵I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers and sisters. This truth will help you understand that you don't know everything. The truth is this: Part of Israel* has been made stubborn. But that will change when enough non-Jews have come to God. ²⁶And that is how all Israel will be saved. It is written [in the Scriptures*]:

"The Savior will come from Zion*;
He will take away all evil from the
family of Jacob.*"

²⁷ And I will make this agreement with
those people
when I take away their sins."

Isaiah 59:20–21; 27:9

²⁸The Jews refuse to accept the Good News,* so they are God's enemies. This has happened to help you non-Jews. But the Jews

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Zion Another name for Jerusalem, the city of God's people.

Jacob Father of the twelve family groups of Israel.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

are still God's chosen people. So God loves them very much. God loves them because of [the promises he made to] their fathers. ²⁹God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them. And God never takes back his call to the people. ³⁰At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because those people (*the Jews*) refused to obey. ³¹And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they can also receive mercy from God. ³²All people have refused to obey God. God has put all people together as people that don't obey him, so that God can show mercy to all people.

Praise to God

³³Yes, God's riches are very great! God's wisdom and knowledge have no end! No person can explain the things God decides. No person can understand God's ways. ³⁴Like the Scripture* says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give God advice?"

Isaiah 40:13

³⁵ "Who has ever given God anything?
God owes nothing to any person."

Job 41:11

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

Give Your Lives to God

12 So brothers and sisters, I beg you to do something. God has shown us great mercy. So offer your lives as a living sacrifice* to God. Your offering must be only for God and will be pleasing to him. This offering of yourselves is the spiritual way for you to worship (*serve*) God. ²Don't change yourselves to be like the people of this world. But let God change you inside with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide and accept what God wants for you. You will be able to know what things are good and pleasing to God and what things are perfect.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

³God has given me a special gift. That is why I have something to say to every person among you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself like you really are. Decide what you are by the kind of faith God has given you. ⁴Each one of us has one body, and that body has many parts. These parts don't all do the same thing. ⁵In the same way, we are many people, but in Christ we are all one body. We are the parts of that body. And each part of that body belongs to all the other parts. ⁶We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace (*kindness*) that God gave us. If a person has the gift of prophecy,* then that person should use that gift with the faith he has. ⁷If a person has the gift of serving, then that person should serve. If a person has the gift of teaching, then that person should teach. ⁸If a person has the gift of comforting other people, then that person should comfort. If a person has the gift of giving to help other people, then that person should give freely. If a person has the gift of being a leader, then that person should work hard when he leads. If a person has the gift of showing kindness to other people, then that person should be glad to do that.

⁹Your love must be real. Hate the things that are evil. Do only the things that are good. ¹⁰Love each other in a way that you feel close to each other like brothers and sisters. You should want to give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourself. ¹¹Don't be lazy when you need to be working for the Lord. Be spiritually excited about serving him. ¹²Be happy because you have hope. Be patient when you have troubles. Pray all the time. ¹³Share with God's people that need help. Look for people that need help, and welcome those people into your homes.

¹⁴Say only good things to those people that do bad things to you. Say good things to them and don't curse them. ¹⁵When other people are happy, you should be happy with them. And when other people are sad, you should be sad with them. ¹⁶Live together in peace with each other. Don't be proud. Be willing to be friends

with people who are not important to other people. Don't be conceited.

¹⁷If someone does wrong to you, don't pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do the things that all people think are good. ¹⁸Do the best you can to live in peace with all people. ¹⁹My friends, don't try to punish people when they do wrong to you. Wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: "I am the One who punishes; I will pay people back,"* says the Lord. ²⁰But you should do this: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink. In this way you will make that person ashamed."** ²¹Don't let evil defeat you. You should defeat evil by doing good.

Obey Your Government Rulers

13 All of you must obey the government rulers. Every person who rules was given the power to rule by God. And all the people that rule now were given that power by God. ²So the person that is against the government is really against something God has commanded. People that are against the government cause themselves to be punished. ³People that do right don't have to fear the rulers. But those people that do wrong must fear the rulers. Do you want to be free from fearing the rulers? Then you should do right. If you do right, then the rulers will praise you. ⁴A ruler is God's servant to help you. But if you do wrong, then be afraid. The ruler has the power to punish, and he will use that power. He is God's servant to punish people that do wrong. ⁵So you must obey the government. You should obey because you might be punished if you don't obey. And you should also obey because you know that is the right thing to do.

⁶And this is why you pay taxes too. Those rulers are working for God and give all their time to the work of ruling. ⁷Give all people what you owe them. If you owe them any kind of tax, then pay it. Show respect to the people

"I am ... back" Quote from Deut. 32:35.

you will make that person ashamed Literally, "you will pour burning coals on his head." People in Old Testament times often put ashes on their heads to show they were sad or sorry.

"If your ... ashamed" Quote from Prov. 25:21–22.

gift of prophecy The ability that God gives a person to speak for him.

you should respect. And show honor to the people you should honor.

Loving Other People Is the Only Law

⁸Don't owe people anything. But you will always owe love to each other. The person that loves other people has obeyed all the law.*
⁹Why do I say this? Because the law says, "You must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not murder anyone, you must not steal anything, you must not want things that belong to other people."* All these commands and all other commands are really only one rule: "Love other people the same as you love yourself."* ¹⁰Love doesn't hurt other people. So loving is the same as obeying all the law.

¹¹I say these things because you know that we live in an important time. Yes, it is now time for you to wake up from your sleep. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night* is almost finished. The day* is almost here. So we should stop doing things that belong to darkness (*sin*). We should prepare ourselves to fight evil with the weapons that belong to the light (*good*). ¹³We should live in a right way, like people that belong to the day. We should not have wild and wasteful parties. We should not be drunk. We should not do sexual sins or sin in any way with our bodies. We should not cause arguments and trouble or be jealous. ¹⁴But become like the Lord Jesus Christ, so when people see what you do, they will see Christ. Don't think about how to satisfy your sinful self and the bad things you want to do.

Don't Criticize Other People

14 Don't refuse to accept into your group a person that is weak in faith. And don't argue with that person about his different ideas. ²One person believes that he can eat any kind of food* he wants. But if another person's faith is weak, then that

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

"You must not ... people" Quote from Ex. 20:13–15, 17.

"Love other people ... yourself" Quote from Lev. 19:18.

night Used as a symbol of the sinful world we live in.

day Used as a symbol of the good time that is coming.

any kind of food The Jewish law said there were some foods

Jews should not eat. When Jews became Christians, some of them did not understand they could now eat all foods.

person believes he can eat only vegetables.

³The person that knows that he can eat any kind of food must not feel that he is better than the person that eats only vegetables. And the person that eats only vegetables must not decide that the person that eats all foods is wrong. God has accepted that person. ⁴You cannot judge another person's servant. His own master decides if he is doing right or wrong. And the Lord's servant will be right, because the Lord is able to make him right.

⁵One person might believe that one day is more important than another. And another person might believe that every day is the same. Each person should be sure about his own beliefs in his own mind. ⁶The person that thinks one day is more important than other days is doing that for the Lord. And the person that eats all kinds of food is doing that for the Lord. Yes, he gives thanks to God [for that food]. And the person that refuses to eat some foods does that for the Lord. And he gives thanks to God.

⁷Yes, [we all live for the Lord]. We don't live or die for ourselves. ⁸If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord. ⁹That is why Christ died and rose from death to live again. Christ did this so that he could be Lord (*ruler*) over people that have died and people that are living. ¹⁰So why do you judge your brother [in Christ]? Or why do you think that you are better than your brother? We will all stand before God, and he will judge us all. ¹¹Yes, it is written in the Scriptures*:

"Every person will bow before me;
 every person will say that I am God.
 As surely as I live, these things will
 happen, says the Lord (God)."

Isaiah 45:23

¹²So each of us will have to explain to God about the things we do.

Don't Cause Other People to Sin

¹³So we should stop judging each other. We must decide not to do anything that will make a brother or sister weak or fall into sin. ¹⁴I am in the Lord Jesus. And I know that there is no

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

food that is wrong to eat. But if a person believes that something is wrong, then that thing is wrong for him. ¹⁵If you hurt your brother's faith because of something you eat, then you are not really following the way of love. Don't destroy a person's faith by eating something [that he thinks is wrong]. Christ died for that person. ¹⁶Don't allow something that you think is good to become something that other people say is evil. ¹⁷In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. In the kingdom of God, the important things are these: living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁸Any person who serves Christ by living this way is pleasing God. And that person will be accepted by other people.

¹⁹So let us try as hard as we can to do the things that make peace. And let us try to do the things that will help each other. ²⁰Don't let the eating of food destroy the work of God. All food is right to eat. But it is wrong for a person to eat something that makes another person fall into sin. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine if that makes your brother or sister fall into sin. It is better not to do anything that will make your brother or sister sin.

²²Your beliefs about these things should be kept secret between yourself and God. What a blessing it is for a person if he can do the things he thinks are right without feeling guilty. ²³But if a person eats something without being sure that it is right, then that person makes himself wrong. Why? Because that person did not believe that it was right. And if a person does anything without believing that it is right, then it is sin.

15 We are strong with faith. So we should help the people who are weak. We should help those people with their weaknesses. We should not try to please ourselves. ²Each of us should please other people. We should do this to help them. We should try to help them be stronger in faith. ³Even Christ did not live trying to please himself. It was like the Scriptures* said about

him; “Those people that insulted you have also insulted me.”* ⁴Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those things were written so that we could have hope. That hope comes from the patience and strength that the Scriptures give us. ⁵Patience and strength come from God. And I pray that God will help you all agree together the way Christ Jesus wants. ⁶Then you will all be joined together. And all together you will give glory (*praise*) to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Christ accepted you. So you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God. ⁸I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that what God promises is true. Christ did this to prove that God will do the things he promised the Jewish fathers. ⁹Christ also did this so that the non-Jews could give glory to God for the mercy he gives to them. The Scriptures* say,

“So I will give thanks to you among
the non-Jewish people;
I will sing praise to your name.”

Psalms 118:49

¹⁰And the Scriptures* also say,

“You non-Jews should be happy
together with God's people.”

Deuteronomy 32:43

¹¹The Scriptures* also say,

“Praise the Lord all you non-Jews;
all people should praise the Lord.”

Psalms 117:1

¹²And Isaiah says,

“A person will come from Jesse's family.*
That person will come to rule over
the non-Jews;
and the non-Jews will have hope
because of that person.” *Isaiah 11:10*

¹³I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then you will have more and

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“Those people ... me” Quote from Ps. 69:9.

Jesse's family Jesse was the father of David, king of Israel. Jesus was from their family.

more hope, and it will flow out of you by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul Talks About His Work

¹⁴My brothers and sisters, I am sure that you are full of good. I know that you have all the knowledge you need and that you are able to teach each other. ¹⁵But I have written to you very openly about some things that I wanted you to remember. I did this because God gave me this special gift: ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus. God made me a minister to help the non-Jewish people. I serve God by teaching his Good News.* I do this so that the non-Jewish people may be an offering that God will accept. Those people are made holy* for God by the Holy Spirit.*

¹⁷So I am proud of the things I have done for God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁸I will not talk about anything I did myself. I will talk only about the things that Christ has done with me in leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. They have obeyed God because of the things I have said and done. ¹⁹And they obeyed God because of the power of the miracles* and the great things they saw, and because of the power of God's Spirit. I have told people the Good News* about Christ in every place from Jerusalem to Illyricum.* And so I have finished that part of my work. ²⁰I always want to tell the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I don't want to build on the work that another person has already started. ²¹But it is written [in the Scriptures*]:

“The people that were not told
about him (*the Christ*) will see,
and those people that have not heard
about him will understand.”

Isaiah 52:15

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

holy A holy person is pure, belongs only to God, and does only the things that God wants.

miracle(s) Amazing things done by the power of God.

Illyricum A Roman province far north and west of Greece.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²²That is why many times I was stopped from coming to you.

²³Now I have finished my work in these areas here. And for many years I have wanted to visit you. ²⁴So I will visit you when I go to Spain. Yes, I hope to visit you while I am traveling to Spain, and I will stay and enjoy being with you. Then you can help me on my trip. ²⁵Now I am going to Jerusalem to help God's people. ²⁶Some of God's people in Jerusalem are poor. And [The believers in] Macedonia and Achaia wanted to help those people. So they gathered some money to give them. ²⁷[The believers in] Macedonia and Achaia were happy to do this. And really they should help those believers in Jerusalem. They should help because they are non-Jews and have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings. So they should use the things they have to help the Jews. They owe this to the Jews. ²⁸I must be sure that the poor people in Jerusalem get all this money that has been given for them. After I finish this work, then I will leave for Spain. While I am traveling to Spain, I will stop and visit you. ²⁹I know that when I visit you, I will bring you Christ's full blessing.

³⁰Brothers and sisters, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. Do this because of our Lord Jesus and the love that the Holy Spirit* gives us. ³¹Pray that I will be saved from the non-believers in Judea. And pray that this help I bring to Jerusalem will please God's people there. ³²Then, if God wants me to, I will come to you. I will come with joy, and together you and I will have a time of rest. ³³The God that gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul Has Some Final Things to Say

16 I want you to know that you can trust our sister [in Christ], Phoebe. She is a special helper* in the church in Cencrea. ²I ask you to accept her in the Lord. Accept her

special helper Literally, “deacon,” a Greek word meaning “servant.” See 1 Tim. 3:11.

the way God's people should. Help her with anything she needs from you. She has helped me very much, and she has helped many other people too.

³Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila. They work together with me in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their own lives to save my life. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful to them. ⁵Also, say hello to the church that meets at their house.

Say hello to my dear friend Epaphroditus. He was the first person to follow Christ in Asia.*

⁶Say hello to Mary. She worked very hard for you. ⁷Say hello to Andronicus and Junia. They are my relatives, and they were in prison with me. They were followers of Christ before I was. And they are some of the most important of the people that Christ sent out to do his work.* They were believers in Christ before I was. ⁸Say hello to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹Say hello to Urbanus. He is a worker together with me for Christ. And say hello to my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰Say hello to Apelles. He was tested and proved that he truly loves Christ. Say hello to all those people that are in the family of Aristobulus. ¹¹Say hello to Herodion, my relative. Say hello to all the people in the family of Narcissus that belong to the Lord. ¹²Say hello to Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Those women work very hard for the Lord. Say hello to my dear friend Persis. She has also worked very hard for the Lord. ¹³Say hello to Rufus. He is a special person in the Lord. Say hello to his mother. She has been a mother to me also. ¹⁴Say hello to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers in Christ that are with them. ¹⁵Say hello to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas. And say hello to all the saints (*believers*) with them. ¹⁶When you see each other, say hello with a holy kiss. All of Christ's churches (*groups of believers*) say hello to you.

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, I ask you to be very careful of those people that cause people to be against each other. Be very careful of those people that upset other people's faith. Those people are against the true teaching you learned. Stay away from those people. ¹⁸People like that are not serving our Lord Christ. They are only doing things to please themselves. They use fancy talk and say nice things to fool the people that don't know about evil. ¹⁹All the believers have heard that you obey. So I am very happy because of you. But I want you to be wise about the things that are good. And I want you to know nothing about things that are evil.

²⁰The God that brings peace will soon defeat Satan (*the devil*) and give you power over him.

The grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹Timothy, a worker together with me, says hello to you. Also Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (these are my relatives) say hello to you.

²²I am Tertius, and I am writing these things that Paul says. I say hello to you in the Lord.

²³Gaius is letting me and the whole church here use his home. He also says hello to you. Erastus and our brother Quartus say hello to you. Erastus is the city treasurer here. ²⁴*

²⁵Glory to God. God is the One who can make you strong in faith. God can use the Good News* that I teach to make you strong. That is the Good News about Jesus Christ that I tell people. That Good News is the secret truth that God has made known. That secret truth was hidden since the beginning. ²⁶But that secret truth has now been shown to us. And that truth has been made known to all people. It has been made known by the things the prophets* wrote. This is what God commanded. And that secret truth has been made known to all people, so that they can believe and obey God. God lives forever. ²⁷Glory forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Verse 24 Some Greek copies add verse 24: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen."

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Asia The western part of modern Turkey.

most important ... work Literally, "important among (or to) the apostles."