

Romans

1:1. “Good News.” The Greek word is *euaggelion* (#2098 εὐαγγέλιον), from the prefix “eu,” which means “good” (and is used in such words as “euphemism: good speech; eulogy: “a good word;” and euthanasia: “a good death”), and from *aggelos* (pronounced “angelos”), which means “message,” and from which we get “angel,” or messenger. It is the good message, or more colloquially, the Good News.

“appointed.” This is from the Greek word *aphorizo* (#873 ἀφορίζω), which has two basic meanings, (1) “to remove one party from other parties so as to discourage or eliminate contact, *separate, take away*” and (2) “to select one person out of a group for a purpose, *set apart, appoint*” (BDAG). The meaning in this context is (2); definition (1) obviously does not apply—Paul was certainly not *separated* away from other parties and discouraged to make contact when he was set apart for the Gospel. For this reason we have avoided the translation “separated” (cp. KJV; ASV), and chosen “appointed” to communicate the meaning of the Greek word. Paul was *appointed*; he was selected for a purpose, namely, to bring about the obedience of faith among the nations (v. 5).

“*the* Good News of God.” Many versions have “the Gospel of God.” The phrase “Gospel (or Good News) of God occurs 8 times in the NT. As “the Good News of God,” care must be taken to read the context to determine what the “Good News” is, which Good News is being referred to in the context. In Mark 1:14, it is clear “the Gospel of the Kingdom,” that is the “Good News” being referred to. The other 7 uses of the phrase “Good News of God” appear in the writings to the Christian Church. In this case in Romans, the Good News is a general statement about Jesus Christ. There is no definite article in the Greek text, so it is not “THE good news of God but rather “a good message from God,” which He promised before through His prophets...concerning His Son Jesus Christ.” This does not refer to the Good News of the Grace of God, because that was not promised beforehand, but was a secret hidden in God (Eph. 3:2-10). There are cases, such as in 1 Thess. 2:2,8, and 9, where the Good News of God that Paul is referring to is the message he taught and preached, which was the Good News about the Grace of God (the Good News of the Grace of God;” Acts 20:24).

1:3. “according to the flesh.” In the sense that it is used here, the flesh declared, if you will, or revealed, that Jesus was the Son of David. Both his mother, Mary, and his adopted father, Joseph, were from the line of David (Matt. 1 and Luke 3 respectively). There is a parallel between verse 3 and verse 4 in that the flesh revealed that he was the Son of David, and God revealed that he was the Messiah, something He declared when He raised him from among the dead.

1:4. Jesus was declared to be “the Son of God with power” by the resurrection. He had been the Son of God since his conception, and even demonstrated some power in his life on earth. However, his resurrection showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was indeed, “the Son of God with power. The phrase “with power” could be conflated to add clarity to “the Son of God invested with power.”

“according to *the* Spirit of Holiness.” The “Spirit of Holiness” is God. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power when he was raised, and this was “according to” God. God had placed in His Word some references to the death and resurrection of His Son (Ps. 16:10, Acts 2:31; Ps. 2:7, Acts 13:33; Isa. 53:11,12). We have to remember that through all ages there have been false Messiah’s. How are we to know who is the

real Messiah? God had said in his Word that He would raise the Messiah from the dead. So when Jesus got up from the dead, he was, by that fact, declared to be the Son of God, and this was according to God (the Spirit of Holiness), i.e., according to what God had said. We use the same general expression today when we say, “According to so and so, . . .” when we mean, according to what the person had said. There are commentators who believe that the spirit of holiness is Christ’s new spiritual body or spiritual nature. Lenski does a good job of discussing that and showing that it really does not fit in this instance. For one thing, the phrase “the Spirit of Holiness” would not be something that most people would assume would be Jesus’ new body, while on the other hand, the unusual word for “holiness” here, *hagiosune* (#42 ἁγιωσύνη), occurs 4 times in the Septuagint, all of them referring to an attribute of God. By referring to God as the Spirit of Holiness there is an emphasis on His unique holiness, which is then juxtaposed with the unique power he has invested in His Son.

1:5. “we.” This is a literary plural, also known as the plural of majesty. Paul means only himself (cp. Kistemaker; John Murray, “Epistle to the Romans,” *New International Commentary on the New Testament*). This is the same use of the plural in Genesis 1:26: “let us make man in our image.” For another example of the literary plural see Ezra 4:18.

“obedience of faith.” This is the genitive of production: Paul is speaking of the obedience *produced by* faith. Lenski, who calls this a subjective genitive, explains the phrase, “faith *renders* obedience.” He also provides a good list of other possibilities, which he rules out: Attributive genitive: obedience *marked by* faith; objective genitive: obedience *to the* faith; appositional genitive: obedience *which is* faith.

“*all* for the sake of his name.” Lenski has shown that this phrase refers to whole verse, including the receiving the grace of apostleship and the great commission. By adding the word “all,” we see that the phrase refers to more than the bringing of obedience that is done for his name’s sake.

1:7. “called *ones*, holy *ones*.” This phrase has been understood many different ways, which can be seen by reading different versions. This is in part due to the fact that there are three adjectives in a short phrase, and in Greek an adjective can be used in many ways, including a predicate nominative when a verb is not actually present but supplied, which is where we get the common reading, “called *to be* saints.” In this verse “beloved,” “called,” and “holy” are all dative masculine plural adjectives modifying the same subject: “**All**” [who are in Rome]. The rendering “called *to be* saints” (NIV, KJV, ESV) takes the Greek adjective “called” (*kletos*, #2822 κλητός) as if it were a verb, and then takes the Greek adjective *hagios* (#40 ἅγιος) and translates it as a predicate nominative modifying “called.” However, this seems incorrect. The straight forward reading of the Greek seems to treat all the adjectives in the verse attributively. (See: Dana and Mantey p. 118). Lenski agrees that “called *to be* saints” is not correct (as does Meyer). However, he says that “called” is used as an adjective modifying “holy,” which is using “holy” as a noun (holy ones), not an adjective, so he notes the phrase is saying “saints because called.”

The NASB reads, “called *as* holy,” which seems better than “called *to be* holy,” but the problem is that it still makes “called” a verb in the sentence, which seems incorrect. One of the problems we have in English is that “called” seems automatically to be a verb, which it is not in the Greek. The book of Romans emphasizes salvation by faith and who we are in Christ as God’s saved Church. Thus it seems appropriate that

God would open the epistle by stating and thus emphasizing what each Christian is: “beloved,” “called *ones*,” and “holy *ones*,” and the Greek can easily and naturally be read that way.

We should also notice, however, that the Greek text can be read as “called to be holy,” as well. There is no question that God has called us to live a holy life, and Christians are commanded to “be holy” (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16). Thus there are overtones of the figure of speech amphibologia (double entendre) in this verse, with God both telling us what we are and also how we should live. Fittingly, God can say that we are holy, and we are to be holy, in one phrase. However, for the translation, it seems the dominant meaning in Romans (and 1 Cor. 1:2) is that God has made us holy.

1:9. “in my spirit.” This phrase has been interpreted many different ways. In the Bible, the word “spirit” can refer to a large number of different things. These include, God (the “Spirit” in John 3:8); Jesus, who is referred to as “the Spirit” after his resurrection (2 Cor. 3:17); the gift of God known as holy spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:15; 10:44; 19:2); angels, who are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14); demons (Matt. 8:16; Luke 9:39); “breath” or “life,” as when the girl’s *pneuma*, breath or life, returned when Jesus raised her from the dead (Luke 8:55); wind (John 3:8); and attitude or thoughts, as when Christ said, “The spirit [attitude] is willing, but the body is weak” (Matt. 26:41b).

In this case, the fact that Paul refers to this as “my spirit,” makes it clear that this verse is referring to the gift of God that he received when he was born again (for an understanding of “the gift of holy spirit” in contrast to “the Holy Spirit,” see, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to Be Like Christ*, by Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit). Many commentators think that the use of “in my spirit” is roughly equivalent to “with my whole heart.” However that is because Trinitarian commentators are not used to thinking in terms of “spirit” as a reference to the gift of holy spirit that a person receives when he is born again. Trinitarian commentators are used to thinking that “spirit” refers to “the Holy Spirit,” the third person of the Trinity. However that cannot be the case in this verse because Paul speaks of “my spirit,” in the sense of his personal ownership. While personal ownership certainly does not apply to God in any way, it is true of the gift of holy spirit that God gives when a Christian gets born again. The gift of holy spirit that a Christian receives when he is born again is very much “his” spirit. Paul does more than just serve God with his whole heart, something he makes clear through the entire Epistle, he serves God “in” his spirit, i.e., in connection with and in relation to, his spirit. To really serve God, the Christian must not only serve God with his whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, in the flesh, but he must walk by the spirit of God and thus by revelation and divine guidance. That is what Paul is emphasizing here.

1:10. “succeed.” The Greek verb is, *euodoō* (#2137 εὐδοῶ), which is a compound word from the the noun *hodos*, “road,” and the prefix *eu*, “good.” Often translated “to prosper,” this word literally means to “have a good road,” i.e., have an easy, successful path ahead of you. Although it can apply to financial prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2), it is not restricted to such; the term is much broader than that. It is used in Romans 1:10 in the context of things working out well, so the Apostle Paul could visit the Romans. See note on “go well with you” in 3 John 1:2.

1:12. “in other words.” The Greek pronoun *touto*, like most pronouns, has a wide range of meanings, depending on the context. As the BDAG lexicon points out, in this case it naturally means, “that is,” or “that means.” It seems very unclear to translate *touto* as

“that is,” because it makes what Paul is saying in this verse equal to what he said in verse 11. Paul is explaining and expanding in verse 12 what he had said in the previous verses, which the phrase “in other words,” captures very well. Other versions that use the phrase “in other words” include *The New Testament in the Language of the People*, by Charles Williams and *God’s New Covenant* by Heinz Cassirer.

1:14. “non-Greeks.” The Greek word is *barbaros* (#915 βάρβαρος). To the Greeks, any foreigner who did not speak Greek sounded as though all he could say was “bar, bar, bar,” so a non-Greek was referred to as a *barbaros*. From this word we get the English “barbarian,” which most translations employ in this verse. But the English word barbarian is perhaps too harsh; for it carries either the connotation of evil, harsh people or that of warriors wearing animal skins and bearing large swords. Neither is intended by the Apostle Paul. Rather the sense of the word as he uses it refers simply to people the Romans considered foreigners, both in the language aspect (non-Greek speakers) and culture aspect (non-Hellenists). By using the phrase “Greeks and non-Greeks” the Apostle means, essentially, *everyone*. “In Rom. 1:14-15 Paul is describing the universality of his apostolic commitment (cf. 1:5) he is to preach to barbarians as well as Hellenes... [he] describes the whole non-Jewish world by the formula” (TDNT).

1:17. Quoted from Hab. 2:4.

1:18. “hinder.” The Greek word is *katecho* (# 2722 κατέχω), and it means to hold back, hinder, prevent, restrain, suppress. In the war between truth and error, the Devil is constantly working to suppress, hinder, or stop if possible, the work of God. He often succeeds. Sadly, sometimes it is because of too little effort on the part of God’s people. For example, we are told to pray without ceasing, and one of the things we are to pray for is that “the word of the Lord may continue to run *swiftly* and be glorified” (2 Thess. 3:1). If Christians do not pray for the spread of the Gospel, it will not spread as efficaciously as it could have. In many cases, however, the Devil marshals his demons and those people who oppose God, and directly hinders God’s purposes. For example, Paul wanted to go to Thessalonica and support the believers there, “but Satan prevented us” (1 Thess. 2:18). This verse is very solid evidence that not everything that happens is the will of God, for surely it is not ever God’s will that truth be hindered. Scholars who think that “God is in control” or that everything that happens is God’s will, take the word “hinder” in a conative sense, the sense of “trying to prevent.” In general, they argue that God’s truth always prevails, so all man can do is “try” to suppress it. While it is true that God’s truth cannot ever be completely stopped because God Himself is behind it, it is also true that Satan’s forces and evil people can indeed actually hinder, and sometimes, in some situations for a period of time, stop God’s truth.

It is often the case that the people who hinder God’s truth are in positions of authority in government. They pass laws forbidding prayer in public schools, or demanding evolution be taught in school while forbidding the teaching of creation, or forbidding evangelism. Such things give reason for godly people to seek positions of earthly authority. It does not make sense that God would want righteousness to prevail on earth (1 Tim. 2:2), and that He is in favor of supporting earthly governments (Rom. 13; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14), but He would expect righteous laws to be enacted and enforced by unbelievers. The things of God are foolishness to those who are unsaved (1 Cor. 2:14). One of the ministries God calls people to is leadership and administration (Rom. 12:8), and not all of the people with those ministries are called to serve in the

Church. Some should lead in the government. Then they will be in a good position to enact and enforce laws that support truth and do not hinder it.

1:19. “plain to them.” The Greek is literally “plain *within* them” (cp. NASB).

1:26. “females.” The Greek word is not “women” (*gunē*; #1135 γυνή; pronounced goonay)

but “female” (*thēlus*; (#2338 θήλυς) which in this context is more degrading. See commentary on 1:27, “males... females... males with males.”

1:27. “males... females... males with males.” In this context of aberrant sexual behavior, Paul does not use the usual terms “man” and “woman,” but rather “male” and “female.” This serves two purposes. First, because the subject at hand is the proper correspondence between the sexes, using the words for “male,” *arren* (#730 ἄρρην), and “female,” *thelus* (#2338 θήλυς), draws appropriate attention to the issue of biology and what is natural. Second, as Lenski has pointed out, in this context such language is somewhat degrading, portraying the sexual deviants as “nothing but creatures of sex.”

“burned with intense desire” The Greek phrase is *ekkaíomai en te orexei* (ἐκκαίομαι ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει), and the lexicon by Louw Nida points out that this phrase is “an idiom, literally ‘to burn with intense desire’; ‘to have a strong, intense desire for something’; ‘to be inflamed with passion, to have a strong lust for, to be inflamed with lust.’ In some languages the equivalent idiom is ‘to boil with desire,’ ‘to feel hot in the genitals,’” Both the word “burn” and the word “desire” are used only here in the New Testament.

1:28. “they did not approve.” This is very difficult to translate. The verb here is *dokimazo* (#1381 δοκιμάζω), which is used of the testing of metals or coins, which were tested then approved (or disapproved) based on the results of the test. See Commentary on Rom. 12:2, “test and approve” the will of God. In this case, these immoral people “tested, then disapproved (or saw no value in) holding God in a way that fully recognized Him (see note on 2:18, which also uses *dokimazō*.”

“in full recognition.” The Greek is *epignosis* (#1922 ἐπίγνωσις), a full and accurate knowledge or acknowledgment. This is really important, but not well represented in most translations. Cp. the following translations:

ESV: “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, ...”

KJV: “And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, ...”

NIV: “Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, ...”

In contrast to those above versions, Williams gets the sense correctly: “...as they did not approve of fully recognizing God...” The phrase, “fully recognizing” cannot be underestimated. Many people who do not obey God recognize Him to some degree. God wants people to fully obey Him, not just to believe and act on the things about God that they want to.

1:29. “meanspiritedness.” This comes from the Greek word *kakoetheia* (#2550 κακοήθεια). BDAG’s definition is very insightful: “a basic defect in character that leads one to be hurtful to others, *meanspiritedness*, *malice*, *malignity*, *craftiness*.” The translation “malignity” (e.g., KJV) does not express the sense of the word as well as “meanspiritedness.”

1:31. “family affection.” See commentary on Rom. 12:10 and John 21:15. The Greek word is *astorgos* (#794 ἄστοργος), which is made up of the prefix *-a*, “not, no,” and

storge, which is familial love. The term however can be used in extension beyond just familial love, to be applied to others in a general sense. Louw-Nida explains the word as “pertaining to a lack of love or affection for close associates or family—‘without normal human affection, without love for others.’”

2:1. “Therefore.” The Greek conjunction *dio* (#1352 διὸ) means “therefore, wherefore, on account of.” At first it seems confusing, because a surface reading seems to be saying that because of the vices of the evil people who have been given over to shameful acts and evil behavior, “therefore,” everyone else is without excuse if they judge anyone. Hendrickson writes: “Many are puzzled by the word ‘Therefore.’ It must be admitted that the meaning is not immediately clear.” Lenski is correct when he states that the “Therefore” connects, not just the closing verses with chapter 2, but the entire previous section, 1:18-32. Also, Paul is not writing a blanket condemnation of judging. We must judge others, and judge on a daily basis, in order to obey the commands of God. Jesus said, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (John 7:24). Paul warned us to “...watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them” (Rom. 16:17), and we cannot keep that command unless we make judgments about people. Paul also wrote many instructions to Timothy, including who to avoid and who to select for leadership based on behavior and qualifications, which is impossible to do without making a judgment about people. To fully understand the “therefore,” we must realize it refers back to the whole previous section of Romans, and points forward to those who judge but “practice the same things” (2:1).

“in that which.” The point is not, in that you *judge*, which would simply deride the act of judging. The Greek is more specific. Paul speaks of *in that which* you judge—in other words, the very act that you judge, this act you are doing. Paul is not deriding being judgmental in this case, but hypocrisy.

2:4. “is intended to lead you to repentance.” Williams’ translation has the note: “implied in the genitive present.” What is implied is the idea that this grace is *meant* to lead you to repentance, which is how many versions read (e.g., ESV; NRSV; HCSB).

2:5. The teaching of this verse, and verse 26, is that God’s judgment is just, and that a sinner’s punishment is in proportion to the crime committed. The amount of wrath a person stores up for himself corresponds to the amount he hardens his heart. This is similar to the truth taught in Matthew 7:2, “With the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you” (ESV); and Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

“corresponding to your hardness.” The word “corresponding” comes from *kata* (#2596 κατά), which in this context serves as a “marker of norm of similarity or homogeneity, *according to, in accordance with, in conformity with, according to*” (BDAG, def. 5). This is the same meaning as in Romans 2:2: God’s judgment is “according to truth,” i.e., God’s judgment corresponds to what is truly deserved. The translation “because,” as most versions go, does not capture the sense of the Greek at all. This misses the symmetry being promised by the word *kata*; it makes the hardening simply the cause for future wrath without noting how the cause proportionally affects the amount of wrath being stored up. The verse is not asking, “Why will the person receive

wrath?” This question would be answered with “because of the hardness of his heart.” The question being asked in the verse is “How much wrath will a person receive?” The answer is, as much as he deserves. In other words, the wrath that any person receives is “in accordance with” (in proportion to) his own hardness, and the unrepentance of his own heart. This is hard to understand by some orthodox Christians who think that all the unsaved burn forever (thus equal punishment) and all the saved are in the presence of Christ forever (thus equal reward). The truth is that the unsaved are thrown into Gehenna and are burned up, but the time they spend before being consumed is different from person to person. Similarly, the rewards Christians will receive in the future kingdom are different from person to person and are based on the works each one has done (Cp. John Schoenheit, *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*).

“hardness.” The Greek is *sklerotes* (#4643 σκληρότης), and it is a noun, meaning “hardness, stubbornness.” It is from *skleros*, which means “dried,” “stiff,” “rough,” or “hard.” It is the picture of a branch that has dried out and is hardened and stiff. It is a noun, standing on its own, not an adjective describing heart. Too many people are “hard” in their lives, being stiff, rough, unchanging, unyielding, unrepentant towards God.

“unrepentant.” The Greek is *ametanoetos* (#279 ἀμετανόητος), and refers to not being repentant (the Greek verb “repent” is *metanoeo*). Thus it is unrepentant, not turning to God, refusing to turn to God. Louw Nida’s lexicon states, “In a number of languages it is difficult to speak of ‘a hard and unrepentant heart.’ A more satisfactory equivalent of this expression in Rom. 2:5 may be ‘but you are stubborn and refuse to repent’ or ‘refuse to turn to God.’” Some versions read “impenitent” instead of “unrepentant,” but that does not seem as accurate here because impenitent means, ‘not penitent, without shame, regret, or remorse.’ While it is true that those who do not repent usually have no shame, regret, or remorse, the primary meaning here is that the people have hearts that refuse to repent, i.e., they will not change their ways and turn to God.

“treasure up.” The Greek verb is *thesaurizo* (#2343 θησαυρίζω), and it means to gather and lay up, to heap up, store up, to treasure up (Liddell and Scott), to accumulate riches. The noun form of the verb is *thesaurus* (#2344 θησαυρός) and is a treasury or storehouse, or the treasure that is put there (Cp. Matt. 6:19, 20 “treasure”). This phrase makes the verse contain the figure of speech irony, for who would store, as a treasure for themselves, wrath? Yet this is the picture being presented them. As a greedy man stores up wealth for himself, these hard and unrepentant people store up more and more wrath for themselves, which they will receive at the Day of Judgment.

“day of wrath, when... righteous judgment.” The day of wrath and the righteous judgment are not two separate events. The day of wrath is the day “when” the righteous judgment of God is revealed. The Greek *kai* (usually “and”) can be understood as a “when” occasionally when it connects an expression of time with something that occurs in that time (BDAG; cp. Matt. 26:45; Mark 15:25). In this verse, the wrath of God and the “righteous” judgment of God are intertwined. The wrath of God is not unrighteous. It is not “a necessary evil.” Rather, it is part of the righteous nature of God to honor mankind’s freewill and give people the judgment that they have asked for via their words and behavior. The genitives (of wrath; of the righteous judgment; of God) without the definite articles emphasize the quality of the noun (Cp. Lenski, Meyer), but we put them in our version for clarity.

2:6. Quoted from Ps. 62:12.

2:8. “selfishly ambitious.” The Greek is *eritheia* (#2052 ἐριθεία). Spicq (Theological Lexicon) says, “...*eritheia* is used seven times in NT, including twice in the sin lists (2 Cor. 12:20, Gal. 5:20), along with *eris* [strife], which indicates that the former does not have the same meaning as the latter and is not derived from it. ...it was formed from *eritheuomai*, “work for hire.” The *erithos* is a day laborer; the term is used especially for weavers and spinners. As a result, the term *eritheia* (paid work) originally had a positive sense, but it came to mean that which is done solely for interested motives (“What’s in it for me?”). Hence the meaning: contrive to gain a position...not in order to serve the state, but to gain honor and wealth. From that developed two other meanings: 1) dispute or intrigue to gain advantages; or 2) personal ambition, the exclusive pursuit of one’s own interest. These connotations of intrigue, disputations, and chicanery, appear in all the NT texts.” Aristotle used the word of those who seek political office by unfair means, and Philo wrote, “The only stable government is one in which there is no strife and no intrigue [*eritheia*]” (Spicq, Vol. II, p. 70). “The idea is “base self-seeking,” the “baseness” that cannot shift its gaze to higher things” (TDNT). It is a complex word that takes on different meanings in different contexts, so attention to the context is important. Meanings include, selfishness, selfish ambition, rivalry, base self-seeking, and the use of dishonest means to get personal gain (particularly in political circles).

2:15. “also bearing witness.” The Greek is *summartureo* (#4828 συμμαρτυρέω), and means to bear joint witness. Their works demonstrate what is in their hearts, and their conscience bears a joint witness to that as well.

“reasonings.” The Greek is *logismos* (#3053 λογισμός) and is a “reasoning,” not just a “thought.”

“one another.” Most translations treat this as if it is the person’s thoughts that vary back and forth between accusing and excusing, and this could be the case, but the Greek is not clear. Meyer argues that it does not refer to that, but refers to the people excusing and accusing one another. Lenski admits that the Greek can be read either way. There seems to be more evidence in the context that the people act individually according to their heart and conscience, and that action then either excuses or accuses others. It is of course the case that people can be double minded, but that does not seem to be the emphasis here, although it can apply. It is best to translate the verse in a way that allows for both possibilities. A more literal reading of the Greek phrase would be, “and their reasonings accusing or else excusing between one another.”

2:16. “God will judge.” The Greek verb, though translated as future (“will”), is actually in the present tense. This is known as the futuristic present (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, pp 535-37), which is the figure of speech *heterosis*, a switching of tenses for effect. Most versions, as we do, simply translate the verb according to its future tense meaning rather than its present tense form.

2:18 “determine the things that are best.” In the Greek, the word for determine is *dokimazō* (#1381 δοκιμάζω). It means to put something to the test with the hope of recognizing it as genuine, or worthy; to *prove* something in order to *approve* of it (Trench; Thayer). It was used by the Greeks in the context of metallurgy (Thayer). Here it is applied to *ta diapheronta*, literally, “the things that differ,” from *diapherō* (#1308 διαφέρω). The differing things are that which are good and evil, which carry (*phero*) in different directions. The sense of the Greek is that you examine the difference between good and evil, approving of the good things that pass the test. In English, “determine”

shows that you examine and arrive at a judgment, while “things that are best” captures the sense of difference and approval (see *dokimazō* in Rom. 1:28).

2:20. “formulation.” Cp. NAB translation. The Greek word is *morphosis* (#3446 μόρφωσις), used only here and in 2 Timothy 3:5. This word refers to “the state of being formally structured” (BDAG). Hence, the law was the formulation of knowledge and truth, structured and brought together in one work. In this sense, it could alternately be translated the “embodiment” of knowledge and truth (cp. ESV; NIV; NASB).

2:22. “do you rob temples?” What does this question mean in relation to abhorring idols? It is not simply a remark against stealing, for the apostle already addressed this in verse 21 with the question, “do you steal?” Rather, this phrase is meant to call out hypocrisy and compromise. Rome, along with the entire Roman Empire, was crowded with temples, which were filled with idolatrous images and artifacts. Such artifacts were often very costly, made of gold and silver. Also, some temples were used as banks, in which people’s money was kept. In fact, our English word “money” comes from “Moneta,” the name of a goddess who had a temple in Rome in which money was both minted and stored. Since ancient Temples did not have particularly good security, temple robbery was somewhat common in ancient times. Paul raises the question, you say you hate idols, but do get dishonest gain by robbing temples? Paul thus brings up the commands of Deuteronomy 7:25: “The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God” (NIV). As Lenski writes,

“It is the violation of the first principle of Judaism itself, its abhorrence of all idols.

To snatch some jewel, gold, or silver, or other valuable from an idol temple, to buy it from another, to work it up into something else, to sell it yea, even to touch it and in any way to possess it, really destroyed a Jew’s Judaism.”

2:23. This verse is a statement and not a question. Compare the ESV and NET translations. It is a verdict paralleling vs. 17, as Lenski says, “What, then, is the verdict? ‘Thou art dishonoring God!’” If this verse was meant as a question, it would hardly be worth asking, because of course one dishonors God by transgressing the law!

2:25. “to be sure... but” Cp. NAB. This is a common Greek construction where two sides of a matter are presented. It is often translated as “on the one... on the other hand.” The translation “to be sure” is from the Greek word *men* (#3303 μέν), which here is “introducing a concessive clause... *to be sure*” (BDAG). This word works in conjunction with the word *de* (#1161 δέ), which gives the other fuller side of the matter. The apostle Paul concedes that (“on the one hand”) circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law, but what he gives with one hand he takes away with the other, for he immediately adds that (“on the other hand”) if you break the law your circumcision is useless. This is important because the apostle will affirm in the next chapter that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), and so circumcision of the flesh is not profitable for justification, for no one can keep the whole law.

2:29. “inwardly.” The Greek is *kruptos* (#2927 κρυπτός), meaning “hidden” or “secret.” Paul says a true Jew is one who is a Jew in the secret, hidden parts of the soul. In this sense, the translation “inwardly” is good.

“On the contrary.” The Greek is the strong “but,” *alla* (#235 ἀλλά), which means “but, nevertheless, notwithstanding, etc., and sets in contrast that which comes before from the new thought being introduced. Especially after a negation (“not” and “nor” in

verse 28), “on the contrary is a good and clear translation (Cp. Holman Christian Standard Bible; Lenski).

“in spirit.” The Greek is “in spirit,” *en pneuma* (#4151 πνεῦμα). It refers to being “in spirit” or perhaps more understandably, “in union with the spirit of God,” which means in relation to God via the spirit of God which a Christian receives when he is born again. The Greek *en* is always in the dative case, and can be instrumental, so many Trinitarian translators understand this phrase to mean, “by the Spirit,” meaning that it is the Person of the Holy Spirit who circumcises a person’s heart at the time he believes, but that is not what this verse is referring to. Neither does this use of the word “spirit” refer to our “attitude.” If that were the case, the verse would read something such as: “true circumcision is of the heart, in the attitude, not by the written code...” Although there are verses where “spirit” does refer to an activity of the mind and can mean “attitude,” that is not its meaning here. Even if a person was a Jew who had a wonderful attitude about obeying God’s laws, he could not be righteous in God’s sight except through Christ. The Christian, whether Jew or Greek in background, was part of the “true circumcision” only by virtue of being born again of the spirit of God. Thus, true circumcision is always “in union with,” or “in connection with,” the spirit.

3:2. “First of all...” This short verse reveals the feelings of the Jews (and rightfully so) toward the Law. Christians have been influenced by the writings to the Christian Church (Acts-Jude) to see the Law as a yoke of bondage, a burden, and weak through the flesh. Thus it seems that all we can say about it is that we are glad we did not live under the Law. The Jew, on the other hand, considered the Law one of God’s greatest gifts to them as a nation. The Law (meaning the Tanack, the entire OT), was God’s guidance that showed them how to live, how to run a just society, and how to be holy before God. Indeed, Jewish life would not be Jewish life were it not for the Law.

It also helps us to see the wonderful attitude the Jews had toward the Law when we recognize that other nations did not have anything like it. It is truly a gift of God’s grace that He gave the Law and in doing so revealed Himself, His love, His righteousness, what He expected from mankind, and how to live prosperous and blessed lives. The gods of other nations gave no such gift. There is no “Word of God” in the pagan religions. Poets and authors such as Homer wrote about the gods, but what did they reveal? First, the stories themselves were contradictory in many ways. And the gods they revealed were often worse than any good human would be. They were jealous, vengeful, capricious, and often delighted in causing trouble. Furthermore, unlike the Law of Moses, which told people exactly what God wanted, pagans never quite knew how to please their gods, or if they were angry (something the people assessed by bad fortune such as sickness, losing a war, a famine, pestilence, etc.), they did not know exactly how to appease them. No wonder the Jews loved the Law and considered it a gift. Compared to our freedom in Christ, it was very restrictive, but how many of the commands of God to the Church are in the Law in one form or another? Many! Romans 7:12 will tell us that the Law is holy, just, and good. The Law, and the Christ, and the New Testament, are a true and unique witness of the love that our true God has for mankind. He not only wants a relationship with us, He wants to make sure that we know how to live such that life is a blessing and joy.

2:24. Quoted from Isaiah 52:5.

2:27. “in spite of.” The Greek *dia* refers to things passing through, which may be favorable or hostile. Here it is hostile, and has the sense of “in spite of.” (See Lenski).

3:3. “Some did not believe.” Figure of speech, *tapeinosis*, or understatement. “Some?!” Oh if that were only the case, that “some” did not believe, but “most” did. Sadly, for most of Israel’s history, only “some” believed, while the majority lived in unbelief. Yet those who believed had such a huge impact, that it could surely seem like only some did not have faith.

3:4. Quoted from Ps. 51:4.

3:10-18. A catena of passages from Psalms and Isaiah. Quoted from Ps. 14:1-3, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, Isaiah 59:7, 8, and Ps. 36:1.

3:26. “faith in Jesus.” This translation takes the genitive as an objective genitive, where Jesus is the object of our faith. See also Rom 3:22.

3:20. “declared righteous.” Lenski states, “The word [*dikaioo*, #1344 δικαιω] is not ethical (middle in force): “becomes righteous,” but everywhere forensic (a straight passive): “declared righteous.” The difference between, “becomes righteous” (or “is made righteous”) and “is declared righteous” is subtle but important. The Christian is declared righteous by God based upon the cleansing sacrifice of Christ. God declares that we are righteous while we are still in sin in our flesh. It is not as if we are “made righteous” such that our flesh is no longer sinful. Romans 7:14-25 shows that is not the case. God declares us righteous due to the effect of the work of Christ in spite of the sin that lives in us. We have an obligation to try to live sinless lives, but as Paul discovered, no amount of human effort will attain that goal. We are wretched sinners, but thank God that He simply declared us to be righteous.

“comes only the full knowledge of sin.” The context says that no flesh will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the Law. Then it says why: “for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.” The context implies that making people know sin is all the Law does, it cannot make on righteous in God’s sight. Thus adding the implied word “only” clarifies the argument. A number of versions translate the concept into the verse: “all that the Law does is to tell us what is sinful” (NJB); “The law simply shows us how sinful we are” (NLT); For all the law can do is to make men conscious of sin” (Williams).

“full knowledge.” The Greek is *epignosis* (1922 επιγνωσις) and does not just refer to “knowledge,” but rather a full or complete knowledge or realization. When the Law came, “sin increased” (Rom. 5:20). People did not just know about sin, they fully knew sin because they experienced it, and its dreadful consequences, for themselves.

3:21. “righteousness from God.” This is the genitive of origin (cp. NIV). “Although the law and the prophets are bearing witness to it” is similar to RSV and ESV. “Witness” is a present participle. Even now they bear witness to the principle (law) of faith.

3:22. “faith in Jesus Christ.” In this verse, the genitive phrase in Greek, “faith of Jesus Christ. Typical of genitive phrases, this one can be translated many different ways. As always, therefore, the context of the verse and the scope of Scripture are necessary for arriving at the proper translation to arrive at the meaning God intended the phrase to communicate. The whole book of Romans is about the change that God instituted due to the sacrifice of Christ. Salvation is no longer a matter of doing the works of the Law, but rather of having faith in Jesus Christ. In that light, this verse can be seen to be an objective genitive, where Jesus Christ is the object of our faith. Thus, “faith in Christ” is

the correct translation in this context. This verse contrasts the revelation of the Church Epistles, which say salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, with the revelation of Old Testament, which says the works of the Law are also necessary (Deut. 6:25). This verse and many others like it in Romans, Galatians, etc., make it crystal clear that our righteousness in the sight of God comes by having faith in Jesus Christ. There is, however, a possible sub-current in the verse that we should pay attention to. It would also be grammatically possible to translate this phrase as a subjective genitive, in which case it would mean, “Jesus Christ’s faithfulness.” That is not its meaning in this verse, because if righteousness came only by Jesus Christ’s faithfulness then everyone would be righteous, but it is a legitimate grammatical meaning, and it would point to the fact that our righteousness is only available due to the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. In that sense, a deep meaning of the verse could be seen to be that righteousness is only available because of the faithfulness of Christ, but only procured into the life of a believer by his or her faith in Christ.

“righteousness.” The book of Romans clearly establishes that the Christian becomes righteous, or “in right standing,” before God by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22, 26, 28; 4:5, 13; 5:1; 9:30; 10:6). However, somewhat complicating the issue of each believer being righteous before God is that almost every English version of the Bible uses both “righteousness” and “justification,” in the New Testament, and most English readers think they are translated from different Greek words. However, that is not the case. The same Greek root word and root meaning underlies the different Greek words translated both “righteousness” and “justification.” That is why different English versions of the New Testament do not agree when to use “righteousness” (or “righteous,” etc.) and when to use “justification” (or “justify,” etc.).

The reason both “righteousness” and “justification” are used even though the Greek is the same, is that, in general, scholars have agreed to translated the attributes of God as “righteous,” while translating what God has done for men as “justification.” D. W. Diehl writes:

“Even though there is no distinction between righteousness and justice in the biblical vocabulary [the Greek words], theologians often use the former to refer to the attribute of God in himself and the latter to refer to the actions of God with respect to his creation.”³⁰

We believe that translating the same Greek words both as “righteousness” and “justification” causes problems. First and most obvious, the average English reader does not know that the Greek words are related, and assumes that “righteousness” comes from one Greek word and “justification” comes from another. Furthermore, the English words “righteousness” and “justification,” while related in meaning, do not mean the same thing. In English, “righteousness” means “to act in accord with divine or moral law,” while “justification” relates to God’s judicial pronouncement that the person has been found innocent or absolved from guilt.

A second major problem with translating the same Greek words both “righteousness” and “justification” is that the internal consistency of the Church Epistles,

³⁰ Walter Elwell, editor, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984), p. 953, “Righteousness.”

and especially as it would be seen in Romans and Galatians, is lost. If the word “righteousness” appears all the way through the New Testament, then a consistent message is being set forth. If one sees, “righteousness...through faith” in Romans 3:22, but “justified by faith” (NIV, ESV) in Romans 5:1, although the reader gets the general meaning of the verses, the consistency is lost.

A third problem with translating the same Greek words both “righteousness” and “justification” is that the flow of the pattern of salvation is not clearly maintained from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The idea of salvation, which is quite often communicated by the word “saved” (Greek: *sōzō*) in the New Testament, was generally communicated by the word “righteousness” in the Old Testament. Examples abound. Romans 4:9 recounts what we learned in Genesis 15:5; that Abraham’s faith was counted as “righteousness.”

The paradigm for a person’s righteousness in the Old Testament was in three parts. First, God is righteous, and many verses attest to that fact. God’s righteousness sets the standard for mankind to attain. Second, it was people’s duty to live righteously, according to God’s standards. The Old Testament made it clear that for God it was more acceptable for a person to live righteously than sacrifice (Prov. 21:3), and righteousness was the plumb line by which God measured a person’s actions (Isa. 28:17). However, no one could ever perfectly uphold the righteousness demanded by the Law. Therefore it was people’s faithfulness to try to keep the Law or do what was righteous, and their trust that God would reward them for it, that God counted to them as righteousness. The New English Bible does an excellent job of translating Habakkuk 2:4, “...the righteous man will live by being faithful.” In this verse, like many others in the Old Testament, the word “live” referred to living forever. Thus, we could expand Habakkuk to read, “...the righteous man will live [forever] by being faithful.” In many contexts, the concept of living righteously often included being faithful year after year. Third, the word “righteous” was used throughout the Old Testament for people to whom, because of their righteousness, God would grant everlasting life. As a side note, the word “wicked” in the Old Testament was used as a direct contrast to the righteous. They were ones to whom God would not grant everlasting life.

As we stated above, “righteousness” in the Old Testament was basically equivalent to “saved” in the New Testament. However, because that is not well known, some scriptural documentation is warranted. The list of verses relating righteousness to being acceptable with God and having everlasting life is far too large and too varied to include, but there are some profound examples. To get a fuller impact of the relation between righteousness and salvation, just substitute “saved” or “salvation” instead of “righteousness.” Deuteronomy 6:25 says the Israelites would be “righteous” if they were careful to obey the Law. Psalm 1:3-6 teaches us that the righteous will stand (i.e., do well) in the Day of Judgment, but the wicked will not. The righteous are the ones who will dwell on the earth forever (Ps. 37:29). The righteous will not be moved, which refers to them being around forever (Ps. 55:22; 112:6), and Proverbs 10:30 and 12:3 expand that to say although the righteous will not be moved, the wicked will not dwell in the land. Psalm 58:11 says the righteous have a reward, referring to an everlasting reward. Psalm 69:28 says the righteous are enrolled in the book of life. Psalm 92:12 and 13 say the righteous flourish and are planted in the house of Yahweh. Proverbs 10:2 say righteousness delivers from death, meaning everlasting death. The righteous person who

does not sin will live forever (Ezek. 3:21). A person who keeps God's laws is righteous and will live forever (Ezek. 18:5-9). If a wicked man does righteousness, he will live forever (Ezek. 18:21, 22, 27, 28; 33:12-16). A righteous person who changes and practices wickedness will not live forever, but will die (Ezek. 18:26). At the Day of Judgment people will see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, and the wicked will be burned up while the righteous will be healed (Malachi 3:17- 4:2).

When the Christian Church started on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), God began a new program. Whereas the Administration of the Law was in force from Moses until the Day of Pentecost, on the Day of Pentecost God started the Administration of Grace (Eph. 3:2), which is also called the Administration of the Sacred Secret (Eph. 2:9). As we have seen above, under the Administration of the Law people were saved by their righteous acts and faith. In the Administration of Grace, people were saved by their faith in Christ without the works of the Law. Theologians refer to this doctrine as "justification by faith." A short definition of the doctrine of justification by faith is: "People are counted to be free from guilt and the penalty of sin because of their faith in Christ." We might also define it as, "People are declared 'righteous' in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ." A person only needs to have faith in Christ, not both faith and works, to be saved (Rom. 3:20-22; Eph. 2:8). Added to that is the fact that in the Administration of Grace salvation involves "birth." A saved person is one who is "born again," and his or her salvation is guaranteed (1 Pet. 1:3, 23; Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5). Thus, unlike the Old Testament when a righteous person could start being wicked and then be told he would "die," i.e., die forever, in the Administration of Grace, when a person is born again, his or her salvation is assured and the person will absolutely have everlasting life. The salvation that was not gained by works cannot be lost by evil works.

Now that we have seen how important "righteousness" is in the Old Testament, it is easy to see why it is so important to clearly maintain the concept of "righteousness" in the New Testament, especially in Romans and Galatians, which are the Church Epistles that most clearly show the transition from the Law to the Grace Administration. Also, people can easily see the greatness of what God has done in Christ declaring people "righteous" apart from doing the works of the Law.

The Greek words in the New Testament that relate to righteousness, and are all from the root *dikē*, "right," are: *dikaios* (adjective); *dikaiosunē* (substantive: adjective used as a noun); *dikaioō* (verb); *dikaiōs* (adverb); and *dikaiōma* (noun). We will now take the time to define these, using definitions found in BDAG and Thayer's lexicons.

1. *Dikaios* (Adjective. Strong's #1342, δίκαιος). "Observant of what is right (*dikē*)."
"Righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be." (The neuter denotes that which is obligatory in view of certain requirements of justice, right, fair, equitable). In a broad sense, "upright, righteous, virtuous. Keeping the commands of God; used of O. T. people noted for piety. In a narrower sense, rendering to each his due; and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them. In a context that has a negative idea predominating, "innocent, faultless, guiltless."
2. *Dikaiosunē* (Substantive: an adjective used as a noun. Strong's #1343, δικαιοσύνη).
"The virtue or quality or state of one who is *dikaios* (righteous). In the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be; righteousness. The condition acceptable to God. Thus, in the writings of Paul *dikaiosunē* has a peculiar meaning, opposed to the views of the Jews and Jewish Christians who were still zealous for the Law, that *dikaiosunē* denotes the state of being acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's

- possession through faith in Jesus Christ. *Dikaioṣunē* is also used in the narrower sense of justice, or the virtue which gives each one his due; thus, the quality, state, or practice of judicial responsibility with focus on fairness, justice, equitableness.
3. *Dikaioō* (Verb. Strong's #1417, δικαιόω). To declare or pronounce someone to be righteous, just, or such as he ought to be. To declare and treat someone as righteous. To make one righteous (however, *dikaioō* should be compared to *hosioō* and *axioō*, which do not mean "to make holy or to make worthy, but rather to "declare, judge, or treat" as holy or worthy. The emphasis of the verb seems to be not that God "makes" us righteous (although that meaning fits a few contexts), as if the emphasis is on the state of righteousness that we now have, but rather that God "declares" us righteous, and thus that is how we are before Him in spite of our sins and shortcomings. The glory goes to God, who declared sinners to be righteous. *Dikaioō* is especially used as "declare to be righteous," in the technical phraseology of Paul, respecting God who judges and declares such men as put faith in Christ to be righteous and acceptable to Him. In contexts where the negative idea is predominant, it means "to declare guiltless." The passive voice is used reflexively, "to show oneself to be righteous."
 4. *Dikaiōma* (Noun. Strong's #1345, δικαιώμα). Universally, of an appointment of God having the force of law; a regulation relating to just or right action, what has been established and ordained by law: thus, a regulation, requirement, commandment or ordinance. A judicial decision or sentence, either the favorable judgment which acquits, or the unfavorable one that is a sentence of condemnation; even sometimes extending to mean a punishment. Also, *dikaiōma* is used of a righteous act or deed.
 5. *Dikaiōs* (Adverb. Strong's # 1346 δικαιώς). "Righteously" (EDNT), justly, properly, uprightly. As is right, agreeable with what is right.
 6. *Dikaiōsis* (Noun. Strong's #1347 δικαιώσις). "Righteousness, justification, vindication, acquittal." It is both the process and state of being. It is the act of God's declaring men free from guilt and acceptable to him; adjudging them to be righteous; it is also the righteousness we have as a result of that action. (Rom. 4:25)

3:23. "have sinned" is aorist, because we have sinned in the past. But "fall" is present. We have not just "fallen" (past) short of the glory of God, we "fall" (present) short of it on a regular basis. There was a temptation to translate this verse, "...all have sinned, and even now fall short of the glory of God."

3:24. "accomplished in Christ Jesus." The Greek phrase uses the word *en*, which can mean "by," or "in" with the idea of "in connection with" (cp. Lenski; Hendrickson). Some scholars would expand that to mean the redemption that is embodied by Christ. Scholars who support the translation, "in connection with" argue that God is the author of the plan of redemption, God is referred to as the Redeemer throughout the Old Testament, and God is mentioned as setting forth Christ as the atoning sacrifice in the context (3:25). While these arguments are true, the simple translation, "in Christ" is not clear to most English readers. Furthermore, the concept of "by" is clearly in the Greek text. The NIV, uses "by," and scholars such as Boice (cp. *Romans: Justification by Faith* by James Boice) prefer "by" for several reasons. First, it is a legitimate translation of the Greek. Second, it is clear to English readers and fits with the scope of Scripture. Our redemption was paid for by Jesus Christ, as many Scriptures attest. It was Christ who gave himself for us (Titus 2:14), and redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13). Third, it fits with the Old Testament concept of the "kinsman-redeemer," the close family member who could redeem a person or piece of property. The best example of the kinsman-redeemer in the Old Testament is Boaz, who appears in the book of Ruth. To be a kinsman-redeemer a person had to be a close relative, be willing to take the

responsibility upon himself, and be able to pay the price. Jesus Christ is the ultimate kinsman-redeemer. He was a close relative, a member of mankind. He was willing to die for our sins even when we did not deserve to have our sins forgiven, and he, and he alone of all mankind, was able to pay the price for the sins of mankind since he alone was sinless.

Nevertheless, “by” offers a somewhat limited view of the meaning of the verse, which seems to be saying more than just that our redemption came by Jesus Christ. The fullness of our redemption was not just “by” him, in a very real sense it “was” him. He was the fulfillment of the promise of a seed of a woman, a lamb from the flock, a lion from the tribe of Judah, a sinless sacrifice, a perfect offering with no bones broken, and so much more. But how to get both the “by” and “in” into the same verse. Cranfield has a translation that comes very close “the redemption *accomplished* in Christ Jesus” (C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*). God is the great Redeemer, and Jesus Christ was His way of redeeming mankind, nay, much more than that, the fallen world itself, which Jesus Christ participated in by offering himself, and thus being the de facto redeemer.

3:25. “set him forth.” The Greek is *protithemai* (#4388 προτιθεμαι) and it has two important meanings that are relevant to this verse. 1) to set forth, put forward publicly, present, offer; (2) literally, to set before oneself; hence to plan, purpose, or intend. Historically, scholars and commentators have been divided as to which meaning fits in Romans 3:25. In favor of “planned” or “purposed” is the fact that *protithemai* only occurs three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:13; 3:25; and Eph. 1:9), and the other two times it refers to “plan” or “purpose.” Also, there is no doubt that God “planned” for Jesus Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind. On the other hand, “set forth” is the overwhelming meaning of *protithemai* in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and thus the believers in Rome would have been accustomed to hearing about the sacrifices and offerings that were “set forth” by God (Ex. 40:4, 23; Lev. 24:8; Ps. 100:3). And Romans 3:25 is in the context of Jesus being an atoning sacrifice. From a larger perspective, however, there is no doubt that in the context of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, both “planned” and “set forth” apply well, and this could be an example of the figure of speech *amphibologia* (double entendre), where one thing is said but two things are meant. God both planned, and set forth, Jesus, as an atoning sacrifice.

“atoning sacrifice.” The Greek is *hilastērion* (#2435 ἱλαστήριον). It has two distinct meanings, both of which are significant in this verse. The first meaning is: A sin offering; a sacrifice to atone; an appeasement necessitated by sin. In this first definition here is a “focus on the means by which sins are forgiven; having atoning power, bringing about reconciliation” (Friberg). The second meaning of *hilastērion* is: The place where the expiation occurred. The majority of translators and commentators believe that the idea of an offering or payment for sin is the primary emphasis in this verse, and thus translate *hilastērion* as “sacrifice of atonement” (NIV; NRSV), “sacrifice for reconciliation” (NJB; cp. Williams); “expiation” (RSV; Cassirer), and “propitiation” (ESV; HCSB; KJV; NASB). Although “propitiation” is used by a lot of translators, we agree with Louw & Nida that it misses the point. They write:

Though some traditional translations render ἱλαστήριον [*hilastērion*] as ‘propitiation,’ this involves a wrong interpretation of the term in question.

Propitiation is essentially a process by which one does a favor to a person in order to make him or her favorably disposed, but in the NT God is never the object of propitiation since he is already on the side of people. ἱλασμός [*hilasmos*] and ἱλαστήριον [*hilastērion*] denote the means of forgiveness and not propitiation.

Although one of the results of Christ's sacrifice was the withholding of the wrath of God, a wrath we deserved, we believe it is wrong to translate this verse in such a way as it presents Christ's death as "appeasing" God. The sacrifice of Jesus did not placate God, but rather was a provision that our loving God made for mankind so that we would be acceptable to Him even though we had sinned against Him. This is a case where we really do have to pay attention to the theme of the Bible, and not just look at the way the Greek word was used in Greek culture.

The Greek gods were angry, jealous, gods, did not have any particular love for mankind. They often acted immorally, and were sometimes offended by things, such as being spurned at love, that they should not have been offended at. Much of the ritual and sacrifice in the pagan world was to appease these gods, and *hilasterion* is accurately translated "propitiation," a sacrifice that appeases the wrath of the gods, in the context of these pagan deities. However, when it comes to our God, He has always loved people, and His wrath is a function of His justice and righteousness, not any immoral nature or actions. Before mankind had ever sinned, in the Garden of Eden, God warned that sin would result in death (Gen. 2:17) and since that time people have continually sinned against God. Sacrifices, including the death of Christ, were not made to "appease" God, as if He were angry because people were breaking His laws. Instead, the sacrifices pay the legitimate debt we incur when we sin, and thus they allow God to withhold any judgment and wrath and yet still be righteous in His judgments. Thus, translations such as "sacrifice of atonement," "sacrifice for reconciliation," or "expiation," are much better than "propitiation."

Now we turn to the second definition of *hilasterion*, which, in biblical contexts, refers to the "mercy seat." *Hilasterion* is the word the Septuagint used for the "mercy seat," the solid gold lid on the Ark of the Covenant that was sprinkled with the blood of the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement (Ex 25:17; Lev. 16:14-16). Although some commentaries and translations have "mercy seat" in Romans 3:25, we do not see that as the primary meaning here. The mercy seat received the blood of the sacrifice, but it did not itself bleed or die. There had to be a shedding of blood in order for there to be remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). God had decreed that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and there had to be the death of a sinless sacrifice if people's sin was to be atoned for. Jesus Christ died in our place, and is his atoning sacrifice that we appropriate to ourselves by having faith in his blood. Did the children of Israel have faith in the blood on the mercy seat? Yes, but it was in connection with the entire ceremony on the Day of Atonement. They would not have had faith in blood being on the mercy seat if that blood was not from an animal that had only been cut and wounded, but had not died. There had to be the death of a sacrifice of atonement for God to forgive people and declare them righteous, and that is the point Romans 3:25 and 26 are making.

There is merit, however, in recognizing the subtle double meaning in *hilasterion* in this verse. The verse says that God showed His righteousness by passing over "the sins previously committed," i.e., the sins of those people who lived before Christ. The idea

being communicated is that God passed over the sins of the people who lived before Christ died, but when Christ died his sacrifice atoned for the sins of those Old Testament people too. Thus, in a way Christ is like the Mercy Seat, which one day each year is sprinkled with blood to atone for the sins Israel has committed. When the people of Israel sinned, their sin was not immediately atoned for, but awaited the Day of Atonement. On that day, the tenth day of Tishri (the seventh month), the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies and atoned for all the sin of the people. Thus individuals often waited many months for atonement for their sin. In the same way, God passed over the sin of the people before Christ, and did not judge them for it. Then, many years later when Christ died, his death atoned for their sin. “What actually took away the sins of the Old Testament saints was Christ’s blood” (Lenski: *Romans*). “The merits of the cross reach backward as well as foreword” (Hendrickson: *Romans*).

“to show.” See note on “with a view to show” in verse 26.

“passing over.” The Greek is *pareisis* (#3929 πᾶρεσις), and this is the only use of this word in the New Testament. It means a passing over, letting pass, neglecting, disregarding. This is a very exact recounting of what happened with God’s justice and judgment before the death of Christ. Israel offered sacrifices to God, but in actual fact, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4). God knew that, so He withheld His final Judgment of people until Christ could come and atone for sin. It is a very good thing that God waited for Christ to be the sacrifice for sin before He judged the world. Before Christ died there was no actual effectual atonement, no effective payment for sin, and thus there was no actual forgiveness for sin available. Thus, if God had judged people when they died, instead of waiting until Christ had come to judge, the people before Christ would all be doomed, because not one person would be righteous in God’s sight. Job would have been quite right: “How then can a man be righteous before God?” (Job 25:4). However because God’s Judgment is future, and well after the death of Christ, atonement resulting in everlasting life is available for everyone—those who lived both before Christ and after him.

Romans 3:25 is very good evidence that people do not live on after they die, as most Christians believe. If people’s souls or spirits lived on after they died, then that soul would have been judged right after the person died. But if the person died before Christ, nothing he could have done would have made him righteous in God’s sight, and so he would have been doomed. However, because all the resurrections occur in the future, after the death of Christ, salvation is available.

3:26. “with a view to show.” Lenski is quite right that many versions and commentators miss the sense of what God is saying in verses 25 and 26 by breaking them into two sentences that start the same way, thus making them into independent thoughts in which the second sentence elucidates the first. For example, the ESV has, “This was to show...it was to show...” the NIV has “He did this to demonstrate...He did it to demonstrate...” and the KJV has “to declare...To declare...” If we are to understand this verse, it is important to see how these phrases are connected and why. The Greek phrase in verse 25 starts, *eis endeixis*, while verse 26 opens with *pros ho endiexis*. The noun *endiexis* is a “pointing out,” and hence a demonstration or showing forth. Being a “verbal noun,” a noun that inherently connotes action, it is not off the mark to translate it as a verb in English, which most versions do. Thus *endeixis* is translated “show” (ESV, REV; RSV; NRSV); “declare” (KJV); “demonstrate” (NASB; NIV), “prove” (NAB), etc.

Verse 26 start with *pros ho endiexis*, which is not like *eis endeixis*, which means “to show” (more literally, “for a showing”), but instead means, “with a view to showing” (Lenski; Wuest, *Word Studies*; Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible). Most translators see no essential difference in the two phrases, and that is why they have them start two different sentences. However, if the translators make the verse into two sentences, as we saw with the KJV, NIV, and ESV above, then the subject of both sentences is God’s making Christ an atoning sacrifice, and then God gives two different reasons for doing that, the first being the last half of verse 25 and the second being verse 26. Essentially, translated the way the KJV, ESV, NIV, and many others have it, the verses mean: “God set forth Christ as an atoning sacrifice to show His righteousness in connection with passing over the sins previously committed.” And, “God set forth Christ as an atoning sacrifice to show His righteousness at this present time.” We do not believe that is what the verses mean. Verse 26 is not an explanation of why God set forth Christ as an atoning sacrifice; it is an explanation of why God passed over the sins “previously committed,” that is committed before the death and resurrection of Christ.

God passed over, disregarded, ignored, the sins committed before Christ. He had to, because if He had judged mankind before the death of Christ, everyone would have been guilty of sin and then sentenced to everlasting death. This condemnation would have been “just” on God’s part because the people would have truly deserved everlasting death, but it would not have accomplished God’s purposes for mankind. Furthermore, since no one can really be righteous before God on his own merits, condemning mankind without giving them a fair chance to be righteous before Him would not have even really been righteous. So God passed over the sins committed before Christ—why?—“with a view to show his righteousness at this present time.” God set forth Jesus to be an atoning sacrifice to show His righteousness and He overlooked people’s sins before Christ in order to show His righteousness now, because in light of Christ’s atonement, He would be seen to be truly righteous, and also One who declares people righteous who have faith in His Messiah no matter when they lived.

3:27. “By what kind of law?” The Greek phrase is *dia poios nomos*, and the Greek word *poios* can mean “what” or “what kind of, what sort of.” In this verse the word *nomos* is not referring to the Mosaic Law, but just “law,” or “principle,” “norm,” or “basis,” so it is better to render the phrase by “what kind of law,” opening the door for multiple possible answers (cp. ESV, NASB; Lenski).

3:30. Justify the Jews, *ek*, “out of,” faith (we say “by,”) because they first had it, and the Gentiles “through” that same faith.

3:31. “Uphold,” cp. BDAG. The “law” or “principle” (*nomos* can mean both) of faith is in the law, as we will see from Abraham in Rom. 4. This is the wider use of law as in the entire OT, not the narrower use of Law as just the Mosaic statutes.

4:3. Quoted from Gen. 15:6.

4:4. “gift.” The word is the usual word for grace, *charis* (#5485 χάρις), but here it is not used with its theological trappings. The word also has a cultural meaning of “a gift of favor.”

4:7, 8. Quoted from Ps. 32:1, 2.

4:7. “were forgiven... were covered.” Most versions translate these verbs in the present tense, “are forgiven... are covered.” The verbs are in the aorist (past) tense, however, so we rendered it “were covered.”

“blessed.” The word for “blessed” is *makarios* (#3107 μακάριος), which also means “happy.” Not only are we blessed, but we should feel happy that our sins have been covered and not counted against us.

4:8. “not.” The Greek is stronger than the English “not.” It is the phrase *ou me*, literally, “not not,” using two different Greek words for “no” together.

4:11. “seal.” The Greek word *sphragis* (#4973 σφραγίς) referred to a seal, as books were sealed.

“the purpose was to make him.” The phrase is a purpose idiom (cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*; cp. ESV, RSV, NRSV. It is hard to communicate the purpose with just “that.” This shows that God had a plan to clearly reveal that He would justify people by faith—which He did in the OT and will do in the Millennium. However, today, in the Administration of the Sacred Secret, we see the ultimate justification by faith, because what we have is permanent.

“but are not circumcised.” This is the general idea of the statement. The Greek, “the ones believing through uncircumcision” would not be clear. It means those who believe and are in the condition of uncircumcision. Cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*. The phrase in Greek means without being in a state of circumcision.

4:12. “merely.” This is the essence of “only” here (cp. ESV; RSV). The difficulty with “only” is that the reader may think that it refers to a class of people, i.e., not only the circumcision, but the uncircumcision. However, it refers to another aspect of the circumcision. Being circumcised is not the “only” aspect of following (“falling in line”) with Abraham.

4:13. “seed” Greek is sperma, “seed.” By metonymy “seed” becomes “descendants, offspring,” etc., but we felt that the reader could make that jump as well as the translator. “that comes by” is the genitive of origin. The literal “a righteousness of faith” is much less clear. Although almost all versions read “the righteousness...,” there is no warrant for it in the Greek.

4:14. The Greek word, *katargeo*, means, in this context, to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness, invalidate, make powerless, make ineffective, nullify, make the law invalid (BDAG).

4:15. “for the law produces wrath, but where there is not a law, neither is there a violation.” The believer’s great freedom! We should read this verse and shout for joy. God has delivered Christians from the Law. Galatians tells us to “Stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has set us free.” We are not under Law, therefore we cannot transgress it and be guilty. Step up to faith and receive its benefits!

“For the law produces wrath.” A simple statement of fact. No one could keep the Law, therefore it produced wrath from God.

“violation.” The Greek, *parabasis*, literally means an overstepping, hence, a violation or transgression.

4:16-17. “in the sight of.” Greek is *katenanti* (#2713 κατέναντι). There are two ways to understand how the phrase “in the sight of” fits with the parenthesis: (1) He is the father of us all (as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) in the sight of God. This has the meaning represented in the HCSB: “He is the father of us all in God’s sight” (HCSB). Or (2) “to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of

God” (NRSV), meaning, the promise is secure to those who share the faith of Abraham in God’s sight.

We take the parenthesis in the second sense; it is to be set off as it appears in the REV (cp. NRSV and Kistemaker’s translation). The flow of thought regards those who in God’s sight are of the faith of Abraham; the entire clause about Abraham being the Father of all who believe and the supporting Old Testament quote is parenthetical.

4:16. “*The promise.*” We felt that as long as the subject was ellipsed (Figure of Speech, Ellipsis), we might as well add it in italics for clarity. Most versions simply have “it.”

4:17. Quoted from Gen. 17:5.

“God... who gives life to the dead, and calls into existence the things that do not exist.” (translation as per many versions.) The context is Abraham. Sarah’s womb was “dead” (v. 19), and yet God spoke to Abraham in the past tense (idiom: Prophetic Perfect; see note on “seated,” in Ephesians 2:6).

4:18. Quoted from Gen. 15:5.

“beyond hope, believed in hope.” The word for “beyond” is the preposition *para* (#3844 παρά). Thayer is insightful with regard to its usage here: “*beside, beyond*, i. e. metaphorically, equivalent to *contrary to*... literally, *beyond hope*, i. e. where the laws and course of nature left no room for hope, hence, equivalent to *without* (*A. V. against*) *hope*.” The point is that considering Abraham and Sarah’s body, naturally speaking, they were without any hope of having a child. They were beyond hope. Although Abraham and Sarah were “beyond hope” they believed in hope because God had told them they would have a child.

This is the figure of speech *antanaclasis*, the “the use of the same word in the same sentence in two different senses” (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). Here “hope” is repeated, but used in different senses. The first occurrence refers to natural, worldly hope—in that sense Abraham is beyond hope. The second occurrence of hope, however, is put for metonymy for the promise in which Abraham believed—he believed in hope, that is, he believed in the promise of God who said he would have an heir.

4:19. “already having become dead.” The passive perfect participle. Abraham’s body was “dead” when it came to having children without a miraculous intervention by God, and Sarah was in the same situation. To us, translating the Greek as “as good as dead” blurs the clear meaning of the text. What is a body “as good as dead?” Could he, or could he not have children. The Greek is clear as a bell—he was dead!

4:20. “looking to the promise” (Cp. Lenski)

“was not divided.” Divided is a use of *diakrino* (Cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*). “by unbelief.” There is no word for “by” or “in.” “Unbelief” is in the dative case, and here it is the instrumental dative (Robertson), thus “unbelief” is what causes people to be divided, or waver, or stagger. They doubt, and move in and out of a state of faith. Not Abraham. He did not allow himself to be divided by unbelief. To say “he did not waver in unbelief” is to say he was always in unbelief without varying from it, which of course is not the case. Wuest uses “vacillate” instead of “divided.” Abraham did not vacillate because of unbelief.

4:22. Quoted from Gen. 15:6.

4:23. Quoted from Gen. 15:6.

4:24. “about to be counted.” This is just one of the many verses in the New Testament that states that the Lord will come back quickly. Cp. verses such as Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor.

7:29; Phil. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7; Rev. 1:3; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20. The key to understanding this verse is realizing that “righteousness” in this context is understood in its Old Testament meaning of “saved,” due to the fact that it is used in the quote from the OT just 2 verses earlier. Our righteousness, that is, the consummation of our salvation, is “about” to be reckoned to us; it is about to be realized.

“out from among *the* dead.” Almost every version we checked reads “from the dead.” When the average English speaker reads that Christ was “raised from the dead,” he thinks that “dead” refers to the state of death, as if the verse were saying that “Christ was raised from the state of death,” or that “Christ was raised from being dead.” This is not at all the meaning.

There are serious problems with the translation, “from the dead.” First, there is no word “the” in the Greek text, so “from the dead” would be “from dead.” Second, the word “dead” in the phrase “from the dead,” is a noun, but in the Greek text “dead” is an adjective. More than that, it is a plural adjective. The Greek text reads, *ek nekros*, and means “out from among dead *ones*” [or “dead *people*”], (Cp. Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible; Wuest). The Greek word *ek* means “out from,” and the word *nekros*, as we said, is a plural adjective. An adjective modifies a noun, and thus the adjective “dead” must modify a noun, and thus answer the question “Dead what?” The scope of Scripture shows us that the answer to that question is “dead people.” Since Adam, people have died and been buried. Thus Christ rose out from among the dead *people*, who, not raised by God, stayed in the ground. This explains why the word “dead” is plural; it refers to the many dead who are still in the ground. What the Bible is saying, and what we need to support with a proper English translation, is that when God raised Jesus, He raised him up and out from among all the myriads of dead people who are buried in the ground. Everyone who has died is in the ground, but God raised Jesus out from among those dead people, and gave him life. Furthermore, there will be other times people will be raised out from among the rest of the dead people. At the Rapture, Christians will be raised out from among the rest of the dead, and then at the first resurrection the righteous will be raised out from among the other dead people, the unrighteous being left in the ground until the Resurrection of the Just (Luke 14:14 KJV; Rev. 20:6). There are 44 usages of *ek nekros* in the New Testament, and not one of them refers to the resurrection of the unjust (Acts 24:15). That makes sense because at the resurrection of the unjust, which occurs at the end of Christ’s 1,000-year reign, no one is left in the ground.

Although *ek nekros* could be considered an ellipsis, with the emphasis on “dead” and the word “ones,” or “people” being supplied by the scope of Scripture, the phrase is more an idiom than a true ellipsis. This verse is not saying that Christ was raised from “death,” or “being dead” (a nominative use of death). It is saying that Christ was raised from among those who are dead. The rest of all the humans who had died are still dead and in the ground, and Christ was raised out from among them.

5:5. “disappoint us.” The Greek is *kataischuno* (#2617 καταισχύνω), which means to dishonor or disgrace; put to shame or humiliate; or disappoint (BDAG). The point is that our hope, which is real, will not disappoint us or put us to shame, while false hopes will disappoint and put to shame those who believe in them.

5:6, 7, 8. “in place of the ungodly...for... in our place.” All of these are translations from the Greek preposition *huper* (#5228 ὑπέρ). *Huper* can have the sense of *in place of*, *instead of*, *in the name of* (BDAG, 1c; TDNT, def. 3; Robertson, *Grammar*, pp.630-32

and *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, pp. 35-42; see also Appendix on Greek Prepositions). In such cases the meaning of *substitution* is indicated, as can be clearly seen in Romans 5:7: “For scarcely for [*huper*] a righteous person will one die; though perhaps for [*huper*] a good person someone would even dare to die...” The meaning is clear. The verse is speaking of dying *in place of* someone else, or dying in one’s stead. This becomes important for understanding the nature of Christ’s atonement for our sins—it was a substitutionary atonement. Christ literally died instead of us, thus taking our place in death: “Christ died in place of [*huper*] the ungodly... while we were still sinners, Christ died in our place [*huper*] (Rom. 5:6, 8).

5:6. “weak.” Figure of speech, *tapeinosis*, or understatement. “Weak?” We were more than weak—we were *dead!* We were dead in sins, totally unable to help ourselves, and God, in his grace and mercy, sent Christ, who died for us so that we would be strong in him.

5:11. “continue to boast.” The present participle of “boast,” *kauchaomai* (#2744 *καυχάομαι*), calls for the translation “continue to boast” (cp. Lenski). This is known as the continuous present.

5:18. The English translation only implicitly refers to the conduit for which the results of condemnation and justification come. In the Greek, however, this verse strongly communicates both the *results* and the *means through which* the condemnation and justification come. It indicates result with the preposition *eis* (#1519 *εἰς*), meaning “resulting in,” and it shows the means through which the result comes with the word *dia* (#1223 *διὰ*), meaning “through.” Literally the Greek reads: “through (*dia*) one trespass unto all men results (*eis*) condemnation, so also through (*dia*) one righteous act unto all men results (*eis*) justification of life.” The one trespass was the conduit through which the result of condemnation came, and the one righteous act was the conduit through which the result of justification to life came.

“justification to life.” According to Robertson, this is an objective genitive (*Grammar*, p. 500-501), meaning that *life* functions as the object of the verbal noun *justification*; i.e., the life that is brought by the action of justification (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*, p. 116-117). This is justification that results in life.

5:20. “with the result.” God did not give the Law “so that” trespass would increase, but rather “with the result” that it did. The Greek is *hina*, which can be used to indicate a result. So it is here (Robertson, *Word Pictures*; Lenski). In this case it is particularly used with the subjunctive (*pleonazo*) to indicate a result that was not intended—that is, God did not introduce the law with the *intent* of making trespasses increase, this was merely the *result* of the introduction (see also commentary entry on Rom. 7:10). Cp. Wallace: “This use of *hina* + subjunctive expresses the result of the action of the main verb. It indicates a consequence of the verbal action that is *not intended*. The *hina* is normally translated *so that, with the result that*” (*Exegetical Syntax*, emphasis in original). See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.”

This should not be translated as a purpose clause, as though the Law was introduced for the purpose of making transgression increase. God never intends for transgression to *increase*. Rather, this was merely the result of the introduction of the Law. This topic is taken up in Romans 7:7-13, specifically refuting the idea that the Law us culpable for bringing evil. The Law was holy and just (7:12), yet when the command came, sin came alive and produced death (7:7-11). Paul writes that “by no means” did the

Law become death for us (7:13), for it is *sin*, not the Law, that produces death. If the *purpose* of the Law was to increase transgression, then the law would indeed have become death for us and Paul's entire argument in Romans 7 would be fall apart. The purpose of the Law was not to increase sin, but to silence everyone under the standard, to make us aware of the extent of our transgression, and be our "guardian" until Christ came (for "guardian," see Gal. 3:24). A guardian is meant to protect. So if the Law brought us closer to sin, and the wages of sin is death, then how can the Law protect us when its purpose was to take us to death? (See also: entries on Rom. 7:13, "with the result that," and Gal. 3:19, "because of transgressions").

Scripture is telling us that it was not God's intent that sin would increase by introducing the law. But if he knew that it would, how could this not be his intent? It is much like a doctor who performs a surgery which he knows will result in weeks of painful recovery for the patient. Yet he does not perform the surgery with the *intent* that pain ensues. The pain is simply a byproduct of the greater good being accomplished. And in the case of God putting forth the Law, it's not even as though God brings the pain—adding the law didn't force people to sin, they still chose to sin on their own.

"came in." The Greek is the compound verb, *pareiserchomai* (#3922 *παρεισρχομαι*); built from the prefix *para* (beside, alongside) and *eiserchomai* (to come or to go). *Pareiserchomai* has two meanings: 1) "to come in besides," or "to come in along side of" and 2) to come in secretly or by stealth (Gal. 2:4). In this context it means, "to come in along side of." Eight verses earlier, in verse 12, sin "entered" into the world. Now in verse 20, law "enters in alongside" the sin that is already here. Most versions simply say "came in" or "entered" because the scope and context make it clear that sin was already in the world, and writing "came in along side of" can confuse the reader.

5:21. "by death." This is an Instrumental dative, showing the means by which sin reigned. We can see this because of the "in this way also" (*houtos kai*) construction of the sentence. Grace is said to reign "through" (*dia*) righteousness, expressing the means through which grace reigns; this is set in comparison ("in this way also") with sin reigning by death. Just as righteousness reigned "thorough" death so sin reigns "by means of" death.

6:3. "into *union with*." This phrase is translated from the Greek preposition *eis*, which can refer to relation as well as to motion. R. C. H. Lenski writes:

"It is the task of the grammars to tell the story as to how the Koine *eis* has expanded and invaded the territory of *en* [in] so that it reached even the static verbs, even those of being, letting us have the construction *einai* and *ōn eis*, this invasion being completed in modern Greek, *en* there being swallowed up entirely by *eis*. All the old grammars and all the old exegesis are superseded by the immense volume of new information now at hand in the papyri, etc.

We now see how wrong it was in scores of instances in the New Testament to interpret *eis* as "into," and how only sheer ignorance forced the idea of motion into the preposition. Here in verse 3, 4, where it is found three times, as in Matt. 28:19, *eis* denotes sphere (Robertson's *Grammar* p. 592) and not motion. The grammars now call it static *eis*."

In this context, *eis* is denoting a relation. Thus while it is true, and most versions say that we were baptized "into Christ," i.e., into a relationship of union with him, the English reader is almost always confused by what the phrase "into Christ" means. Lenski

translates it “as many as were baptized in connection with Christ Jesus were baptized in connection with his death.” While “in connection with” is good, we felt it was not as clear as it could be. When Christians are “in Christ,” there is more than just a connection, there is a spiritual identity. The Christian was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), died with Christ (Rom. 6:8), was buried with Christ (Rom. 6:4), and was raised with Christ (Eph. 2:6). Thus, although there is a connection with Christ, the word “union” seems much more appropriated and clear. Several English versions besides the REV use the word “union” to express the relationship that *eis* is describing in this verse and context (*The New English Bible*; Goodspeed’s translation; *The New Testament in the Language of the People* by Charles Williams).

6:4. “into union with.” See note on 6:3.

“glory.” The Greek word translated “glory” is *doxa* (#1391 δόξα), and usually means “the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor, radiance” (BDAG lexicon). However, it can also include the idea of power or might, and that is the case in this verse (BDAG), which is why the New Jerusalem Bible reads “glorious power” instead of just glory. Rather than add “power” to the REV, we thought it best to just educate the reader that the “glory” of God often includes His power.

“his death.” The Greek has the definite article: “the” death. It is referring specifically to the death of Christ, thus we translate it “his” death to indicate the particularity being expressed.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

6:6. “body of sin.” This is not just the genitive of character for “sinful body,” but in the context seems to be a genitive of possession, “the body owned by sin,” or “the body used by sin.” Lenski would make it attributive, “the body marked by sin.” It is not the genitive of apposition, “the body; namely sin,” or a genitive of content, “the body made of sin.” The context makes the genitive of possession very clear, because in verse 6, and in the following verses (6 twice, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), “sin,” while retaining its literal meaning, also is the figure of speech personification. Sin is presented as a powerful lord. It uses our flesh body (v. 6); we must not be its slave (v. 6); the one who has died is free from it (v. 7), and we died to it (v. 10); now we must consider ourselves dead to it (v. 11), and not let it reign in our body (v. 12), and not offer any part of our body to sin (v. 13), for sin must not exercise lordship over us.

“powerless.” The Greek word is *katargeō* (#2673 καταργῶ), and in this context it means to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, powerless. “Destroyed” is too strong in this context. The body, our flesh body, which is being used by sin is made powerless with the intent that it can no longer serve as a slave to sin.

“serve as slaves.” The Greek word is *douleuō* (#1398 δουλεύω; pronounced “doo-lay-uh-oh”), related to *doulos*, a slave. The verb *douleuō* means to serve or to be a slave, so “serve as a slave” is a good English translation. “Be in bondage” is not wrong, but it fails to put enough emphasis on the service that sin is forcing the slave to do, instead placing the emphasis on the state of bondage that exist. While the flesh body is indeed in a state of bondage, the emphasis here is that it is forced to serve. Slavery was a part of Roman society, and a person could serve as a slave in a bad sense, be a wicked slave or serve an evil master, such as sin, or a person could be a valuable help and serve in a good sense if the master is good, such as God.

6:7. “has been freed.” The Greek word is *dikaioō* (1344 δικαίω). It is from the root *dikē*, “right,” and thus it is related to all the uses of “righteous,” “righteousness,” etc. here in Romans. However, although it would literally be “render righteous” or “pronounce to be righteous,” it was used idiomatically in the culture for a slave being set free.

Therefore, “set free” is the clearest and best translation in this context, even though when it is translated that way, the reader does not see the verbal relationship between us being “righteous” and us being “set free.”

6:9. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “up from among those who are dead.”

“exercises Lordship.” The Greek verb is *kurieuo* (#2961 κυριεω; pronounced kūrēe-you’-ō), and it is related to *kurios*, “lord.” It means to rule, have dominion over, have power over, or, as we would say, “be lord over” or even “lord it over” someone. Wuest (Word Studies) translates it “exercises lordship,” which we feel catches the sense exactly. Before coming to Christ, people were lorded over by death, and had no escape from it.

When Christ becomes the Lord in a person’s life, that person is guaranteed everlasting life, and death no longer exercises Lordship over the person. (Cp. note on Romans 6:14).

6:14. “exercises Lordship.” The Greek verb is *kurieuo* (#2961 κυριεω; pronounced kūrēe-you’-ō), and it is related to *kurios*, “lord.” It means to rule, have dominion over, have power over, or, as we would say, be lord over or even “lord it over” someone. Wuest

(Word Studies) translates it “exercises lordship,” which we feel catches the sense exactly. Before coming to Christ, the sinner’s lord was Lord Sin, who made a slave of the person and forced him to sin. When the sinner comes to Christ, he dies in Christ and gets both a new Lord and his body is made powerless to Sin (6:6). Given the exchange of lordship, it needs to be expressed clearly that Sin no longer has lordship. (Cp. note on Romans 6:9).

6:17. “slaves to sin.” The Roman Cicero (Paradoxes of the Stoics) mentioned ways that a free citizen could still be a slave. “... anyone who is saddled with a greedy, violent, or simple-minded nature could be considered a slave. ... a man who is under the thumb of a woman... People who devote inordinate amounts of time and effort to admiring and acquiring works of art could be considered slaves of the very things that they aspire to control through ownership... An excessive ambition... can turn a free man into a slave, if he is willing to sell out his honor to satisfy that ambition...”

6:20. “free from *obligation to* righteousness.” The word “righteousness” is in the dative case and is the indirect object. However, simply saying “freed to righteousness,” is not very clear. The dative is a dative of relation, but what is the relation? Many translations simply set forth the relationship by saying, “free in regard to righteousness,” which is good but perhaps not as clear as it could be. Other versions say things such as “free from the control of righteousness” (NIV), or “free from allegiance to righteousness” (HCSB). The context makes it clear that this verse is describing the “master-slave” relationship, and continuing the personification of sin, but adding “Righteousness” as another Master (see note, Romans 6:6). A slave only has one master to serve, and serving that master is an obligation of slavery. The Christian became a willing slave of Righteousness (6:18). However, when we were unsaved and still slaves of Sin, we had no obligation to righteousness. Not surprisingly, that is how many unsaved people feel and act. They live their lives doing whatever they want, with no obligation to Righteousness at all. The obligation that exists in the master-slave relationship is the reason we define the relationship in this verse as an “obligation.”

7:4. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “up from among the dead.”

7:6. “a new way.” The Greek is literally “in newness of spirit” and it is contrasted with the old way of the “letter,” or better here, the “written code.” The concept of “new way” comes from the Greek *kainos*, which is new in quality. The Greek language has an advantage over English because it has two completely different words for “new.” *Kainos* is new in quality, while *neos* is new in time. This verse uses *kainos*, so it is not a brand new spirit, but a new quality of the spiritual thing being referred to, thus a “new way.” “of *the* spirit.” This genitive, “of *the* spirit,” has many possible meanings, and all of them having some value. The most dominant meaning seems to be the genitive of character, where “spirit” defines the character of the relationship, that we have a new, “spiritual” way of living, not an old life based on the legal code. Also, however, the genitive of origin (the new way we do things originating from holy spirit) is true also, and the genitive of relation, the new way of life that involves our interrelation to the spirit, not just obeying the letter of the law.

7:7. Quoted from Exod. 20:17.

7:8. “afforded by.” Cp. NIV. This is the preposition *dia* (#1223 διὰ) in the Greek. It is here used to indicate the *means by which* sin seized the opportunity to produce coveting (cp. Appendix on Greek prepositions). It was “through” the command that sin did this; the command was the means through which sin seized the opportunity, thus, the opportunity was “afforded by” the command.

7:10. “for life...resulted in death.” The Greek in this verse twice uses the preposition *eis* (#1519 εἰς), which can express both *purpose* and *result* (see appendix on Greek prepositions). The first instance conveys the *purpose* of the law (“was given for life”), the second instance conveys the *result* (“resulted in death”). See also commentary on Romans 5:20.

“actually.” Compare NIV translation. There is no Greek word in this verse explicitly meaning “actually,” but it is nevertheless implied. Bringing out this implicit “actually” accomplishes two things. First, there is an emphatic “this” (*aute*) in the Greek, literally, “the commandment for life, **this** resulted in death.” The translation “actually” serves to highlight the emphatic nature of the result. Second, it captures the sense of the two uses of *eis*, bringing into English how the purpose-result prepositions are playing off each other in Greek—intended for life but actually resulted in death.

7:12. “good.” See note on Rom. 3:2.

7:13. “with the result that... with the result that.” This is the translation of *hina* + subjunctive, forming a result clause. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” We feel this should not be translated as a purpose clause, “*in order that* sin might be recognized...*so that* through the commandment.” Sin did does not produce death with the purpose of being revealed for what it is. Sin does not want to be revealed, it prefers darkness and ignorance. (See also commentary on Rom. 5:20).

7:14. “the power of sin.” The Greek in this verse literally says we are *sold under* sin. The word for sold is *piprasko* (#4097 πῖπρασκω), and it is used of human slaves being sold in Matthew 18:25. This word is combined with *hupo* (#5259 ὑπό), meaning “under.” These words taken together paint a picture of sin’s dominating power over us. Like slaves being sold to a master, we are under the power of sin.

7:15. “understand.” (Cp. Wuest). This verse is very hard to translate accurately because it contains three words that all more or less mean “do.” Thus the NIV translates them all as

“do,” but then a lot of the color and meaning of the verse is lost. “Actions.” The Greek, *katergazomai* (#2716 *κατεργάζομαι*) is to bring about a result by doing something. “Practice,” Greek *prasso* (#4238 *πράσσω*) is to behave in a certain way, do, accomplish, perform. In this context, it would refer to that which is done a certain way, or “practiced.” “Do,” Greek: *poieo* (#4160 *ποιέω*), is the closest to our English word “do.” Because the three words are all used in the same context, they are juxtaposed with each other, bringing out the subtle differences.

7:21. “while I am desiring to do good.” The word *desiring* is a present participle showing a continual fact of wanting, from *thelo* (#2309 *θέλω*). Translations which read, “when I want to do good” make it sound as though the wanting is a particular singular instance, a one-time wanting to do a good thing; however, this is not the case. The “law of sin” (vv. 23, 25) that Paul is discussing, is the continual desire to be doing what is right, yet having evil within, and further, often giving in to it even though it is not what one truly desires. This is the culmination of the battle described in verses 14-20.

7:22. Verses 22 and 23 are very similar to Galatians 5:17, which portrays a battle between the flesh and the spirit. Most versions miss the point of this verse. Paul is not saying “For in my inner being I delight in God’s law” (NIV), as if it was Paul’s inner man that delighted in God’s law. Rather he is saying that “I,” Paul, delight in the law of God, “according to” the inner man. The inner man is the holy spirit, the divine nature that is created in man when he gets born again. That inner man fights against the flesh (Gal. 5:17) working to produce its own godly nature in the person. Paul is saying that he (in his mind, v. 23) delights in the law, according to the inner man, i.e., even as the inner man does.

7:23. The “different” law that is in Paul’s “members,” i.e., body, is the law of the flesh, or the fleshly nature.

7:24. The body of this death. Figure of speech. Antimereia (cp. Bullinger, *Figures*). For emphasis, instead of “death” being an adjective, it is a noun. We might say, “angels of might” for emphasis, instead of “mighty angels.”

8:1. Some older texts add the phrase “who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit,” at the end of the verse, but the early texts do not have that. The shorter reading “is strongly supported by early representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*).

8:2. The texts vary as to whether, “I” “you” or “we” have been set free, but “Impressed by the weight of the combination of Alexandrian and Western witnesses, a majority of the Committee preferred *σε* [you] as the earliest attainable text” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*).

8:3. Jesus was given as an offering for sin, the antitype of all the sacrifices for sin, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, in which God clothed Adam and Eve with animal (probably sheep) skins.

8:4. “so that.” Purpose-result clause. See Matt. 2:15 entry, “resulting in... what was spoken being fulfilled.” God sent his son and condemned sin in the flesh both for the purpose of the law being fulfilled in us, and it results in the law being fulfilled in us.

8:5. “For those who are living according to *the* flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh.” The Greek is very clear. Those who are of the flesh, who do not have spirit, set their mind on the things of the flesh. It is wrong to translate this verse as “Those who live...” or “Those who walk...” This verse is saying behavior follows nature.

8:6. “life.” Not everlasting life. Setting your mind on spiritual things does not keep one saved. This is the use of “life” that is life to the full, the enjoyment of life (cp. 1 Thess. 3:8. “The ‘life’ he offers speaks of full satisfaction and the exercise of one’s total abilities. Oh, to live life at its fullest and best! Many people think they are really living today, but it is a shoddy substitute for the life God wants to provide.” J. Vernon McGee, *Through the Bible*).

8:7. “because” (*dioti*) = “because” in this context. BDAG.

8:9. “if in fact the spirit of God dwells.” The *eiper* “does not question the fact expressed (as if some of the Romans were remiss) but emphasizes it...” (Lenski, on 8:17). The NRSV says “since,” as does the interlinear by Brown and Comfort).

“of God.” This is a genitive of origin; it is the spirit *from* God.

“spirit of Christ.” This is not a different spirit than the gift of holy spirit from God in the first part of the verse. Rather it is a different name for holy spirit. The genitive “of Christ” places the emphasis in a couple different ways (Figure of Speech; *amphibologia*). First since his ascension it has been Jesus Christ who has given the holy spirit, so it is a genitive of origin, “spirit from Christ.” Also, holy spirit allows us to relate to Christ: to better understand the aspects of the Christ and also to be like him. Thus “spirit of Christ” is also a genitive of relation. Also, very accurately, anyone without “spirit of Christ,” i.e., holy spirit, “this one is not his.” A Christian is one who has the seed of God born and sealed within him, and thus is a partaker of the divine nature. A person without holy spirit is not a Christian.

8:11. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead,” “from among the dead.”

8:13. The Greek word *mello* (#3195 μέλλω) means “to be about to; to intend to; to occur at a point in the future subsequent to another event and to be closely related that event; to delay” (Thayer; Louw and Nida; Lenski’s translation). We decided to translate *mello* as “about to” rather than “will” or “shall” because “about to” carries the implication of something taking place soon rather than later. “Will” and “shall” carry the implication of an event occurring at some point in time in the future whether it is sooner or later.

This verse is not contrasting non-Christians and Christians, but Christians with other Christians. To fully grasp this, we need to look back at the context of Romans 7:14-8:18. In 7:14-25, Paul begins by informing us of his own inner struggles with his flesh. He says things such as “...I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin;” “...what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do;” “...what is good, but I cannot carry it out;” “...the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.” Paul continues by informing us that he fights against the law of sin that is still inside him, and God is the only means of victory over the law of sin.

In Romans 8:1-18, Paul continues the thought about the battle we face in the flesh, and informs the Romans that they will go through the same struggle with their sinful nature. He tells them of the two different ways in which a Christian can live, from the spirit or from the flesh, and what each choice brings. Paul informs the Romans that the only way to stand strong is through the spirit. Romans 8:13 is part of the overall context and is addressed to Christians. It not suddenly contrasting Christians, who walk by the spirit, with non-Christians who do not and will eternally die.

“about to die.” Most of the commentators say that this verse refers to a Christian losing his salvation by not walking in the spirit, however, this belief conflicts with the

salvation picture painted by the epistles (see the 3rd point in the commentary entry for Eph. 1:13); especially when 2 Corinthians 5:5 says that salvation is guaranteed for us. The verse does not say, “you will lose your salvation,” it simply says, “if you live according to the flesh, you are about to die.” The question is, what will die if you live in the flesh? The answer is that Christians will lose their “life,” their enthusiasm, joy, peace, and feeling of connection with God, if they live according to their fleshly desires. J. Vernon McGee writes about the “death” in this verse, stating that it relates to a person’s fellowship with God, not to his physical or eternal death: “Die to God. That is, you have no fellowship with Him. I am not talking about a theory. If you are a child of God, you know this from experience.” (McGee, *Thru the Bible*). In *Absolutely Free*, Hodges also hits upon this point by saying, “Pursue sin, warns Paul, and your existence will be an experience that accords with the deadness of your physical body.” In verse six, Paul contrasted death with “life and peace.” Throughout Romans, the phrase “life and peace” is used to mean abundant life, so it is logical that “death” must refer to the opposite of life and peace which would be a loss of enthusiasm, peace, and the feeling of connection to God (see commentary on Rom. 8:6). Throughout the Bible, *apothnesko* (#599 ἀποθνήσκω), “die,” is used both metaphorically and literally. It is used to mean the death of a person (John 6:49), to represent eternal death (John 6:50), and the death of a principle (Rom. 6:2); however, it is also used to represent a mental death. In 1 Corinthians 15:31, Paul says that he dies every day, however, he is not literally dying every day. He was mentally stressed and beaten down by all the persecution he was going through. Another use of death being in the category of the mind is Romans 7:9, which says, “Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.” Thayer’s lexicon points out that Paul is talking about being deprived of real life and sinking into spiritual torpor because of the Law. *Apothnesko* is not the only word translated death; *thanatos* (#2288 θάνατος) is another Greek word meaning death, and it is also used in a metaphorical sense. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, it says that godly sorrow brings to salvation, but worldly sorrow brings death. Worldly sorrow brings about depression, a lack of enthusiasm, and disconnectedness; thus, it makes your spiritual life “dead.” Thus, death is not always used to mean a literal or eternal death, and it is not used of everlasting death in this section of Romans.

“by the spirit.” This refers to the gift of holy spirit born inside each Christian. It has no article “the” in the Greek text. The gift of holy spirit is contrasted with the flesh. If a person lives according to (by the standards set by) the flesh, he will die, but if he lives by holy spirit he will live life to the full. This is the use of “live” that is “really live,” or “live life to the full.” Cp. 1 Thess. 3:8. “By spirit” is the dative, here it is an instrumental dative, there is no separate word for “by.” We can do our best to not live in the flesh by the power of our flesh, and we will fail. We would be no better off than the Israelites, who could not keep the Law. It takes our will-power, plus the power of holy spirit to live by spirit.

“live.” The Greek word is *zao* (#2198 ζάω), and it is used of literal physical life as well as mental, emotional, and spiritual life. 1 Thessalonians 3:8 says, “For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” Paul is certainly not saying that if the believers in Thessalonians walk away from the Lord that he will become unsaved. He is using “live” for the fullness of life. Paul will be excited, happy, and energized. Proverbs 3:21-22 says that sound wisdom and discretion will be life for the soul. It is saying that wisdom and

discretion will bring the fullness of life to the person, and the idea of everlasting life is included as well, but as an undertone, not a primary meaning. In Romans 8:6, “life” is connected with “peace,” so it means a life of joy and completeness.

8:15. “adoption.” See note Ephesians 1:5.

“in connection with.” The Greek word *en* often denotes a relationship, and that is the case here (see note on Rom. 3:24 for more on *en*). We are children of God. We were fathered by God when He placed in us His gift of holy spirit, and thus it is in connection with that holy spirit we can call Him “Abba,” the Aramaic for “father.” The Trinitarian theology of most theologians shapes their understanding of this verse, and thus many versions read something such as, “by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (ESV). However, the Christian does not cry “Father” by way of the Third Person in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. It is unclear what that would even mean. We Christians cry “Father” out of our hearts, speaking directly to God, coming boldly before His throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). Furthermore, this verse is not using *en* in the instrumental sense, as if we called God “Father” by way of holy spirit (NASB). Christians can speak by the spirit of God, which is speaking in tongues and other spiritual utterances such as prophecy (1 Cor. 12:2). However, there is no reason to assume that Christians can only say “Father” by the spirit of God. We say “Father” from our hearts because God is our Father, and we became His children when we were “born” of God. That happened when we got His spiritual seed placed in us and were “born again” (1 Pet. 1:23), which happened when we confessed Jesus as our Lord and believed God raised him out from among the dead (Rom. 10:9). Thus, in connection with the gift of holy spirit we received as children of God, we can say, “Father.”

“Abba,” (Father). The Hebrew is *abba*, its translation is “father,” in this context “Father” because it is referring to God. This is similar to Mark 5:41, where the Hebrew is given, then its translation, and the NIV and many other versions put the translation in a parenthesis.

8:16. “The Spirit” refers to Jesus Christ (Cp. 2 Cor. 3:17). See also verse 26 and 27, and the note on verse 26. “Bears witness together with” or “testifies together with” (Lenski). Both Jesus Christ and the holy spirit within us bear witness that we are the children of God. Our spirit testifies conclusively by empowering us to speak in tongues and to operate other manifestations of the spirit. Jesus bears witness in many ways, if we will walk with him daily and commit our lives to him and his Father.

8:17. The verb for “will be glorified” in the phrase, “so that we will also share in his glory” is part of a purpose-result clause in the subjunctive mood. Since the subjunctive mood frequently expresses uncertainty, the word “will” is often translated as “may.” However, the subjunctive mood, from which the “may” translation comes, does not always express uncertainty, particularly in result clauses. Here the subjunctive is due to the purpose-result clause, and hence does not necessarily express any doubt that we will be glorified with Christ. As Wallace writes, “Sometimes the subjunctive acts like a future indicative... When used in result clauses, for example, the subjunctive cannot be said to express “probability” (*Grammar*, p. 462). Seeing this is the case, we have rendered the verb with the future “will” to avoid mistakenly inferring doubt from the subjunctive, which grammatically is not intended here. For more on purpose-result clauses see Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in... what was spoken being fulfilled.”

8:18. “in us.” Not to us, even though the word is *eis*. The KJV has the sense. The glory will be revealed to us (touching us, we are participants). If it was revealed “to” us in the ordinary sense of the word, then *pros*, not *eis*, would be used. (Cp. Lenski). We are not simply onlookers, but participants in this glory, as verse 17 makes clear: “we will be glorified with him.”

8:19. “the eager anticipation of creation.” This is an attributed genitive (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). Tholuck argues that the attributive has the effect of the figure of speech personification. The coming revelation will be so great that even the expectation itself becomes a character who is expecting.

8:20. All but the last two words, “in hope” belong inside a parenthesis that starts in the previous verse, and the words “in hope” go with verse 19. The creation was subjected to *mataiotes*, (futility) by the will of the one who subjected it. That “one” is the Devil. He is the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). However, the creation is waiting in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed—in hope that the creation itself will be liberated.

8:22. “right up to this present time.” Cp. NIV. Most versions read, “until now,” but this translation can be confused to mean, “not anymore,” which is not the case. The creation is *still* groaning today and will continue to do so until the new creation.

8:23. “adoption.” See note Ephesians 1:5.

8:24. “were saved.” The Greek word “saved” is *sōzō* (#4982 σωζω), which has a broad range of meaning but in this context means saved from death and thus given everlasting life. It is in the aorist tense, indicating the one time action in the past when our salvation was guaranteed (Lenski). “Hope” is in the dative case and has the definite article. It is not the dative of means, for we were not saved by hope, we were saved by faith. The entire context of the chapter is pointing to the future, when the world, which was “subjected to futility...because of the one [the Devil] who subjected it” (Rom. 8:18), is “freed from the bondage of corruption” (v. 21). Even Christians, “who have the first-fruits of the spirit...groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption—the redemption of our body” (v. 23). God saved us, not to live in this fallen world, but to live in Paradise.

The key to understanding the verse is knowing that we are not “saved” yet. We have a promise of salvation, a guarantee of salvation, but we are not actually “saved” yet. However, we will be “in the Hope,” that is, in the future that is promised to us and therefore we hope for. Our new birth and guarantee of salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14) is so strong that the Bible can say we are already saved “in the Hope.” God saved us “in the hope” of a glorious future, when “the whole creation [which] groans together and suffers the pains of childbirth together” (v. 22) will be liberated.

When it comes to salvation, the New Testament can be quite confusing for an average reader. That is due to the fact that some verses say we have already been saved (Eph. 2:8), some verses say we are being saved now (1 Cor. 1:18), and some say our salvation is future (Rom. 13:11). The word *sōzō* has a large range of meanings and it does not have to refer to the future salvation of the Christian. That range of meanings explains some of the variations in the use of “saved.” However, when it comes to *sōzō* meaning having everlasting life, we must understand the Bible has an idiomatic use of verbs in which a past tense verb is used to indicate the certainty of a future action. If something is absolutely going to happen in the future, the Bible often refers to that as if it had already occurred. One way scholars refer to this is the “prophetic perfect.” Good example of this is Jude 1:14, which in the Greek text says the Lord Jesus “came” with his holy ones. Of

course, that has not happened yet, but the fact that it will happen is so certain that God can put it in the past tense (in that verse, the aorist tense). For more on the prophetic perfect, see the note on Ephesians 2:6

“what he sees.” This is a Greek idiom where “see” is put for “has.” We have a similar idiom in English and say, “Let me see it,” when we mean, “Let me have it.” Cp. NIV: “Who hopes for what he already has?”

8:26. “The Spirit” in this verse is Jesus, just as he is “the Spirit” who speaks in Revelation chapter 2. When Jesus was resurrected, his body was still flesh and bone (Luke 24:39), but it was spiritually empowered. 1 Corinthians 15:44-46 says Jesus was raised “a spiritual body.” When he first appeared to his disciples, they thought he was a spirit, an incorporeal being (a *pneuma*; Luke 24:37), but he denied that, and had them touch his body to feel his flesh. Nevertheless, because Jesus’ new body was spiritually empowered, Jesus is called “the Spirit” in many places in the NT. These include Acts 2:4; 10:19; Romans 8:16, 26, 27; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 14:13; and 22:17. (Cp. also note on Acts 2:4 and *The Gift of Holy Spirit* by STF). In this verse, “Spirit” is not referring to the gift of holy spirit. The gift of holy spirit that is born inside Christians does not have a mind as this Spirit does (v. 27). Neither does our holy spirit intercede for us, as if it had a mind of its own. Rather, we intercede for others via our holy spirit. Those who say that the “Spirit” in this verse is the gift of holy spirit usually also say that the groans mentioned in the verse are speaking in tongues. However, it is the Christian who speaks in tongues, not the gift of holy spirit, but this verse clearly says that it is the Spirit that groans. The context makes it clear that the world is groaning (v. 22), we are groaning (v. 23) and Jesus, who loves us, is groaning. Even today Jesus is feeling the awful effects of the fallen world, and he groans as his body, the Church, is groaning.

“joins in to help.” The word *sunantilambanomai* (συναντιλαμβάνομαι) means, to ‘take part with,’ generally, to come to the aid of, be of assistance to, *help*. (BDAG). The prefix “*sun*” means “together with.” The Spirit, Jesus, “helps” us, but he does not do it all. We also must pray if we are going to have God’s power fully manifested in our lives.

“in the same way.” In the same way as what? This explains what the “groans” are. The creation groans (v. 22), we groan (v. 23) and in the same way, the Spirit, Jesus groans. Nothing in God’s creation is free from the horrific consequences of sin. As our fellow brother, and as one who loves God’s creation, Jesus groans too. This is a case where the orthodox belief in the Trinity and that God is unchanging and all-controlling causes the verse to be misunderstood. For example, Lenski wrongly writes, “...the Holy Spirit does not and cannot groan....” The truth is that God can groan, and has a myriad of other emotions as well. So does Jesus. Like Hebrews which says that Jesus is touched with the feelings of our infirmity (Heb. 4:15), this verse tells us that Jesus, like the rest of creation, is groaning in distress about what is happening in God’s creation.

“makes intercession for *us*.” (Present tense, active voice). Jesus prays for us to the Father now, just as he did when he was training his apostles on earth (Luke 22:32).

“along with groans....” Jesus prays for us, and he also groans about the fallen state of the world (there is no separate word for “with” in the phrase, “with groans,” groans is in the dative case). This verse is not saying that Jesus prays “with groans,” i.e., that he prays by using groans. That misses the point and the context. The verse is saying that Jesus is praying and groaning at the same time. This often happens to any Christian

that truly feels the pain of those he or she is praying for. The world groans, we groan, and Jesus groans, all of us groaning because of the fallen state of the world.

“groans.” We use “groans” rather than “groanings,” “sighs,” etc., because it can be understood as a noun, and makes the connection with v. 22 and 23 more easily.

“too deep for words.” *Friberg’s Analytical Lexicon* has a clear definition of the Greek word: “of something that arouses such strong emotions one cannot find words to speak of it” (cp. BDAG). This definition is reflected in many modern translations. The groans over the ruined and enslaved state of creation are too deep to express in words.

The “groans too deep for words are not speaking in tongues in this verse any more than the groans in verse 22 or 23 are speaking in tongues. Besides, if it were speaking in tongues, the verse would be saying that Jesus makes intercession for us by speaking in tongues, but there is no reason to think that is how Jesus prays to the Father.

8:27. “and he [God] who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit [Jesus], because he [Jesus] makes intercession for the holy ones [Christians] according to *the will of God*. The gift of holy spirit has no “mind,” so it is clear from this and from the context that “the Spirit” is Jesus.

8:28. “in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” This verse shows us that no matter how difficult a situation is, God is always trying to do His best for His people. However, historically, this verse has been used to teach that every situation, no matter how terrible, will turn out “good” if a person loves God. The reason for the different interpretations is that the way Roman’s 8:28 is translated and understood is due to the theology that the translator and interpreter bring to the verse from their scope of Scripture.

Grammatically, the Greek text can be translated in two different ways, with two completely different meanings. In the Greek, the phrase “all things” can be nominative (the subject) or accusative (the direct object, or used adverbially). If it is nominative, then the verse should be translated as it is in many versions, that “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...” (KJV). This particular translation has a lot of defenders. However, it should be noted that since the time of Augustine (354-430 AD), the majority of the Christian theologians have been Augustinian/Roman Catholic/Calvinist/Reformed or of that theological persuasion. They believe that everything that happens, good or bad, is God’s will, and they translate the Greek in a way that supports that belief. R.C. H. Lenski provides a good example. When it comes to the “all things” of this verse, he comments: “all of them without exception operate together to produce ‘good’ in the sense of what is beneficial for God’s lovers. This includes every kind of painful experience in Christian lives,...” (Lenski, *Romans*, p. 551).

The problem with this interpretation is that it seems very clear from life itself that everything does not work for good for those who love God. In fact, everything does not even work for good for God Himself. He wants everyone to be saved, but they will not all be; He wants people to come to a knowledge of the truth, but they all do not; He wants people to obey and love Him, but they do not. So if all things do not work together for God, how can all things work together for God’s people? All things do not work together for good just because a person loves God. Many evil things happen to those who love God. The earth is a war zone, with the forces of good fighting the forces of evil.

Sometimes the Devil can hinder God’s purposes. This point is discussed at length in *Don’t Blame God*, by Graeser, Lynn, and Schoenheit.

As we said above, instead of being in the nominative case, “all things” could be accusative. If that is so, it can either be the direct object (“he works all things”) or it could be understood as being adverbial (thus, “he works in everything”). Of those two choices, the adverbial use best fits the scope of Scripture that not everything that happens is God’s will, but in everything that happens God is working for the good of those who love Him. F. F. Bruce prefers the adverbial, (*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans*), as do a number of English translations (New English Bible, NIV, REV, and RSV; cp. Moffatt’s translation and Aramaic Peshitta New Testament Translation by Janet Magiera).

There is every reason to believe that God works for the good of His people in every situation. That is in accordance with His nature, and also with the fact that He is not in control of all things. God cannot make everything good, but in every situation He can work for the good of those who love. It needs to be stated that F. F. Bruce has pointed out a possible interpretation that, while long known about, does not get much attention in commentaries or versions (although the NEB is an exception). In this interpretation, the subject of “works together” (which is one word in the Greek) is “the Spirit” from the previous clause. Since the original text had no punctuation or breaks between sentences, 27b and 28a could be together, and the verse would read, “And he who searches the hearts [God] knows what is the mind of the Spirit [Jesus Christ], because he [Jesus] makes intercession for the holy *ones* according to *the will of God*. Now we know that in everything, he [the Spirit—Jesus Christ] cooperates for good with those who love God...” This translation very accurately represents the meaning of the word *sunergeo* (#4903 συνεργέω), which means “to engage in cooperative endeavor, work together with, assist, help” (BDAG).

There are some theologians who believe the translation “all things work together for good” is correct, yet realize how clear it is that, indeed, all things do not work together for good for those who love God. Thus, they suggest that the phrase “all things” is using “all” in its limited sense and refers to less than “all” things. However, as we will see, this weakens the statement so much it becomes almost pointless. Certainly there are times when “all” can mean “some.” This happens two ways. The first way is by seeing “all” as a synecdoche of the whole for the part (cp. Bullinger), and the second way is that the context of the verse limits the meaning of all to the “all” in the context, or “some” overall. The problem with “all things” being a synecdoche is that there is nothing in the context that demands it, and no apparent reason for the figure of speech. Usually when “all” is used for the greater part (i.e., “most things”), the synecdoche is obvious, and the greater part can justify the use of “all.” That does not seem to be the case here. In the lives of many Christians, especially in the early years of the Church in the Roman Empire, it is likely that very many things did not work out for the good of the Christian. The same problem exists when we try to make “all” mean “some” by the context. It just does not seem to be reasonable here. The context of verse 28 is the fallen world, and that the entire world is subject to the bondage of corruption (v. 21). This bondage is so widespread the whole world is groaning in pain (v. 22), we groan in pain (v. 23) and even Jesus, the Spirit, groans in pain (v. 26). The groaning in this context is worldwide, and seems to cover the creation itself, so there is no reason to conclude that “all” is being limited here to “some” or even “most” in this section.

It seems clear that if the “all” in verse 28 actually means “some,” then the verse is saying that “some” things work together for good for those who love God, which is not really saying anything at all. After all, it is obvious that “some” things work together for good, but that is not helpful in the difficult situation in Romans 8. When people are groaning in pain (v. 23), it is not helpful to try to cheer them up by saying “Not everything is wrong, some things are good.” If a child is in pain with a stomachache, it does not really help to say that “some” things on the child’s body do not hurt. The truth is that the earth is a war zone, God is a warrior (Exodus 15:3), and the battle is raging. In this war, people are experiencing great evil and harm. The comfort of the Word is that no matter what we are going through, we can be sure of this: God is working for the good of those who love Him.

“the called.” “Called” is an adjective here, used substantively as a noun.

8:29. “in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” This phrase can be confusing because it can be read as if the emphasis is on “firstborn.” God did not foreknow and mark out believers “in order that” Jesus could be the “firstborn.” Jesus was the “firstborn” because he was the first to get up from the dead. The emphasis of the phrase is “among many brothers.” God foreknew and marked out people to be conformed to the image of His Son so there would be “many brothers,” many believers. If people did not believe, Christ would have been raised from the dead, but not many others would be, so Christ would have been the firstborn, but only among “a few brothers,” not “many brothers.” Thankfully, God acted in such a way that Christ will be the firstborn among many people.

8:30. This verse contains the figure of speech “climax,” although it actually begins in verse 29. “Those he foreknew... he marked out. Those he marked out... he called. Those he called... he declared righteous. Those he declared righteous... he glorified. Reading the verse is like climbing a set of stairs, each step getting higher until the climax, that we are glorified (cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*).

8:32. “in place of us all.” From the Greek preposition *hyper* (#5228 ὑπέρ). See Romans 5:6 commentary on “in place of the ungodly... for... in our place.”

“in addition to.” The Greek word is *sun* (#4862 σὺν; pronounced “soon”).

Although it usually means “with” or “along with,” in some contexts it is better understood as “in addition to,” and that is the case here (BDAG). This verse is very important for our faith in God. Many people realize that God gave Jesus Christ so they could live forever, but then act as if God will not give them anything else and even withholds His blessings from them. This verse shatters that concept. How could it be that God, who gave His only Son, will not in addition to the gift of Christ, give us everything else we need?

8:36. Quoted from Ps. 44:22.

“sheep for the slaughter.” Literally, “sheep of slaughter.” A genitive of relation.

8:37. “No.” The Greek word *alla*, (“but”) is occasionally used as an adversative, “no.” This is the case here. The commentators are divided between those who see this as a “no,” and those who see it as a “but.” If you see it as a “but,” you are saying that we are considered sheep, “but” we conquer in our adversities. There is a problem with that. People in the OT could conquer in adversities too. So then why the “but?”

In actuality there is a clean break between the Old Testament, in which a person could lose his salvation, and the Church, when one cannot lose his salvation. This is what

is being conveyed here. The idea brought from verse 35 is “Who will separate us from the love of Christ.” Then there is a list of difficulties and hardships that have caused people to turn from God. The people of God even thought God would stand against them and consider them sheep to be slaughtered. That idea, and the idea that any Christian can be separated from salvation and the love of Christ is shattered with a resounding “No!” Unlike what has been in the past Administrations, nothing will separate us from Christ’s love. The Christian’s salvation is secure. Some have said, “But the Christian can renounce his love for God and then lose his salvation.” That is clearly not what these verses say. They teach that “nothing” shall be able to separate a saved person from God. When a person is saved, his very nature is changed. He becomes a “new creation.” No person can undo that by a simple act of the will.

8:38. “am persuaded.” The Greek is *peithō* (#3982 πειθω; pronounced pay-thō), and it means “to be persuaded.” The verb is in the perfect tense, which normally would be translated as a past tense, but in this case the perfect tense has the sense of the present. It is an action that started in the past but is still true in the present, so “am persuaded” is the best translation. If we say, “I have been persuaded,” it could mean in English that Paul was persuaded in the past, but may not be at this present time, which is certainly not the case. *Peithō* is also in the passive voice, but this particular verb does not have an active voice, so whether the sense is active or passive must be determined from the context. Although many versions read “am convinced” (NASB; NET; NIV; NRSV), we feel that omits part of the deeper meaning of this verse. While it is true that “being convinced” is the end result of allowing oneself to be persuaded, it is important to recognize that each of us must allow himself to be persuaded by God. It is not the evidence that persuades a person. Jesus Christ did miracles that convinced some people but not others, but the miracles (evidence) were the same. The Egyptians saw the miracles that God did in Egypt, and some of them believed and even followed the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38), while others, including Pharaoh, would not allow themselves to be persuaded by those same miracles. If the evidence does not convince people, what allows them to be persuaded? It all starts in the soil of the heart, and an honest person constantly seeks for truth, and holds that in the highest esteem. Then, if there is evidence that something he believes or is doing is not actually correct, he will leave his old ways behind and change. No wonder God exhorts us all to examine ourselves.

8:39. “the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The fullness of God’s love is “in” Christ Jesus. In this case, “in” expresses a fullness and connection that one must ponder to grasp. Romans 5:5 and 5:8 speak of the love of God, while 8:35 speaks of the love of Christ. This is the love of God that is “in Christ.” It is in Christ in the sense that that it is connected in every way with Christ. The true love of God for mankind is expressed in Christ. It is impossible to fully grasp the love of God without grasping what God did in, and in connection with, Jesus Christ. The word “in” means “in connection with” Christ (see note on Rom. 3:24), but in this context it also means more than just that, for God worked “in” Christ to manifest His love to the world.

9:3. “Indeed.” The Greek is *gar* (#1063 γαρ), and is usually translated “for” and understood to communicate a reason for something. However, that use of *gar* does not fit this verse, because Paul does not have continual sorrow in his heart for Israel “because” he could wish that he could be accursed in place of them. Rather, this is what some

scholars refer to as the “confirmatory gar” and confirms and clarifies what has already been stated.

“could wish.” The Greek is *euchomai* (#2172 εὐχομαι), a verb, and the noun related to it, *euche* (#2171 εὐχή), means prayer in the general sense. The verb *euchomai* is used 7 times, and the noun *euche* 3 times. The semantic range of these words includes both prayer to God and prayer in the general sense; and it can include the idea of wishing, i.e., to wish. The noun *euche* can also mean a vow, and of its three uses, twice it is used to mean vow (Acts 18:18; 21:23) and once to mean prayer (James 5:15). Here in Romans 9:3 *euchomai* more clearly means “wish,” although the idea of prayer is not totally excluded, simply because we sometimes pray for things we wish for. It is important to realize that here in Romans 9:3 the word *euchomai* is in the imperfect tense, and means “could wish.” Paul “could wish” to be accursed in place of his people, but he knows that is not possible, and so he does not actually ask God for that. The “could wish” expresses the willing condition of the heart, not something that is actually available to do. God gives each person free will, and people make their own choices. God honors those choices, and so must we, even when the bad choices others make cause us much pain. Christ died for everyone, and anyone who wants to can be saved through Christ. If people decide on death rather than life (cp. Deut. 30:19), although we may have great pain and may even get to the point that we “could wish” to die in the place of others, we do not act on our wish.

“in place of.” The Greek *huper* (#5228 ὑπέρ) is a preposition, and typical of prepositions, has many different meanings and nuances, which are determined by the context. In this case, it means “in place of” or “instead of.” Wallace (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 387) concurs that in Romans 9:3 *huper* “is used in a substitutionary sense.” Paul, in a fashion similar to Moses many years before him (Ex. 32:32), would trade places with his people if he could. This is not boasting or wishful thinking on Paul’s part, or Moses’ part. These great men of God had intense passion and love for their people, and that gave them the strength and vision to endure and go forward day after day. If anything, this verse shows us that it is possible to love others more than we love ourselves, and we can give our lives in service to others. The ultimate expression of being accursed “in place of others” is the Lord Jesus Christ, who did in fact love us so much that he took our place. He became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), and died in our place. Ministers must draw strength from God and from their love for people. If they do not, the daily fight will eventually become too much, and they will become embittered, quit, or both. While the work of the Lord can be fun at times, but it is a daily fight due to the spiritual battle and to human nature. We must love in order to endure

“were” “Were” is both the singular and plural past subjunctive, and since it is controlled by “could wish,” “were” makes sense, which is why almost all versions use it. (here the imperfect verb is used to show the impossibility of this wish being fulfilled, and also to note the fact that Paul did not actually wish that he would be accursed for Israel; Cp. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*; also Lenski. Perhaps a more literal translation would follow Young’s Literal, and say, “For I could wish, I myself, to be accursed....” However, that makes it seem like Paul was not clearly wishing that he would be accursed, but rather that he was emphasizing that he himself was the one doing the wishing.

“relatives.” Only in Romans is the word *suggenes* (# 4773 συγγενής), used in the wider sense of “spiritual” relatives, like fellow Christians are called “brothers” or “sisters” even if they are not related by blood. Literally, *suggenes* means: *of the same kin, akin to, related by blood*. However, it is used in a wider sense to *of the same race, a fellow-countryman, or a spiritual brother or sister* (Cp. Thayer). The other “spiritual” uses are Romans 16:7, 11, 21.

9:4. “adoption.” The initial recipients of God’s grace were the Israelites. They were the original children of Abraham and kingdom of priests, they were the first recipients of the gift of holy spirit we all enjoy today (Acts 2), they will be given the land of Israel in the resurrection (Ezekiel 37), and are the “olive tree” into which the Gentiles were grafted (Rom. 11:17-24). Thus it is not unusual that this verse would say that the “adoption” we enjoy, and in a fuller sense, the culmination of that adoption in the future kingdom, is theirs. For more on adoptions, see the note on Ephesians 1:5.

9:5. This verse can, and has been, translated dozens of different ways. Trinitarians usually put a Trinitarian slant on it to the end that it says Christ is God. We thought the way the Revised Standard Version translated it hits the mark: “God, who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen.”

“according to the flesh.” This is a simple statement of fact, showing Christ was a true descendent of the patriarchs. It is the same phrase Paul uses two verses earlier to describe his genetic relationship to the Jews: “My brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (9:3). The Jews were Paul’s kinsmen “according to the flesh,” as opposed to his Christian brothers in the spirit (Robertson, *Word Pictures*). Likewise, Christ came “from” (*ek*) the patriarchs according to the flesh—that is, as a direct human descendent through his mother Mary—but ultimately was “born from (*ek*) the holy spirit” (Matt. 1:20: γεννηθῆν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου). Hence, Paul here is focusing on Christ’s physical line from Abraham, given to him by his mother, rather than his fathering by God.

The parenthesis is the figure of speech *parembole*—a parenthesis thrown in for emphasis, but is a complete thought in itself (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

9:7. Quoted from Gen. 21:12.

“children.” This is the idiom for descendants. Just as “father” means more than just biological father in the biblical language, but also “ancestor,” so “children” does not mean biological children, but descendent, as “the children of Israel” are the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel.

9:9. Quoted from Gen. 18:10.

9:12. Quoted from Gen. 25:23.

9:13. Quoted from Mal. 1:2, 3.

“hated.” If “hate” here seems to be too harsh, it is because it is not to be taken literally, but is a biblical idiom meaning “love less.” The Hebrews, and all ancient near eastern cultures, were prone to exaggeration and overstatement. This is the figure of speech hyperbole. God was faced with a choice as to which of the twins would continue the Christ line, he could only choose one; therefore, before either was born or had done anything, the purpose of God was pleased to choose Jacob as the next patriarch. This was a bestowing of great honor, so Esau, who did not receive this blessing, was said to be “loved less.” For other examples of “hate” used in figurative, hyperbolic language, see: Gen. 29:30-31; Deut. 21:15-17 (KJV); Prov. 13:24; Matt. 6:24; Luke 14:26; 16:13; and John 12:25.

It is important to realize that “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated [loved less]” is in reference to the Christline—the genealogy that would culminate in the birth of the Messiah (cp. v. 5). There was only one Messiah, and since there were two male descendants of Isaac, God had to choose one to be the line to the Messiah, and was not to be. Thus Jacob is said to be loved because his progeny led to the Messiah. The terms “loved” and “hated” need to be seen in the context of the chapter, which is the bringing forth of the Messiah. As to the individuals, Jacob and Esau themselves, a good case could be made for the fact that Esau did much better in his life than Jacob. Jacob lied to Isaac (Gen. 27:18-30) and as a result had to flee his home, and was gone for 20 years. During that time his mother died, and he spent 14 years as an indentured servant working off the dowry for the two women he married while away from his family. Not long after finally getting back home to Canaan, his sons sold his favorite son, Joseph, into slavery, and it was more than 20 more years before they were reunited. When they were, Jacob was uprooted from his home, the Promised Land, and spent his closing years in Egypt, where he finally died. In contrast, Esau stayed close to his family, married several wives, had many sons and daughters, prospered, and founded the country of Edom.

9:15. Quoted from Exod. 33:19.

9:17. Quoted from Exod. 9:16.

9:21. “ordinary use.” Compare NRSV, NASB, NET, NJB, and NIV translations. The word is *atimia* (#819 ἀτιμία), usually translated “dishonor,” however it can carry a neutral sense: “A vessel to which no special value is attached... *for ordinary (use)*” (BDAG). God does not create a vessel for the purpose of “dishonorable” use; rather, he makes one for honorable use and the other for ordinary, plain purposes. There is a word play in the verse, because the Greek word “honorable” is *timē* (#5092 τιμή; pronounced tee-may) and “ordinary” is *atimia*, the same root word with the “a” (“{not}”) prefix. To preserve the word play in the verse, a possible translation would be: “Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for a non-honorable use?”

9:22. “desiring.” God “desires for there to be peace and justice in heaven and on earth. Nevertheless, but due to the fallen state of the world, He awaits the redemption of creation, having long-suffering now in the knowledge that there are some people who are being pulled from the destructive flames.

“fitting themselves for destruction.” The Greek verb is *katartizo* (#2675 καταρτίζω) and means to cause to be in a condition to function well, thus, to put in order or restore; or to prepare, make, create, or outfit. In this verse the verb is a participle, and the form can be either passive voice or middle voice. The voice of the verb makes a great deal of difference, because if it is passive it means the vessels were fitted by an outside force that acted on them, while if it is middle it means they fitted themselves for destruction. Many commentators pick up on this fact and conclude that the vessels caused their own problem and deserve the destruction they will ultimately receive. Meyer, although he himself disagrees, lists many such commentators (p. 382). Hendricksen notes that it is possible “...that here, in verse 22, the people themselves—in co-operation with Satan—were the active agents.” Adam Clarke notes: “...they had fitted themselves for that destruction which the wrath, the vindictive justice of God, inflicted.” John Bengel notes that the text does not say that God fitted the people for destruction, but rather that

the verse “is only stating in what condition God finds them, when He brings upon them His wrath.”

Although Meyer and some commentators assert that “fitted themselves” is opposed to the context, we disagree. The verse clearly says that God “endured” with “much longsuffering” these vessels. But it hardly makes sense that God would have to endure with longsuffering if He is the one fitting the vessels for destruction. In that case, it would have been His plan and His work, and He would be accomplishing it, not enduring it. As with Pharaoh, God is about His purposes of love and mercy, which cause a hardening in obstinate people—they harden themselves rather than yield and obey—and God endures this hardening rather than bringing immediate judgment, because He wants everyone to have an opportunity for salvation (2 Pet. 3:9). Adam Clarke writes: “...He [God] had endured their obstinate rebellion with much long-suffering; which is a most absolute proof that the hardening of their hearts, and their ultimate punishment, were the consequences of their obstinate refusal of His grace and abuse of His goodness.”

9:23. “he prepared.” In contrast to verse 22 in which people prepare themselves for destruction, verse 23 specifically says that God prepares people for glory. There is no way that we humans could any way prepare ourselves for glory. Both the glory itself, and the preparation for it, need God’s involvement.

“prepared beforehand for glory.” God prepares us for the glory before the glory is fully realized. He prepares us as we work with Him, and obey His will day after day. The person who obeys God from the heart “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

9:25, 26. Quoted from Hos. 2:23, 1:10.

9:27, 28. Quoted from Isaiah 10:22, 23.

9:29. “Lord of the Armies” see James 5:4 for the only other use. Quoted from Isaiah 1:9.

9:33. Quoted from Isaiah 28:16.

10:1. “them.” This refers to “Israel” mentioned in 9:31.

10:4. “with the result.” The Greek word *eis* (#1519 εἰς) in this verse indicates that righteousness is the *result* of belief (Cp. NET). A more literal, but not as clear, translation would be “resulting in righteousness for everyone who believes.” This truth fits precisely with verse 10: “with the heart man believes resulting (*eis*) in righteousness.”

10:5. Paul is referring to Lev 18:5. Not an exact quotation, but it is not stated to be one.

10:6 “Do not say....” This is a reference to Deut. 30:12, which reads “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’” It is not an exact quotation, and it should be noted that Paul does not write: “Moses said,” or “the Law says,” but rather that “righteousness” says. Thus Paul is not so much quoting Moses as he is using the principles in the Law to make his point.

“(that is, to bring Christ down).” The figure of speech, Epitrechon, which is a type of parenthesis (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). An Epitrechon (which means “running along”) is a short parenthetical insertion placed in the text as an explanatory remark. It is not complete in itself, but needs the rest of the sentence to be complete.

“speaks this way.” The one speaking is “righteousness.” This is the figure of speech personification, and in this case God’s righteousness is portrayed as a person trying to win the hearts of the doubters. Thus Paul is not so much quoting Moses as he is using the principles in the Law to make his point. First, “righteousness” addresses the doubts of those who think that righteousness is difficult and even far away—perhaps

even that Messianic salvation has not yet come from heaven (v. 6) or that the Messiah has not risen from the dead (v. 7). Then it affirms that the message of faith is close at hand, even in our hearts and mouths (v. 8). In this section, Paul calls to remembrance a very similar situation during the time of Moses. The Israelites had the Law, but were despairing of keeping it, thinking it was too difficult. Moses answered them, saying:

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 (NIV)

11) "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.

12) It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"

13) Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"

14) No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

Just as the Old Testament proclaimed that obeying the Law was not too difficult a task, attaining righteousness by faith is not difficult either. What the Apostle Paul does, however, is modify the statements somewhat so that they fit in the context of the promised Messiah. The gift of the Law has now been superseded by the gift of the Messiah.

"ascend into heaven." When Moses used this in Deuteronomy 30:12, it was in the context of going into heaven to get the commandments from God. In the context of Messianic expectation however, people would not get the Law from God, but would get the Messiah from Him and then bring him back down with them. Thus the explanatory parenthesis, "that is, in order to bring Christ down." Getting Christ from heaven would be, as Deuteronomy 30:11 notes, both difficult and beyond their reach. Furthermore, it contains a denial of the fact that the difficult work of God had already been done. Human effort, no matter how satisfying and empowering to those who need to feel in control of their own destiny, is worthless. God had sent the Messiah, and if we reject him and wish to go to heaven and get another is not only too difficult (impossible!), but a rejection of God's gracious provision.

10:7. "descend into the abyss." The meaning of this phrase might be considered unclear except that it is explained clearly in the parenthesis, which lets us know that in this case, the "abyss" stands for the grave and the state of being dead. In Deuteronomy 30:13, Moses did not use "abyss," but "sea," but Paul modifies the words of Moses and adapts them for the Messianic situation. In verse 6 he spoke in reference to those who thought that the Messiah had not yet come and who would therefore have to go to heaven to get him. In this verse he speaks of those who doubt the Messiah is raised from the dead, and they must help God with that task. The use of abyss makes sense in this context because of the associated meanings of sea, "abyss," and the place of the dead. For example, Job 28:14 compare the abyss and the sea, both of which in that context contain the dead. Thus, Paul's changing Moses' "sea" to the word "abyss" would not have struck most readers as being as drastic as it seems in English. As in verse 6 and going into heaven, the task of helping God with raising the dead illuminates the absurdity of human effort. We simply cannot do what God requires, we have to submit to His provision and accept his gift. Even during the Administration of the Law, there was an element of faith that was necessary for salvation.

“(that is, to bring Christ up out from among *the* dead.)” The figure of speech, Epitrechon, which is a type of parenthesis (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). An Epitrechon (which means “running along”) is a short parenthetical insertion placed in the text as an explanatory remark. It is not complete in itself, but needs the rest of the sentence to be complete.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24.

10:8. “in your heart.” On the surface this seems to be untrue because the Word of God was not “in the heart” of the unbelievers, which is why they were said to ignore God’s righteousness (v. 3). However, there are deeper issues involved here. First, Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 30:14, and the Jews were taught the Law from the time they were little children. The knowledge of the Law was clearly in their hearts, i.e., in the depth of them. Beyond that, the Law, indeed, all God’s commands, are holy and good, and mankind has an inherent knowledge of good and evil that is part of our basic nature (Gen. 3:22: “man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil”). Romans 2:14 notes that even without the Mosaic Law, the Gentiles can do “by nature” the things contained in the Law. This inherent knowledge of good and evil is the reason that what is considered right and wrong, and crime and justice, are similar in every culture. For example, every culture treats lying and stealing as wrong. It is precisely because people do know good from evil that God can judge all mankind to a set of righteous standards. Although we all have a sin nature that makes us selfish and self-centered, which is why children need to be taught to share, we also know instinctively, from the pain we feel when we are mistreated, that love is the correct path and hatred hurts and is wrong.

In a similar vein, we all know that we sin. Everyone knows he makes mistakes. Therefore, at a fundamental level, we all know that if we are going to be “right,” it must be done for us. So in a very real sense, the “message of righteousness” is in our hearts, and if we diligently seek it, we will find it.

10:9. “Because.” The Greek word *hoti* (#3754 ὅτι) can be “because” or “since,” or it can be “that.” In this case, the meaning “because” best fits the context and scope of Scripture. The point God is making in verse 8 is “the message is near to you,” and the “because” shows how near it really is; all a person has to do is confess and believe to be saved. If we start verse 9 with “that,” then it is saying that the message of faith is just confess and believe to be saved. Of course, that is a very important part of the message of faith, but it is not all there is to the message. Other things are also part of the message of faith, including that God gave His Son, Christ voluntarily died for our sins, righteousness is by faith alone, etc. It might be possible to summarize verses 6-9 by saying “Righteousness from God is not difficult to obtain. Do not say you have to go to heaven to get it, or down to the grave. It is near you, because if you just confess and believe, you will be saved.”

“confess.” The Greek word is *homologeō* (#3670 ὁμολογῶ), which means “to say the same thing as another,” and in this case the person must speak the same thing as the truth on the subject, i.e., that Jesus Christ is Lord. It could be argued that because we normally think of confess in a negative context, such as when someone confesses he stole something, that “profess” or even “declare” would be better translations. However, while they may be good, the negative pressure against Christ and Christianity in the world seems to make “confess” a good translation, and sadly, many are afraid to openly confess Christ because of the pressure against it. In this verse, the word *homologeō* and the word *pisteuo* (“believe” [#4100 πιστεύω]) are both in the aorist tense, which is very important.

The aorist indicates a one-time action, and usually in the past. In fact, a very good case could be made for the translation: “If you confessed with your mouth...and believed in your heart...you will be saved.” There are many people who think that a one-time confession of Christ does not get a person “saved,” but rather Christians must continue to confess Christ as Lord over and over again. If that were the case, then “confess” and “believe” would be in the present tense, active voice, but they are not. The Greek text supports the fact that a person confesses Jesus one time and believes one time, and at that time becomes born again and is thus guaranteed everlasting life. A person can sin, or even live and immoral lifestyle after becoming born again, but that does not undo his guarantee of salvation. We do not work for salvation (Eph. 2:8), and just as good works cannot get us saved, evil works cannot undo our new birth.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.” “will be saved.” The Greek is *sōzō* (#4982 σωζω), which means to be saved, or be rescued, and in this context means saved from death and thus given everlasting life. In this verse, *sōzō* is in the future tense, which is very important, especially when it is contrasted with “confess” and “believe,” which are aorist tense (normally referring to an event in the past). Thus, Romans 10:9 accurately points to the fact that our “salvation” is a future event. Romans 10:9 could be accurately translated, “Because if you confessed with your mouth “Jesus is Lord,” and believed in your heart that God raised him out from among the dead, you will be saved.” Christians are not “saved” yet. We are still subject to sin, sickness and death. When we are “saved” in the full sense of the word, we will be in our new, everlasting bodies, no longer subject to sin, sickness, and death. What we have now is a promise of salvation, a guarantee of salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). There are some verses that say we are saved, and they are idiomatic. The idiom that some scholars refer to as the idiom of permission occurs when a future event is so certain to occur that God speaks of it as already past. That is the case with the Christian’s salvation. The guarantee of salvation is so certain that God sometimes speaks of our salvation in the past tense. See the note on Romans 8:24, and for more on the prophetic perfect, see the note on Ephesians 2:6.**10:11.** Quoted from Isaiah 28:16.

10:13. Quoted from Joel 2:32.

10:15. Quoted from Isaiah 52:7.

10:16. Quoted from Isaiah 53:1.

10:17. “Consequently.” After making the case that people need to hear to believe, he sums us, “consequently” (cp. NIV), the faith (the Christian faith) comes through hearing.

“The faith.” The Greek contains the article, “the.” It is not just “faith” in general that comes by hearing, but “the” faith, meaning the (Christian) faith for a person’s salvation. The context of this section starts in 10:1 with Paul’s desire that the Israelites would be saved; he then goes the word of faith spoken for salvation in verses 8 and 9, calling on the Lord to be saved (v. 13), and the need for missionaries to speak of this great salvation (vv. 14-15). By the time we get to verse 17, it is clear that “the” faith being spoken of is the Christian faith in all its aspects.

“not all.” Figure of speech *tapeinosis*, understatement (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). This emphasizes the fact that very few Jews believed.

“message of Christ.” Primarily a genitive of relation, the message about Christ, but it certainly includes the words “from Christ,” (Genitive of origin). The word about Christ, and the words of Christ, both lead men to salvation and “the faith.” When one

word (of) has two applicable meanings, it is the Figure of Speech Amphibologia, “Double Entendre.”

10:18. Quoted from Ps. 19:4.

10:19. Quoted from Deut. 32:21.

10:20. Quoted from Isaiah 65:1.

10:21. Quoted from Isaiah 65:2.

11:2. “petitions.” This is a historical present, using the present tense to speak of an event that happened in the past. This usage portrays the event vividly, placing us in the middle of action as though we are there to see Isaiah petition God, and hear the divine answer “say” (present tense, v. 4) back to Isaiah, essentially, that all of God’s people have not been cast off, there is a remnant of true Israel that remains (cp. 9:6, “not all those who are descended from Israel are truly Israel” [NET]). The question Paul was concerned with in present time was whether Israel had been cast off (11:1-2). By employing the historical present, Paul vividly resurrects Isaiah’s conversation with God from the past and brings it to bear on this question in the present, concluding with, “Even so, then at this present time there is also a remnant...” (11:5).

11:3. Quoted from 1 Kings 19:10, 14.

11:4. Quoted from 1 Kings 19:18.

“divine answer.” This is from *chrematizō* (#5538 χρηματισμός), the noun form of the verb *chrematizo* (#5537 χρηματίζω). See entry on “divinely instructed” in Matthew 2:12.

11:5. “choice *made by grace*.” Compare NASB: “according to *God’s* gracious choice.” The Greek literally reads, “according to the choice of grace.” To translate “choice of grace” as a remnant “chosen by grace” could be confusing, as though God specifically chose each member of the remnant “by grace.” This is not the idea. Rather, that fact that there exists a remnant at all from national Israel is due to God’s gracious choice.

11:8-10. Quoted from Isaiah 29:10, Deut. 29:4, and Ps. 69:22, 23.

11:9. “deathtrap.” The *skandalon* was the trigger of the trap, which then killed the victim.

Due retribution. The people spurned God, and had a retribution coming to them (cp. Lenski.)

11:11. “resulting in falling beyond recovery.” This phrase is a result clause with *hina* + subjunctive mood (cp. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, pg. 473) (See Matt. 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled”). Paul is asking (using *me* which expects a negative answer) if Israel stumbled with the result that they have fallen irrevocably (cp. NET translation: “they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they?”). The word for fall is *pipto* (#4098 πίπτω), which here has the sense of “be completely ruined” (BDAG). Robertson says this is the “effective aorist” of *pipto*, meaning “to fall completely and for good” (*Word Pictures*). Our translation captures both the sense of result and the irrevocableness of the fall in question.

11:15. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.”

11:19. “so that.” In the Greek this is a *hina* + subjunctive purpose-result clause. The branches were broken off for the purpose of grafting in Gentiles, and his breaking them off resulted in room for the gentiles. See Matthew 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.”

11:26, 27. Quoted from Isaiah 59:20, 21 and 27:9.

11:32. “confined” = to enclose on all sides, imprison, encage. Everyone alive has been encaged in sin. No one can escape on their own, it has to be the work of an outsider, Jesus Christ. This applies to both the Jews and Gentiles. All men, due to sin nature, have a natural tendency to defy God; we are all caged together in defiance.

11:34, 35. Quoted from Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11.

12:1. “reasonable service” The Greek word for reasonable is *logikos* (#3050 λογικός), and the exact meaning in this verse is quite hard to pin down. Thayer points out that the word was a favorite of ancient Greek philosophers, who used it in the sense of “rational,” from the use of *logos* as “reason.” Thus if it were used that way in the verse, “your reasonable service” would be a good translation. However, *logikos* was also used in a sense that referred to what belonged to the realm of words and logic versus the realm of matter. If used in that sense, “reasonable” stands opposed not to that which is foolish or *unreasonable*, but rather to that which is material, external, or of the flesh, such as the ritualistic and outward worship of the Jews. This is why many versions go with the translation “spiritual service” or “spiritual worship.” We felt, however, that to English speakers, “spiritual” was more misleading than “reasonable.” For us as Christians, our service and worship should come from within, not from without, and thus with our mind and spirit, not our flesh. Nigel Turner (*Christian Words*) sets forth one more possibility for the meaning of *logikos*, and that is “of the Word,” due to the Christian community beginning to associate *logos* with the Word. That is a possibility also. The only other time that this word is used is in 1 Pet 2:2 as “milk of the word” (see note). We think that all three of these possible definitions are true to an extent, but think that “reasonable service” makes the most sense in an English translation. Furthermore, since the concept of “reasonable” is an important part of the Greek word, it seemed important to bring that out into English.

12:2. “be transformed.” The Greek verb is *metamorphoo* (#3339 μεταμορφώω), “be transformed” and it is in the passive voice. We do not actively transform ourselves. We control our thinking, and as we do, transformation takes place.

“test and approve.” The Greek word is *dokimazo* (#1381 δοκιμάζω) “to draw a conclusion about worth on the basis of testing” (BDAG). Although we generally try to stay away from using a phrase to translate a Greek word, in this case the meaning is clear enough that a general exception needs to be made. In many situations, the Christian does not start out by knowing the will of God. Too many Christians who do not know the will of God in a situation either do nothing or pray for an inordinately long time, waiting for a clear answer. Often the will of God is “Try something!” We are to test (and many tests fail) and then finally be able to approve, the will of God.

12:10. “As regards” (see Lenski).

“brotherly affection.” The Greek is *philadelphia* (#5360 φιλαδελφία), a compound Greek word made up of *philos* (#5384 φίλος, a strong liking, a friendship; see note on John 21:15) and *adelphos* (#80 ἀδελφός), which means “brother.” It is the strong bond of friendship that exists between brothers.

“family affectioned.” This Greek word is *philostorgos* (#5387 φιλόστοργος), which is a compound word made up of *philos* (the noun form of *phileo*; see note on John 21:15) and *storge*. The Greek verb *storge* does not occur as a single word in the NT, but is used in compound form. It is the mutual love of parents and children, and wives and husbands. *Storge* is the love that naturally exists between family members. A mother may

not know why she loves her child, she just does. Family love is often unexplainable and very strong. God wants Christians to have that kind of love for each other. For an explanation of the other types of love in the Bible, see the commentary note on John 21:15.

12:11. “not procrastinating” “Pertaining to shrinking from or hesitating to engage in something worthwhile, possibly implying lack of ambition” (Louw-Nida, *Lexicon*, and cp. Lenski.).

12:19. Quoted from Deut 32:35.

“give place to the wrath of God.” This phrase contains the figure of speech Ellipsis. Leaving out “of God,” which is clearly implied in the context, places the emphasis on “wrath.” Evildoers will not go unpunished. The Christian does not need to avenge himself, but can pray and wait for God’s wrath to manifest itself. The verb, “give place” is in the imperative mood; it is a command. God forcefully commands us to not avenge ourselves. Our part is to love and bless those who persecute us, and to step aside to allow God to avenge His people.

12:20. Quoted from Prov. 25:21-22 and Deut 32:35.

13:4. “bear the sword.” Often the Romans in charge of keeping peace carried a sword, certainly the Roman soldiers did.

13:6. “tax.” The Greek is *phoros* (#5411 φόρος). “That which is brought in as payment to a state, with implication of dependent status, tribute, tax” (BDAG) “A payment made by the people of one nation to another, with the implication that this is a symbol of submission and dependence” (Louw-Nida, *Lexicon*)

13:9. Quoted from Exod. 20:13-15, 17, and Lev. 19:18.

13:10. “love does no wrong.” Is that what it is to love someone, to do him no harm? If I do not harm someone therefore I love him? No, a thousand times no. This is the figure of speech *tapeinosis*, or demeaning. It is the deliberate demeaning, or lessening of something in order to elevate or increase it. It often comes in the form of an understatement. We are aware that sometimes the most powerful way to emphasize something is to understate it. The understatement is subtle, and therefore this *tapeinosis* is often not noticed, but love is much more than just not harming someone. Without the *tapeinosis*, a more literal understanding of love is that it does good to its neighbor.

13:13. “orgies.” The Greek word is *komos* (#2970 κῶμος), it usually translated as “orgies,” “reveling,” or “carousing.” The word originally meant something like “merrymaking” but came to be associated with wild religious festivals where drunken, frenzied mobs would parade the streets after dinner hours with torches accosting people, singing, and carousing. This was associated with orgies and self-mutilation.

13:14. “and do not entertain forethoughts.” “Entertain.” The Greek is simply “to do” in the imperative present middle, but “do not do forethoughts” is awkward. It would be appropriate to put an exclamation point in the phrase, “and do not entertain forethoughts! Concerning...”

The Greek noun *pronoia* (#4307) is “forethoughts,” what is thought about beforehand. The flesh has desires, and many people follow those desires instead of bringing their thoughts captive to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). How many, many times our sin starts by our paying attention to what our flesh desires, thinking ahead about what it wants, what it is pressuring us to do that is outside the will of God. We start with the faintest forethoughts, which become stronger and stronger as we dwell on them and as

the forethoughts take shape into ideas and plans. We dwell on the desires, then can become consumed with them to the point that we begin planning to fulfill them, finally acting on what our flesh craves. This verse is the way out: do not entertain forethoughts about how to fulfill the desires of the flesh.

14:3. “treat...with contempt.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

14:8. “we live...we live...we die...we die.” A beautiful figure of speech, epadiplosis; which occurs when the figure epanadiplosis occurs in successive phrases or sentences (Bullinger, *Figures*).

14:10. “treat...with contempt.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

14:11. Quoted from Isaiah 49:18 and 45:23.

14:14. This verse is the figure of speech *Parembolē*, which is a form of parenthesis. A *Parembolē* occurs when the interposed sentence is independent and complete in itself. It would make sense if it were separated from the sentences before and after it.

14:23. “condemned.” The one who acts against his own conscience and without faith is condemned both by himself (self-condemnation) and by God, for what he is doing is sin, as the verse says.

15:1. “weaknesses.” The Greek is *adunatos* (#102 ἀδύνατος), and means without strength, impotent, powerless, weakly, disabled. In this case the context makes the meaning clear. The context of Romans 14 is the weak in faith not walking in the freedom they have in Christ, and those who are strong in the faith learning to live in peace with them, not leading them to sin against their conscience. It could be said that the chapter break between Romans 14:23 and 15:1 breaks the context and causes the majority of Christian to misunderstand the meaning of 15:1-3. Romans 14 and 15 are clear: we who are strong in the faith have an obligation to help, and bear, those who are not. We have an obligation to not please ourselves, but to do what blesses others.

15:3. Quoted from Ps. 69:9.

15:9. Quoted from Ps. 18:49.

15:10. Quoted from Deut. 32:43.

15:11. Quoted from Ps. 117:1.

15:12. Quoted from Isaiah 11:10.

15:13. “may.” The wish comes from the optative mood of “fill” (Cp. Lenski; Robertson, *Word Pictures*).

“through your continuing faith.” The sense of the Greek *en* is “through,” or perhaps even better, “in connection with.” The joy and peace do not “just happen” to the Christian, but are in connection with his continuing faith, his continuing believing.

“abound in hope through the power of holy spirit.” In this verse, God connects the reality of the hope in the life of a believer to the power of the holy spirit. The gift of holy spirit makes the hope more real in many ways. First, there is the effect the holy spirit has in us as it works to conform us into the image of Christ (Gal. 5:16-25). Perhaps more to the point is how, when we see the power of holy spirit at work in us as we receive revelation, speak in tongues, and manifest the spirit in other ways, God becomes more real to us, and thus his promises about the future (our hope) abounds in us as well. The verse immediately before 15:13, (Rom. 15:12), speaks of the hope of the coming of the

Messiah, the root of David, which is one of the great promises of God that we can hope for.

15:16. “a servant.” The Greek is *leitourgos* (#3011 λειτουργός). It is used of a public minister, a servant of the state, and it is also used of a minister in a sacred manner. Many think that the word always connotes a sacred minister, but there is much to argue that in this context the word can mean a secular minister. There are aspects of both meanings that are true, and this is one of the advantages of the Greek text—it packs both meanings into one word. In the Roman world, public servants bore the expense for festivals, celebrations, games (including the gladiator matches), etc. By addressing himself as a public servant one would immediately note that he was the one who bore the expense of his own efforts in bringing the Gentiles to Christ, something he points out at other places in the Epistles. Both public servants and sacred ministers did what they did on behalf of others, which was certainly the case with Paul.

“my offering, namely, the Gentiles.” The Greek, “offering of the Gentiles” is the objective genitive and thus has the force of “the offering, that is to say, the Gentiles.” Paul’s offering to God was the Gentiles.

“sanctified by holy spirit.” The gift of “holy spirit” that is born inside each believer “sanctifies” them, i.e., it makes them holy, which is why every believer is called a “holy one.”

15:21. Quoted from Isaiah 52:15.

15:24. Although many commentators see an anacoluthon in this verse, for us there is no need for it (Cp. Lenski).

“once I have first enjoyed your company for a while.” The Greek reads somewhat differently, saying that Paul would like to “fill up” his “measure” with them, which is very unclear in English. When we say we have “had our fill” of a guest, it means we are unhappy with the situation and it is time for him to leave. Thus we believe the REV has the correct sense of the verse.

15:26. “Macedonia,” “Achaia,” Figure of Speech, Metonymy. This is a common use of metonymy, the regions being put for the people who live in them.

15:28. The Gentile Churches that Paul founded had given a gift to the Jewish Church in Jerusalem. That is why Paul must take the gift personally, and not hurry on to Rome and Spain right away. Paul feels very strongly that the Jewish church needs to know that even as the Word went out first from them to the Gentiles, now the blessings of the Gentile churches are coming back to the Jews. That is why the verse says “myself sealed” (middle voice). Anyone could have taken money to Jerusalem, but Paul felt his presence was essential to communicate the essence of the message that went with the blessing.

“through you.” Paul would travel through Rome on his way to Spain.

15:32. “rest.” The Greek word *sunanapauomai* (#4875 συναναπαύομαι) means **to relax in someone’s company, rest with** (BDAG). The Romans were so familiar to Paul, and so at ease with him, that he could genuinely rest with them.

16:7. Junia. “Junia” is a woman, a point that has been hotly debated. However, a recent study revealed over 250 uses of the name in Greek, and not one of them was masculine. (Cp. New International Biblical Commentary: Romans, by James Edwards). This means that an apostle could be female, which makes sense if there is neither male nor female in Christ.

