

*Acts 27–28;
Romans 1–3*

NT #27 Bible Reading Class
Pastor: Wentang Wang



BRC

Study the Bible
and follow Jesus

Bishop, CA

A Bible Reader's Conviction

- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV)*

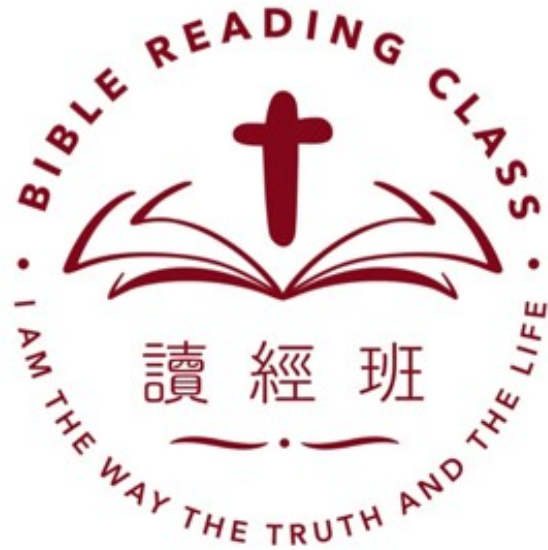
A Blessed Journey

1. *May you study God's Word with a reverent heart and walk in His will.*
2. *May the Lord's Word flourish, and may He add to the church those who are being saved.*
3. *May the Lord bless your days of reading the Scriptures.*

Study the Bible, follow Jesus

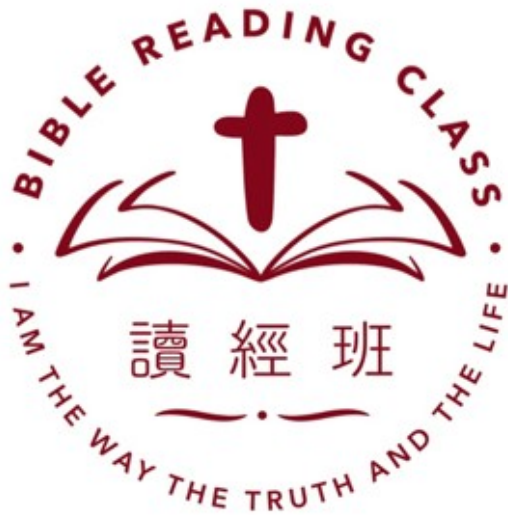


The Guiding Principles of BRC



- Christ-Centered
- Bible-Based
- Mission-Minded

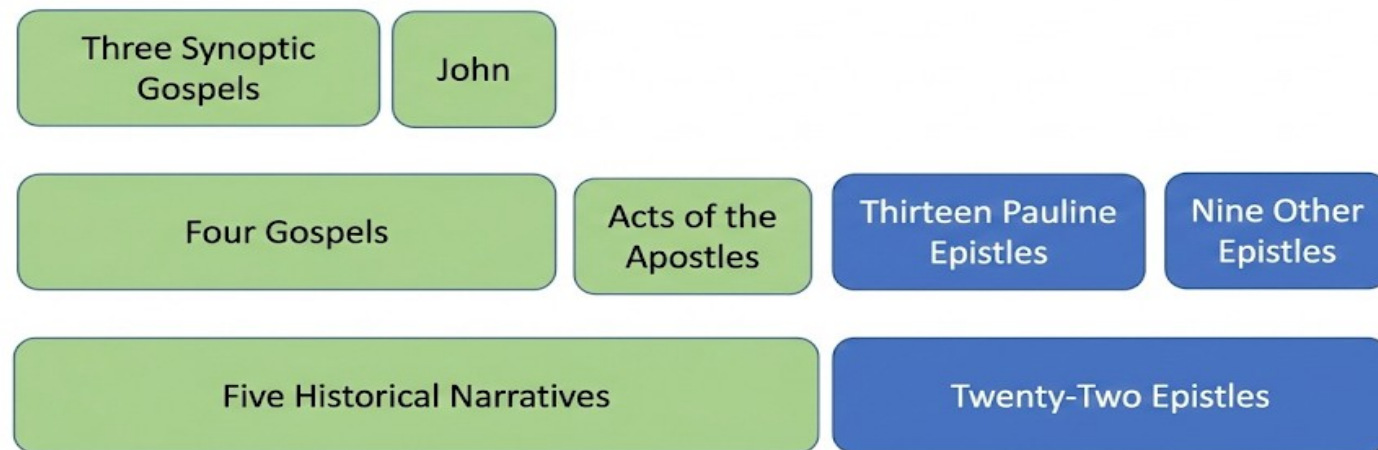
BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



- *I'll complete weekly reading assignment*
- *I'll watch weekly teaching video in its entirety*
- *I'll complete weekly quiz (closed book)*

The Structure of the 27 Books of the New Testament

- *The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) John*
- *The Fourfold Gospel, Acts, The Thirteen Pauline Epistles, The Other Nine Epistles (General Epistles and Others)*
- *Five Books of Historical Narrative, Twenty-Two Books of Doctrinal Teaching*



PREACHING THE GOSPEL ON A RAGING SEA

ACTS 27, A CHAPTER ON LIFE'S STORMS



Preaching the gospel in different circumstances

Chapter 1: Athens, Knowledge Hall Chapter

Chapter 2: Corinth, City Culture Chapter

Chapter 3: Ephesus, Spiritual Warfare

Chapter 4: Jerusalem, Religious Tradition

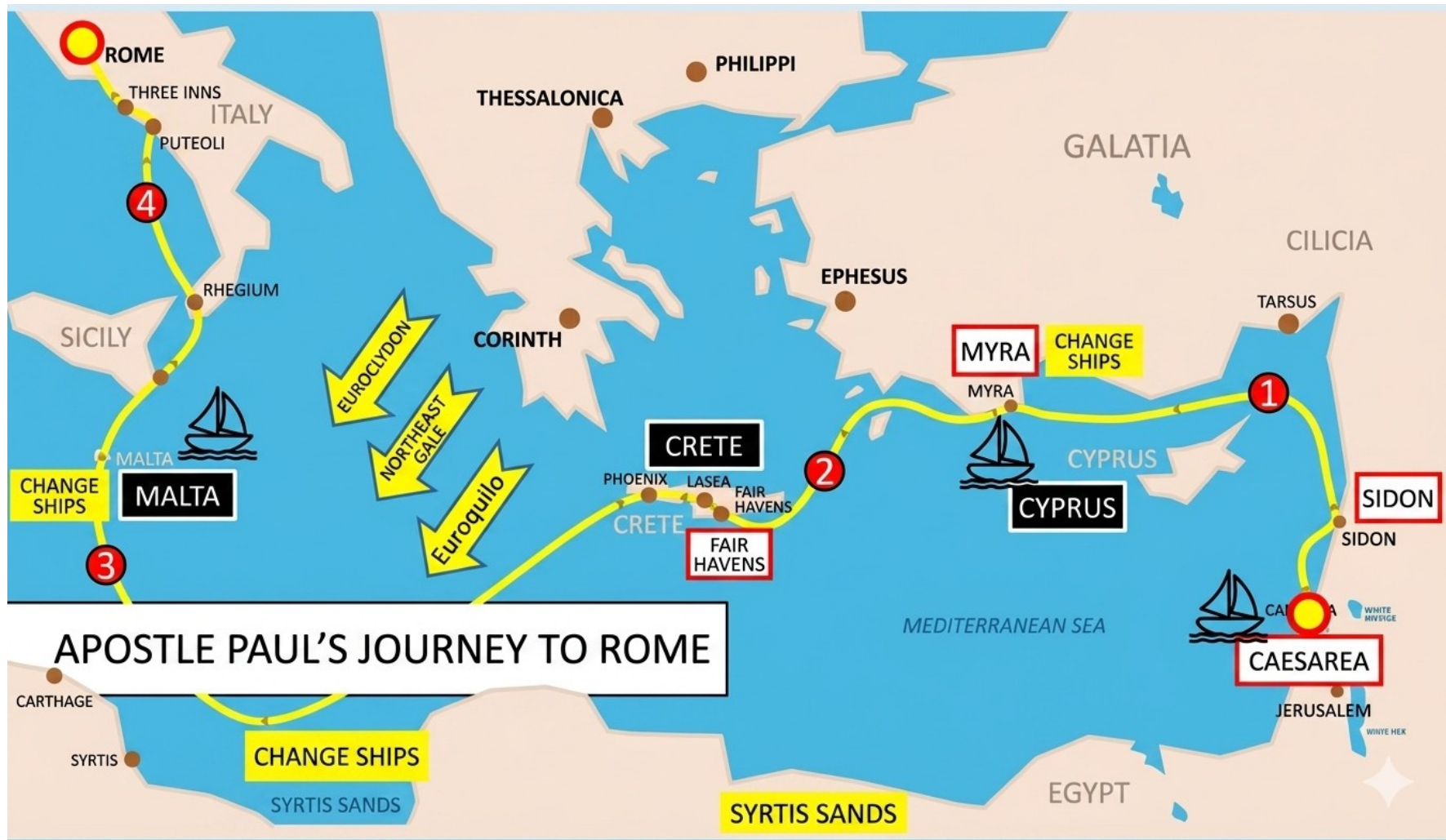
Chapter 5: Caesarea, Political Power

Chapter 6: Raging Seas, Life Storms

Chapter 7: Rome, All Nations and All Kindreds

1. *Surviving the Furious Sea.*

- **Departure: Caesarea, summer of AD 59.**
 - **Arrival: Rome, spring of AD 60.**
 1. **First stage of the voyage:** *From Caesarea to Myra. They encountered west winds and sailed against the wind. At Myra they changed ships.*
 2. **Second stage of the voyage:** *From Myra to Fair Havens. They were hindered by the wind, and the journey was difficult.*
 3. **Third stage of the voyage:** *From Fair Havens to Malta. They encountered Euroclydon, a hurricane-strength northeaster, and drifted at sea for fifteen days, losing all hope of being saved. They finally ran aground on the island of Malta.*
 4. **Fourth stage of the voyage:** *From Malta to Rome. After spending the winter there, they changed ships and continued sailing. They landed at Puteoli in Italy, traveled along the Appian Way, and arrived in Rome.*
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1. *Surviving the Furious Sea*

- *Friends who showed loyalty*
- *“When it was decided that **we** would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium, about to sail for ports along the coast of Asia, and we put out to sea. **Aristarchus**, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his **friends** so they might care for his needs” (27:1–3).*
- *Acts 27 begins with a touching display of friendship and loyalty, recounting Paul’s journey as a prisoner being taken to Rome. Paul did not travel alone; he journeyed with friends. The phrase “we boarded the ship and set sail” shows that Luke and several companions—including Aristarchus of Macedonia—went on board to travel with Paul. Added to this were Julius the centurion, who treated Paul kindly, and the friends along the way who cared for him. This scene of **“sharing hardship and weathering the storm together,” a portrait of loyal friendship, brings a warm glow in the midst of the bitter wind, reaching deeply into the heart.***

1. *Surviving the Furious Sea*

- **Loyal Friends**

- *In my personal view, believers ought to show loyalty to one another. It may not require risking one's life, but at the very least, we should treat each other with sincerity and never betray one another. Scripture often speaks of the loyalty between friends—Jonathan risked his life to see David, and David composed the “Song of the Bow” to mourn Jonathan. Aristarchus traveled a long distance from Macedonia to accompany Paul on the ship, sharing the hardships of the journey. Epaphroditus stayed with Paul in prison, taking care of his daily needs (Philippians 2:25). Such loyalty does not come from compulsion; it is the natural and enduring expression of genuine affection.*
- *This genuine affection—this loyalty between friends—has gradually faded in an increasingly hypocritical church atmosphere. People exchange polite greetings face-to-face but speak against one another behind their backs; they meet often, yet the relationship remains shallow. This should not be the norm in the church. Human hearts long for sincerity; everyone needs friends. Life is short—if I treat you with sincerity, and you treat me with sincerity, we love one another and walk through this life together.*
- *Surviving the Furious Sea begins with a touching display of friendship and loyalty. During this difficult voyage, they shared the same boat, lived or died together, accompanied by friends, moved by loyalty. Amid violent winds and towering waves, friendship shone with brilliant light, illuminating the dark sky and warming cold hearts.*

1. *Surviving the Furious Sea*

- *Acts chapter twenty-seven is the most thrilling nautical narrative in the entire Bible. It vividly portrays the danger of the storm and the peril of the voyage, and its length even exceeds that of the Book of Jonah. Throughout the entire journey, Paul bore witness to the Lord through both his words and his actions.*
- *The season of strong winter winds was about to begin, and the north wind was raging. Paul advised everyone not to risk sailing, suggesting instead that they remain in Fair Havens for the winter. At that moment, a gentle south wind began to blow, and they thought they had obtained what they wanted. They ignored Paul, weighed anchor, and sailed along the southern coast of the island. But that gentle south wind was only an illusion and did not last. What was destined to come still came—the violent north wind swept down from the island, seized the ship, and drove it along with great force. The storm raged for many days without stopping; neither sun nor stars appeared for many days. In the midst of the furious waves, the people struggled for many days until all hope of being saved was gone, and they had gone without food for a long time. At this moment Paul came forward to comfort them, saying:*
 - *“But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.” (Acts 27:22–25, NIV)*

1. Surviving the Furious Sea

- *On the fourteenth day, Paul noticed that the sailors intended to abandon ship and escape. He warned the centurion to prevent the sailors from taking the small boat (the lifeboat). Without the sailors, none of the passengers could be saved. So the centurion ordered the soldiers to cut the ropes of the small boat and let it drift away, thereby preserving the lives of the passengers.*
- *Paul urged everyone to eat, saying:*
 - *“Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. (Acts 27:33–36, NIV)*

1. Surviving the Furious Sea

- *As the ship approached a small island, it ran aground during the attempt to reach the shore. The vessel was battered by the waves and severely damaged, and everyone had to abandon ship to save their lives. There were prisoners on board, and according to Roman law, if a prisoner escaped, the guards responsible would be executed. To prevent the prisoners from swimming away, the soldiers planned to kill them. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul and therefore prevented the soldiers from carrying out their plan. In the end, all 276 people on board reached land safely, not one missing—just as Paul had said.*
- *The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to save Paul and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way, **everyone reached land safely** . (Acts 27:42–44)*



PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN ROME

ACTS 28: THE CHAPTER OF ALL NATIONS AND PEOPLES

w.Wang
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1. Bearing Witness Before the Natives of Malta

- *“Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.” (Acts 28:1, NIV)*
- *The ship ran aground on Malta, and all 276 people on board were saved.*
- *The father of Publius, the chief official of the island, was suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul prayed for him, laid his hands on him, and healed him. The rest of the sick on the island came as well and were cured.*
- *They stayed on the island for three months, and the islanders honored them in many ways. When it was time to sail, the islanders furnished them with the supplies they needed.*
- *To this day, Malta has more than 360 churches—approximately one church for every thousand people. According to tradition, Publius (St. Publius) became the first bishop in the history of Malta.*



w. Wang

**THE ISLAND OF MELITA,
WHERE PAUL WAS RESCUED,
IS KNOWN TODAY AS MALTA.**

**THE ISLAND FEATURES ST. PAUL'S BAY,
COMMEMORATING THE EVENTS
THAT TOOK PLACE THERE.**



• *Malta — Quick Facts*

- *One of the smallest countries in the world*
- *Located 50 miles south of Italy*
- *Area: 316 square kilometers*
- *Population: 475,700*
- *Christians (Roman Catholic): 90%*
- *Extremely high church density, with more than 360 churches—approximately one church for every thousand people*

2. Is He a God or a Murderer? It Depends on a Single Thought

1. He Is a Murderer

• *When the islanders saw the venomous snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.*

2. He Is a God

• *The islanders expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said, “He is a god!” (Acts 28:4–6, NIV)*

• **People without conviction:** *In my personal view, this is the most humorous scene in the Book of Acts apart from the exorcism incident in Ephesus. People without conviction change their opinions at any moment—just a moment ago they said he was a murderer, and immediately afterward they said he was a god. The difference is enormous! Yet such people do not think they are inconsistent. They believe they have keen observation, discerning wisdom, and explanations that fit the situation. What is astonishing is that others actually listen to them and follow their opinions. Thus, the “blind leading the blind,” as Jesus described, repeatedly appears in real life.*

3. Paul Bears Witness in Rome

- Paul had always wanted to go to Rome to preach the gospel. During his third missionary journey, he already had this desire:
 - **“After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. ‘After I have been there,’ he said, ‘I must visit Rome also.’” (Acts 19:21, NIV)**
- In the letter he wrote to the church in Rome, he also expressed this longing:
 - **“I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you...” (Romans 1:13, NIV)**
- Paul finally arrived in the city of Rome! However, he did not come as a free man, but as a prisoner being escorted there. Although his status was different, it did not hinder Paul from preaching the gospel. Praise God—His works are marvelous! He can use all kinds of methods and all kinds of circumstances to accomplish His will.

3. Paul Bears Witness for Jesus in Rome

• *After one day, a south wind began to blow, and the next day they reached **Puteoli** . There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the **Forum of Appius** and the **Three Taverns** to meet us. At the sight of these people, Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we arrived in **Rome**, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. (Acts 28:13–16, NIV)*



The Appian Way

The brothers and sisters there, when they heard our news, came out to meet us at the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. (Acts 28:15)

“All roads lead to Rome.” The Appian Way stretched from the southern end of Italy all the way to the city of Rome. It was one of the most important and most famous roads of the Roman Empire, and its remains can still be found today. Paul traveled along this very road toward Rome, and the Roman believers came to the Forum of Appius to welcome him.

3. Paul Bears Witness for Jesus in Rome

- *As soon as Paul arrived in Rome, he met twice with the local Jewish leaders and preached the gospel to them. As always, some believed and some did not:*
 - ***“They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.” (Acts 28:23–24, NIV)***
- *Paul did not lose heart. As always, he preached first to the Jews; when the Jews refused to listen, he then preached to the Gentiles:*
 - ***“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” (Acts 28:28, NIV)***

4. A Book That Has Not Been Finished

- *Paul was only under house arrest in Rome. He lived in his own rented house, receiving all who came to see him and preaching the gospel to them:*
 - ***“For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!” (Acts 28:30–31, NIV)***
- *The Book of Acts ends abruptly at chapter 28, an open-ended conclusion that leaves room for continuation. In this way, Acts seems both finished and unfinished. What happened to Paul afterward? Was he released? Did he travel elsewhere to preach? Scripture does not tell us. What it does tell us is this: although Paul was confined, the word of God was not confined, and in Rome he preached the gospel without hindrance!*
- *After that, countless “Pauls” continued to pass on the gospel, one generation after another. Brothers and sisters, the responsibility of writing “Acts chapter 29” falls upon us. Believers throughout history—including us in the twenty-first century—have taken up the apostles’ torch and continue to bring the gospel to all nations and peoples...*

4. A Book That Has Not Been Finished

- *“And repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47, NIV)*
- *The gospel concerns all peoples. Paul preached not only to the Jews but also to all nations and all peoples.*
- *God loves the world. Those who preach the gospel must have a broad heart, loving all people regardless of race, class, or gender...*

To the End of the Earth

Luke 24:46–47

He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (NIV)

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (NIV)





The Gospel for All Peoples

“I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11, NIV)

Becoming One in Christ

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26–28, NIV)

Pauline Epistles — Introduction

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

- *Of the 27 books in the New Testament, 13 were written by Paul, including the Book of Romans. Knowing this author helps us better understand his writings.*
- *Paul was a chosen instrument of the Lord, appointed to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ before the Gentiles, kings, and the people of Israel, and to suffer greatly for His name. (Acts 9:15–16, NIV)*
- *Before encountering Jesus, Paul was a zealous persecutor of the church; after encountering Jesus, Paul became an apostle who ran for the gospel with even greater passion—**“out of his mind for God” (2 Corinthians 5:13, NIV)**.*
- *The lines of Paul’s letters reveal a life transformed by the Lord. He shared this life with the saints in various places; when he could not visit them in person, he wrote letters to teach them spiritual truths and guide them in handling church matters.*

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

1. Paul Before Believing in Christ

- **The worst of sinners:** *“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.” (1 Timothy 1:13, 15, NIV)*
- **Approving Stephen’s death:** *As they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” ... And Saul approved of their killing him. (Acts 7:59–60, NIV)*
- **Destroying the church:** *“But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.” (Acts 8:3, NIV) Saul was still “breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples,” seeking letters from the high priest to arrest followers of the Way in Damascus, whether men or women, and bring them to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1–2, NIV)*

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

2. Paul's Conversion and Calling

- **Struck down by a great light:** *As Saul neared Damascus, “suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. ‘Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’” (Acts 9:3–6, NIV)*
- **A chosen instrument:** *The Lord told Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” (Acts 9:15–16, NIV)*
- **Sent to the Gentiles:** *“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” (Acts 22:21, NIV)*

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

3. Paul After Believing in Christ

- **Considering all things garbage:** *“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ... I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.” (Philippians 3:7–8, NIV)*
- **Bearing the marks of Jesus:** *“From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” (Galatians 6:17, NIV)*
- **Compelled by Christ’s love:** *“For Christ’s love compels us... that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14–15, NIV)*

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

- **A man who turned the world upside down:** *The mob rushed into Jason's house, shouting, "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here!" (Acts 17:5–6, NIV)*
- **Out of his mind for the Lord:** *As Paul defended himself, Festus shouted, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!" (Acts 26:24, NIV)*
- **Not disobedient to the heavenly vision:** *Paul said, "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds." (Acts 26:19–20, NIV)*

1. Knowing the Apostle Paul

- **Preaching only Christ crucified:** “Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified... For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 1:22–23; 2:2, NIV)
- **Unimpressive appearance and speech:** “For some say, ‘His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.’” (2 Corinthians 10:10, NIV)
- **Faithful to the end:** “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness...” (2 Timothy 4:6–8, NIV)

2. God Spoke to Paul

- *Although Paul did not personally follow Jesus during His earthly ministry, the gospel he preached came through revelation from Jesus Christ. God also granted him wisdom to write letters that teach spiritual truth.*
- *“I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:11–12, NIV)*
- *“Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation...” (Ephesians 3:2–3, NIV)*
- *“Our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.” (2 Peter 3:15, NIV)*

3. Timeline of the Apostle Paul

- *Born at the same time as Jesus or slightly later*
- *Damascus experience, conversion — AD 35*
- *First missionary journey — AD 46–48*
- *Second missionary journey — AD 50–52*
- *Third missionary journey — AD 53–57*
- *Arrested in Jerusalem — AD 57*
- *Imprisoned in Caesarea — AD 57–59*
- *Sent to Rome to appeal — AD 59*
- *First imprisonment in Rome — AD 60–62*
- *Paul released and visited various churches — AD 62*
- *Second imprisonment in Rome; wrote 2 Timothy — AD 67/68*
- *Paul martyred — AD 67/68*

4. The Pauline Epistles

- *The New Testament contains twenty-seven books, of which twenty-one are letters.*
- *Among these letters, thirteen were written by the Apostle Paul.*
- *Of these thirteen, nine were written to churches and four were written to individuals.*
- *Each letter can be divided into three parts: “Opening Greeting, Main Body, Closing Benediction.”*

4. The Pauline Epistles

- *The Opening Format of New Testament Letters*
- Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ ...writing to you in Rome, loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:7, NIV)
- Paul, an apostle writing to the churches in Galatia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:3, NIV)
- Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God writing to the church of God in Corinth: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:2, NIV)

Reference: Opening Formats of Ancient Chinese Letters

- *Letter to Ren Shaoqing, Han Dynasty, by Sima Qian*
 - *(Sima Qian) bows twice and addresses (Shaoqing) respectfully.*
- *Letter to General Chen Bozhi, Northern and Southern Dynasties, by Qiu Chi*
 - *(Chi) bows his head to (General Chen) respectfully.*
- *Letter to Yuan Zhen, Tang Dynasty, by Bai Juyi*
 - *(Juyi) addresses (Weizhi) respectfully.*

- *Common Features of Ancient Letters:*
 1. *Name of the sender*
 2. *Name of the recipient*
- *Unique Features of New Testament Letters:*
 3. *A greeting of blessing*

1. *From A (a servant of Christ)*
2. *To B (a church or believer)*
3. *Greetings (grace and peace from our Lord)*

4. *The Pauline Epistles*

- **Classification of Paul's Letters**

- **I. By Chronology**

1. *Before Paul's first Roman imprisonment: Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans*
2. *During Paul's first Roman imprisonment: Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, Philemon*
3. *After Paul's first Roman imprisonment: 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy*

- **II. By Nature**

1. *Travel Letters: Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans*
2. *Prison Letters: Colossians, Philippians, Ephesians, Philemon*
3. *Pastoral Letters: 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy*

- **III. By Length (New Testament Arrangement Method)**

- *The longest letters are placed first (Romans), and the shortest last (Philemon).*

- **IV. By Recipient**

1. *Letters to Churches: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians*
2. *Letters to Individuals: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*

CATEGORY	EPISTLE	CORE THEOLOGICAL THEME	COMPOSITION PERIOD
Travel Epistles	Galatians	Soteriology: The Cross of Christ	Between 1 st & 2 nd Missionary Journeys
	1 & 2 Thessalonians	Eschatology: The Coming of Christ	During 2 nd Missionary Journey
	1 & 2 Corinthians	Soteriology: The Cross of Christ	During 3 rd Missionary Journey
	Romans		During 3 rd Missionary Journey
Prison Epistles	Colossians	Christology: Christian Living	During 1 st Imprisonment in Rome
	Ephesians		
	Philippians		
	Philemon		
Pastoral Epistles	1 Timothy	Ecclesiology: Worker of Christ	During Release Period
	Titus		During Release Period
	2 Timothy		During 2 nd Imprisonment in Rome



1. *The Theme and Outline of Romans*

- *Nature: the most doctrinal of Paul's letters, explaining the essential truths of Christ*
- **Theme: the gospel of Jesus Christ**
- *Length: sixteen chapters, the longest of all Pauline epistles*
- *Author: the Apostle Paul*
- *Recipients: believers in Rome (the gospel had already reached Rome by then)*
- *Place of writing: during Paul's third missionary journey, written near Corinth*
- *Key verses: Romans 1:16–17*

1. The Theme and Outline of Romans

- **Outline:**

- *Preface (1:1–17)*
- *I. The Gospel and Justification by Faith (Chapters 1–4)*
- *II. The Gospel and Sanctification by the Lord (Chapters 5–8)*
- *III. The Gospel and Israel (Chapters 9–11)*
- *IV. The Gospel and Christian Living (Chapters 12–15)*
- *Greetings (Chapter 16)*

2. Romans Chapters 1–4: The Gospel and Justification by Faith

1. God's Wrath: All humanity has sinned — 1:18–3:20

1. *The unrighteous are guilty — 1:18–32*
2. *The self-righteous are guilty — 2:1–16*
3. *The Jews are guilty — 2:17–3:8*
4. *All humanity is guilty — 3:9–20*

2. God's Grace: All people may be justified by faith — 3:21–4:25

1. *The doctrine of justification by faith: Jesus Christ — 3:21–31*
2. *The example of justification by faith: Abraham — 4:1–25*

3. Romans Chapters 5–8:

The Gospel and Sanctification by the Lord

- 1. The first step of sanctification: reconciliation with God — Chapter 5*
- 2. The second step of sanctification: union with Christ — Chapter 6*
- 3. The third step of sanctification: victory through the Lord — Chapter 7*
- 4. The fourth step of sanctification: becoming like Christ — Chapter 8*

Romans 1–8: Justification and Sanctification

Romans 1–4:	Romans 5–8:
<i>Justification by faith</i>	<i>Sanctification by the Lord</i>
<i>I before God</i>	<i>God in me</i>
<i>Reconciliation with God</i>	<i>Rejoicing in God</i>
<i>Freedom from the penalty of sin</i>	<i>Victory over the power of sin</i>

4. Romans Chapters 9–11: The Gospel and Israel

1. *Israel's past: chosen — Chapter 9*
2. *Israel's present: unbelief — Chapter 10*
3. *Israel's future: salvation — Chapter 11*

5. Romans Chapters 12–15: The Gospel and Christian Living

1. *Christians and God — 12:1–2*
2. *Christians and themselves — 12:3–8*
3. *Christians and others — 12:9–16*
4. *Christians and enemies — 12:17–21*
5. *Christians and government — 13:1–7*
6. *Christians and God's law — 13:8–10*
7. *Christians and lifestyle attitude — 13:11–14*
8. *Christians and the weak in faith — 14:1–15:13*
- *Appendix: Paul's final sharing — 15:14–33*

6. Romans Chapter 16: Greetings

1. *Recommendation* — 16:1–2
 2. *Greetings* — 16:3–16, 21–24
 3. *Exhortation* — 16:17–20
 4. *Doxology* — 16:25–27
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The teachings of Romans

Teaching One: The Message in the Greeting

- **The author's self-introduction**

1. *His identity: a servant of Jesus Christ*
2. *His office: an apostle*
3. *His duty: to proclaim the gospel of God*

- **The nature of the gospel**

1. *Christ is the content of the gospel*
2. *The gospel is God's promise*
3. *The gospel is the message of the apostles*

- **The source of blessing**

1. *Grace (undeserved favor) and peace (well-being of the whole person)*
2. *From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

Teaching Two: The Universality of Sin

- **The Gentiles are guilty (1:18–32)**

1. *They deliberately refuse to acknowledge God*
2. *They practice unrighteous deeds*

- **The self-righteous are guilty (2:1–16)**

1. *They judge others while doing the same things*
2. *Their hearts are stubborn and unwilling to repent*

- **The Israelites are guilty (2:17–3:8)**

1. *They know the law but do not practice it; they teach the law yet break it*
2. *They focus on outward rituals but ignore inward spirituality*

Teaching Two: The Universality of Sin

- **All humanity is guilty (3:9–20)**

1. *Their hearts refuse to seek God*
2. *Their feet turn away from the right path*
3. *Their mouths speak deceit*
4. *They have no fear of God*
5. *All fall short of the glory of God*

Teaching Three: Justification by Faith

- **The definition of “righteousness”**

1. *Perfect behavior: completely obeying God’s law*
2. *A free gift: God grants His righteousness freely to all who believe in Jesus*

- **Justification by faith**

- *Though our deeds are imperfect, by God’s grace, whoever believes in Jesus Christ is declared righteous*

Teaching Three: Justification by Faith

- **The definition of justification (3:21–31)**

1. ***Justification:*** *being declared righteous by God through faith in Jesus*
2. ***Redemption:*** *Christ paid the price to set believers free from the penalty of sin*
3. ***Atonement:*** *Christ's blood satisfies the holy God's judgment on sin and removes His wrath from sinners*

- **The example of justification: Abraham (4:1–25)**

1. *The nature of justification: it is God's grace — “wages are not credited as a gift”*
2. *The reason for justification: Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*
3. *The timing of justification: he was justified before he was circumcised*
4. *Conclusion: based on these principles, justification is not by works (such as circumcision or keeping the law) but by God's grace. Therefore, all who believe in Jesus are justified by God.*

Teaching Three: Justification by Faith

- **The fruits of justification (5:1–21)**

1. *Justification by faith brings us peace with God*
2. *Justification by faith brings us into God's grace*
3. *Justification by faith enables us to rejoice in God*
4. *Justification by faith grants us eternal life*

Teaching Four: The Process of Sanctification

• Principles of Christian living (6:1–7:6)

1. A new perspective (6:1–11)

- a. Consider yourself dead to sin
- b. Consider yourself alive to God

2. A new offering (6:12–23)

- a. Past: offered to sin as instruments of unrighteousness
- b. Present: offered to God as instruments of righteousness

3. A new freedom (7:1–6)

- a. The old life was bound by sin
- b. The new life is free in the Spirit

Teaching Four: The Process of Sanctification

- **The reality of Christian living (7:7–25)**

1. *My inner being desires to obey God and do good*
2. *My flesh disobeys God and does evil*
3. *Two natures coexist within me, forming two opposing forces: “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?”*

- **The power for Christian living (8:1–39)**

1. *God’s power: the Spirit who gives life has the power to deliver me*
2. *Human will: I must choose to follow the Spirit*

Teaching Five: God's Plan for Israel

- **Israel chosen (9:1–29)**

1. *This is God's sovereignty*
2. *This is God's grace*

- **Israel rejected (9:30–10:21)**

1. *Because they did not pursue righteousness by faith*
2. *Because they rebelled against God*

- **Israel accepted (11:1–29)**

1. *One day Israel will no longer be hardened but will repent and turn to God*
2. *At that time, all Israel will be saved*

Teaching Six: The Life of Believers

- **The secret of Christian living (12:1–2)**

1. *Surrender of sovereignty: offer yourself as a living sacrifice*
2. *Renewal of the mind: continually align yourself with God*

- **Gifts for service (12:3–8)**

1. *Gifts come from God*
2. *Each person has different gifts*
3. *Gifts are for serving the body (the church)*
4. *Be good stewards of your gifts: use them appropriately and fully*

Teaching Six: The Life of Believers

• Attitudes of believers (12:9–21)

- 1. Have sincere love*
- 2. Hate evil and cling to good*
- 3. Be fervent in spirit: toward the Lord and toward people*
- 4. Be humble: honor one another*
- 5. Be diligent: always serve the Lord*
- 6. Be joyful in hope*
- 7. Be patient in affliction*
- 8. Be faithful in prayer*
- 9. Be generous to others*
- 10. Pray for those who persecute you*
- 11. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep*
- 12. Do not take revenge; leave room for God's wrath*

Teaching Six: The Life of Believers

- **Submission to authority (13:1–7)**

1. *Authorities are established by God*
2. *Believers must submit to authority*

- **The importance of love (13:8–10)**

1. *Always consider yourself indebted to love*
2. *All commandments are summed up in “Love your neighbor as yourself”*
3. *Love does no harm to a neighbor*

- *The armor of light (13:11–14)*

- **How to handle the gray areas of life (14:1–15:7)**

1. *Principle of freedom: truth sets people free*
2. *Principle of love: do not insist on your freedom at the expense of others*
3. *Example of Christ: Christ did not seek to please Himself*

- **Conclusion (15:8–13)**

Teaching Seven: The Roman Road (God's Plan of Salvation)

- 1. The universality of sin** — *Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
 - 2. The cross of Christ** — *Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*
 - 3. Two destinies** — *Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
 - 4. How to believe** — *Romans 10:9 “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*
 - 5. Prayer of decision** — *Romans 10:13 “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*
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Romans Chapter 1



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1. Preface to the Book of Romans

• Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. According to the flesh, he was a descendant of David; and through the Spirit of holiness he was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ! (Romans 1:1–7, NIV)

1. Preface to the Book of Romans

The Nature of the Gospel

- 1) *The source of the gospel is God*
- 2) *The promise of the gospel is in the Scriptures*
- 3) *The content of the gospel is Jesus Christ*
 - A. *According to the flesh, He is the descendant of David*
 - B. *According to the Spirit, He is declared with power to be the Son of God*
- 4) *The scope of the gospel is all nations*
- 5) *The purpose of the gospel is to bring about the obedience of faith (obedience — hupakoe — “to hear under”)*

1. Preface to the Book of Romans

- “To call all the Gentiles to the **obedience** that comes from faith.” (1:5b, NIV)

A. The Scope of the Gospel: Among all nations

- “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19, NIV)

B. The Content of the Gospel: Jesus Christ (for His name)

- “Make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19, NIV)

C. The Purpose of the Gospel: To bring about obedience to the truth

- **Obedience** (*hupakoe*. To hear under. Obedience): submission, listening, responding
- **Truth / Faith** (*pistis*. Faith. Conviction. Truth): faith; the content of what is believed

Comparison of English Translations:

- “Obedience that comes from faith.” — NIV
- “Obedience of faith.” — NASB
- “Obedience to the faith.” — KJV

- **Two Different Gospels**

<i>The Gospel of Jesus Christ (The Gospel Preached by the Apostles)</i>	<i>The Gospel of Man (The Gospel Preached by Many Today)</i>
<i>Believe in Jesus</i>	<i>Believe in “a spiritual power”</i>
<i>Includes the cross</i>	<i>No cross</i>
<i>Lifelong obedience to the truth</i>	<i>One-time hand-raising decision</i>
<i>Become a disciple of Jesus</i>	<i>Become a “child of God” (without discipleship)</i>
<i>From the heart</i>	<i>Outward ritual</i>
<i>For the kingdom of God</i>	<i>For human happiness</i>

2. Bearers of the Gospel

- 1. I thank God for you*
- 2. I pray to God for you*
- 3. I want to share spiritual gifts with you so that you may be strengthened*
- 4. I want to bear fruit among you*

2. Bearers of the Gospel

A. The Ministry of a Gospel Bearer

• *“God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son...” (1:9a, NIV)*

a) *Whom do I serve (who)? I serve God.*

b) *Where do I serve (where)? I serve in the gospel of His Son.*

c) *How do I serve (how)? I serve with my spirit.*

B. The Sharing of a Gospel Bearer

• *“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong — that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” (1:11–12, NIV)*

a) *What do I share (what)? I share spiritual gifts.*

b) *Why do I share (why)? To strengthen others.*

c) *How do I share (how)? By mutual sharing.*

2. Bearers of the Gospel

C. The Fruit of a Gospel Bearer

• *“I planned many times to come to you... in order that I might have a harvest among you... I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.” (1:13–15, NIV)*

- a) **My desire**: I want to bear fruit among you (to lead people to Christ in Rome).
- b) **My attitude**: I am indebted to everyone.
- c) **My effort**: I am eager to give all my strength.

Reflection: Serving God — The Value and Happiness of Life

- 1. A person must find his value in life to experience happiness. Those who cannot find value do not feel happy. A sense of value arises only when a person feels useful; those who feel useless lack a sense of value.*
- 2. Value comes from something connected to a person, not from the person himself. Living for something valuable produces a sense of value; living for oneself does not.*
- 3. Value comes from God. What is connected to God has value; what is separated from God has no value. Those who pursue worldly things lack a sense of value; no matter what they gain, they eventually doubt its worth.*

Reflection: Serving God — The Value and Happiness of Life

4. *Inner satisfaction comes from doing God's will. Those who obey God are satisfied; those who pursue the world remain spiritually thirsty.*
5. *Those who pursue material things and fame as life goals can never be truly satisfied. Satisfaction comes from within; shallow goals satisfy only shallow desires, not the deep needs of the heart.*
6. *Humans come from God; only God can satisfy the deepest needs of the heart. If a person leaves God, even with wealth and success, the heart remains empty and unsatisfied.*
7. *Those who serve God are connected to God; their lives are used by God, they affirm their value, and they experience happiness and fulfillment.*

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

1. *My attitude: I am not ashamed of the gospel*
2. *My experience: this gospel is the power of God*
3. *My grace: the righteousness of God is revealed in this gospel*
4. *My life: this righteousness is from faith to faith; the righteous will live by faith*

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

• *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” (1:16–17, NIV)*

• ***I am not ashamed of the gospel***

- Among unbelievers, do you feel embarrassed to admit you are a Christian?*
- Do you feel awkward reading the Bible or praying in public?*
- Do you feel uneasy or ashamed when sharing the gospel?*
- Deep inside, do you feel that believing in Jesus is shameful?*
- Deep inside, do you feel that believing in Jesus is glorious?*

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

B. This Gospel Is the Power of God

- **Power (dunamis):**

- Thayer's Greek Dictionary: *power residing in something by virtue of its nature.*
- English words “dynamite” and “dynamic” come from this root.

- **Understanding the Gospel through its Power**

1. The gospel is power — *The gospel is not weak or ineffective; it is exceedingly powerful.*
2. The gospel is **God's** power — *This gospel is the power of God. Since the gospel is God's power, nothing can resist it.*
3. The gospel is **saving** power — *It brings salvation to everyone who believes. The power of the gospel does not dominate or oppress people; it saves them and gives life to those who believe.*

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

C. The Righteousness of God Revealed in the Gospel

- *The righteousness of God — which one does Romans refer to?*
 - ☐1. *God's attribute: God is righteous.*
 - ☐2. *God's gift: God gives His righteousness to all who believe in Jesus.*
- *“But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.” (Romans 3:21–22, NIV)*
- **I have no righteousness; only God is righteous. By believing in Jesus, I am counted righteous.**

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

D. From Faith to Faith

- *Text comparison:*
 - *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. (NASB)*
 - *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed —a righteousness that is by faith from first to last. (NIV)*

3. This Gospel Is the Power of God

D. From Faith to Faith

- **Explanation of the phrase:** *The meaning of “from faith to faith” refers to...*
 - ❑ **1. Evangelism:**
The believing “me” shares with the unbelieving “you,” so that you may also believe.
 - ❑ **2. Spiritual growth:**
From the initial faith of salvation to the mature faith of victory.
 - ❑ **3. The nature of justification:**
The righteousness of God is received by faith from beginning to end.
- **Which of the above interpretations is correct?**

4. Three Revelations

1. **God's righteousness revealed in the gospel** : *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is **revealed**—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (1:17)*
 2. **God's wrath revealed against the ungodly**: *The wrath of God is being **revealed** from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, (1:18)*
 3. **God's truth revealed in the human heart**: *Since what may be known about God is **plain** to them, because God has made it plain to them.(1:19)*
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General Revelation vs. Special Revelation

<i>General Revelation</i>	<i>Special Revelation</i>
<i>General (known to all humanity)</i>	<i>Particular (known only through Jesus and Scripture)</i>
<i>Creational</i>	<i>Salvific</i>
<i>Natural</i>	<i>Supernatural</i>
<i>Continuous</i>	<i>Final</i>

5. Three Exchanges (exchange)

1. Exchanging the glory of God for idols:

They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. (1:23, NIV)

2. Exchanging the truth of God for a lie:

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. (1:25, NIV)

3. Exchanging natural relations for unnatural ones:

Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones; in the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women... (1:26–27, NIV)

- **Natural:** according to created nature
- **Unnatural:** contrary to created nature

6. Three “Give Them Over” (give them over)

1. God gave them over to sinful desires:

“So God **gave them over** in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.” (1:24, NIV)

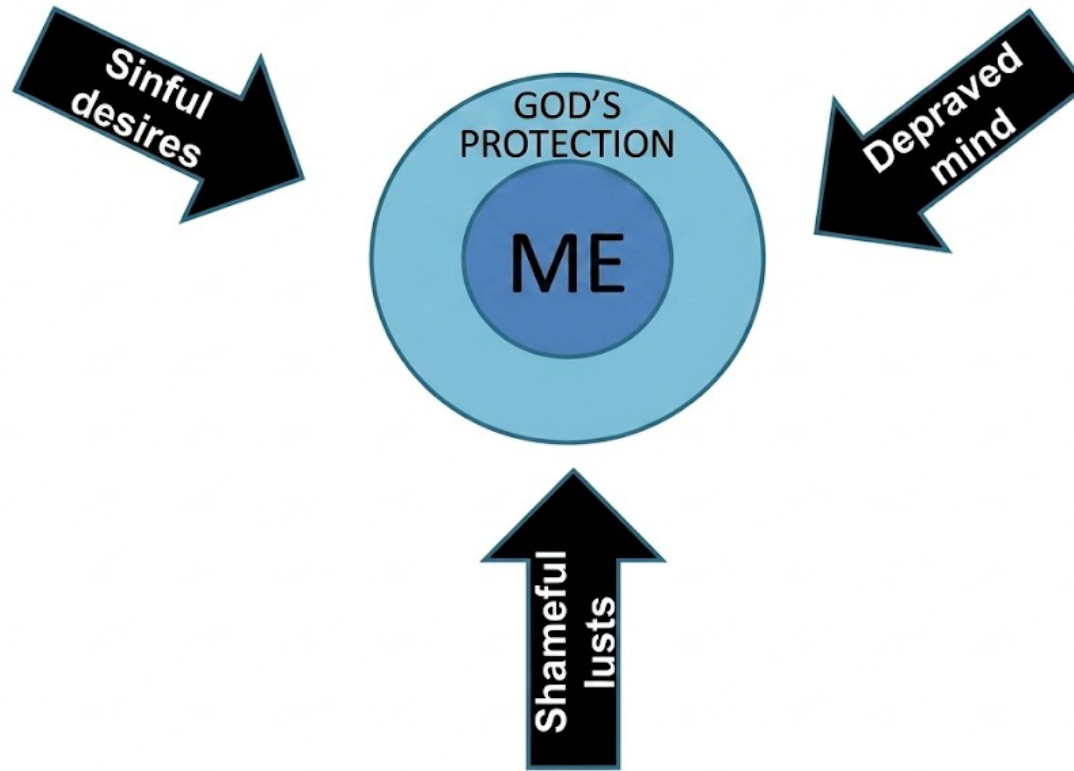
2. God gave them over to shameful lusts:

“Because of this, God **gave them over** to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.” (1:26, NIV)

3. God gave them over to a depraved mind:

“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so **God gave them over** to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.” (1:28, NIV)

GOD GIVES YOU OVER TO.....



7. List of crimes

- Does the Bible say anything about other sins?
- *Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:28-32 NIV)*
- *Are only homosexuals sinners? Far from it! The above passage lists twenty-one sins in great detail. Some are sins of the heart, such as envy, greed, and evil. Some are attitudes toward others, such as insolence and arrogance. Some are sins of speech, such as slander and speaking behind others' backs. Some relate to one's own family, such as disobeying parents and lacking natural affection. Some violate basic human decency, such as breaking covenants and lacking mercy. Some are against God, such as hating God.*

7. List of crimes

- *In the face of such a list, no one can hide. This raises a question: If I have committed some of the sins on the list but not others, am I therefore more righteous than others? For example, I am greedy, inwardly proud, and discriminatory toward others, but I am not homosexual. Can I then put on a righteous face, loudly condemning homosexuals, while feeling inwardly that I am more moral than they are?*
- *If a pastor sees that many in the congregation are unfaithful to their spouses, many speak behind others' backs, and many are racially prejudiced, but few commit abortion and few are homosexual—so he vigorously attacks abortion and homosexuality while never mentioning the other sins in order not to offend the congregation—is that considered righteous?*
- *Paul did not avoid mentioning other sins. Paul wanted everyone to know that all have sinned, all need to repent, and all need the grace of Christ. He did not deliberately amplify abortion and homosexuality while lowering the seriousness of adultery, greed, and racial discrimination. He did not sensationalize the sins that people commit less often, stirring up dust to cover the sins people commit frequently. He did not seek to please the congregation, allowing them not only to avoid the rebuke of conscience but even to imagine themselves morally superior.*

7. List of crimes

- Romans chapter 1 ends with this “truthful and thought-provoking” statement:
 - *Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32 NIV)*
 - **They not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them:** those who sin like others to sin as well. They do not say, “I have sinned, I deeply regret it, and I hope others will not be like me.” Instead, they not only do not regret it, but they also enjoy dragging others down with them, making them the same as they are. Because of this, gossip increases, rumors spread more widely, hatred grows, and prejudice deepens.
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Romans Chapter 2



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1. Two Major Evidences for the Existence of God

• There are two major evidences that not only reveal the existence of God, but also reveal the attributes of God. They not only tell the world that there is a God, but also tell the world what kind of God He is.

1. **External Evidence:** The Creation
2. **Internal Evidence:** The Moral Law

1. Two Major Evidences for the Existence of God

• The Creation

• *What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20 NIV)*

1. **Fact:** *What may be known about God, people do know.*
2. **Reason:** *Because God has made it plain to them.*
3. **How it is revealed:** *Revealed through what has been made.*
4. **What is revealed:** *God's "Eternal Power" and "Divine Nature."*
5. **When it is revealed:** *Since the creation of the world, it has already been revealed.*

1. Two Major Evidences for the Existence of God

- **The Moral Law**

- *They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.*

(Romans 2:15 NIV)

1. **The Law**: *The law written on the heart (the Moral Law).*
2. **The Enforcer**: *The conscience (the sense of right and wrong).*
3. **The Judge**: *The thoughts (reason).*

2. The Wrath of God, Romans 1:18-3:20

- *The wrath of God is being **revealed** from heaven against all the godlessness (ungodliness) and wickedness (unrighteousness) of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness. (Romans 1:18 NIV)*
- *We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. (Romans 3:9 NIV)*
- *Romans tells us two messages—one bad news and one good news—and both have already been **revealed**. The bad news is the wrath of God; the good news is the grace of God. First the bad news: the wrath of God is **revealed** against all the godless and wicked (sinners). You ask: Who are sinners? The answer: Jews and Gentiles (all people in the world) are sinners. Then comes the good news (the gospel): the righteousness of God is **revealed** in the gospel and is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. You ask: Does God treat Jews and Gentiles differently? The answer: There is no difference. All have sinned, whether Jews or Gentiles, and all who believe in Jesus Christ are justified by God.*

2. The Wrath of God, Romans 1:18-3:20

- *In the bad-news section, Paul first speaks of the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the Gentiles, then of the ungodliness and unrighteousness of the Jews. Ungodliness means not fearing God; unrighteousness means not being like God.*
- *How are Gentiles ungodly and unrighteous? They are ungodly: although they know God, they neither glorify him as God nor give thanks to him; instead, they worship created things rather than the Creator. They are unrighteous: they follow the lusts of their hearts to commit impurity; they not only do such things but also approve of those who practice them.*
- *How are Jews ungodly and unrighteous? They are ungodly: although they worship God, they despise the riches of His kindness, forbearance, and patience, and with stubborn and unrepentant hearts store up wrath for themselves. They are unrighteous: they judge others but steal and commit adultery themselves; they do the same things as others; they boast in the law but break the law, dishonoring God.*
- *Thoughts (the cognitive system) and the heart (the inner spiritual world): the cognitive system becomes futile, the inner world darkened, desires uncontrolled, behavior impure and irrational; though they know such things deserve death, they approve of those who practice them.*

3. Gentiles Without the Law

• *For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them. (2:13-15)*

1. ***The Law:** The law is the written code God gave to Israel through Moses, containing many commandments, represented by the Ten Commandments, expressing God's moral requirements for His chosen people. These requirements are moral in nature, and their basic meaning is "love," such as "You shall not murder, commit adultery, steal, or covet..." (all summed up in "Love your neighbor as yourself," Romans 13:9).*
2. ***Not those who hear the law are righteous, but those who obey the law:** Israel has the law; Gentiles do not. If there are two people—one Israelite who has heard the law but does not obey it, and one Gentile who has never heard the law but obeys its requirements—which one will be justified by God? The answer: the one who obeys the law.*

3. Gentiles Without the Law

3. ***Gentiles without the law:** Here is the question—since Gentiles do not have the law, how can they obey the law? The answer: as long as they follow their nature, Gentiles can obey the law, because God has written the law on the human heart. God created humans in His image; human nature contains God’s attributes and instinctively knows what is good. Even without written law, the moral law in the heart guides human behavior.*
4. ***The conscience bearing witness:** God placed three things in the human heart so that people may follow His way: (1) the Moral Law; (2) the conscience (The Enforcer); (3) reason (The Judge). Without an enforcement mechanism, the moral law would be ineffective. God gave humans a conscience—the sense of right and wrong—which constantly compares behavior to the inner moral standard and immediately signals the person.*
5. ***Thoughts accusing or defending:** Thoughts (reason) act as the judge in the human heart, making judgments based on the signals from the conscience, enabling a person to do what is right. A Gentile, under the combined operation of these three (the moral law, the conscience, and rational judgment), is able to fulfill God’s law.*

3. Gentiles Without the Law

6. *If this is so, why was the written law given? If every person is born able to follow God's law, why did God still give written law to Israel? Is it unnecessary? The written law is a reinforcement, intended to restore God's righteousness among His chosen people. After human nature was corrupted, both conscience and reason were damaged—though to different degrees in different people—making them unable to fully live out God's righteousness.*

- *Righteousness is God's "factory setting," the normal state before human nature was damaged. God chose Israel as His people, and before they entered Canaan to become a kingdom of priests, He gave them the holy written law as a standard of conduct. Thus, in addition to the moral law written on every human heart, Israel also received the written law, enabling them to reach a higher standard and more fully live out God's righteousness.*

7. *God's standard for judging Gentiles: God judges Israel according to the written law, but for Gentiles, since they do not have the written law, He judges them according to the law written on their hearts.*

3. Gentiles Without the Law

8. *Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant: The prophet Jeremiah once prophesied that one day God would make a new covenant with Israel—not written on stone tablets, but written on human hearts: “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33 NIV) This new covenant is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The purpose of the new covenant is to restore God's righteousness. God originally wrote His law on the human heart, but because human nature was corrupted, people could not fully obey the law and became unrighteous, falling short of God's glory. Through the redemption of Jesus Christ, the relationship between God and humanity is restored, human nature is gradually renewed in sanctification, and the law gradually returns from the written code to the heart.*

The Error of Formalism

4. Spirit vs. Letter — Pneuma vs. Gramma

- *A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit (pneuma), not by the written code (gramma). Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God. (Romans 2:28-29 NIV)*
- **Spirit- pneuma**: Spirit or spirit . (NIV and NASB translate as Spirit; KJV translates as spirit)
- **Letter- gramma**: letter, written code.

The Error of Formalism

4. Spirit vs. Letter — Pneuma vs. Gramma

1. *Who is a Jew? Most people would say: those who keep the law and practice circumcision are Jews. Paul gives a new definition of who is truly a Jew (God's people). He says: the outward one is not a Jew; the inward one is the true Jew.*
2. *Who are God's people? Disciples or religious people? Disciples are "inward Jews," who truly believe in the Lord and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Religious people are "outward Jews," who appear to believe and follow certain written rules. Disciples are true people of God; religious people are false people of God.*

The Error of Formalism

4. Spirit vs. Letter — Pneuma vs. Gramma

- *Comparison of True and False Believers:*

True Believers:	True Believers:False Believers:
<i>Inside becoming a Jew (truly believing)</i>	<i>Outwardly becoming a Jew (external form)</i>
<i>Circumcision of the heart (the mark of belonging to God is in the heart)</i>	<i>Circumcision of the body (the mark of belonging to God is on the outside)</i>
<i>By the Spirit</i>	<i>By the letter</i>
<i>Receive praise from God</i>	<i>Receive praise from people</i>

The Error of Formalism

4. Spirit vs. Letter — Pneuma vs. Gramma

3. What does it mean to “have substance”?

a) Using substance to enrich form:

Having substance does not mean replacing form with substance, but enriching form with substance. It is not form without substance, nor substance without form, but both form and substance.

b) Using individuals to enrich the community:

Having substance does not mean replacing the community with the individual, but enriching the community through the individual. It is not pursuing only personal spirituality while neglecting community life. Rather, it is cultivating personal spirituality through community life, and enriching community life through personal spirituality.

The Error of Formalism

4. Spirit vs. Letter — Pneuma vs. Gramma

4. What does “having substance” NOT mean?

a) It does not mean abandoning form:

Having substance does not mean “as long as we worship in spirit and truth, we do not need worship gatherings”;

or “as long as we believe in Jesus, we do not need baptism”;

or “as long as we remember the Lord in our hearts, we do not need the Lord’s Supper”;

or “as long as we love brothers and sisters, we do not need fellowship gatherings.”

b) It does not mean disregarding the community:

Having substance does not mean caring only about oneself and not about the community.

Having substance does not mean “this is just how I am; others have no right to say anything.”

Having substance does not mean ignoring the discipline of the community and letting everyone do whatever they want.

Form and Substance

Form	Without Substance	With Substance
<i>Worship gathering</i>	<i>physically present but heart absent; not singing, not listening to the sermon, arriving late and leaving early</i>	<i>worshiping God in spirit and in truth</i>
<i>Baptism</i>	<i>receiving a religious ritual without truly believing in the Lord</i>	<i>believing in Jesus Christ and obeying the Lord by being baptized</i>
<i>The Lord's Supper</i>	<i>going through the ritual without remembering the Lord in spirit</i>	<i>remembering the Lord in spirit and examining oneself</i>
<i>Fellowship gathering</i>	<i>social interaction, joining for fun</i>	<i>loving one another with Christ at the center</i>

Romans Chapter 3



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1. The Advantage of the Jews, 3:1–7

1. The Advantage of the Jews: Entrusted by God

- a) *What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. (Romans 3:1–2 NIV)*
- b) **Colloquial translation:** *Since the law and circumcision cannot save a person, then what advantage is there in being a Jew? And what benefit is there in receiving circumcision? There is benefit—great benefit in many ways. First of all, the greatest benefit is that God entrusted His word to the Jews.*

1. The Advantage of the Jews, 3:1–7

2. But what if some were unfaithful to God's trust? What then?

- a) *What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." (Romans 3:3–4 NIV)*
- b) **Word study:**
Entrust: pisteuo — entrust.
Unbelief / unfaithful: apisteo — unfaithful or do not believe.
Faith / faithful: pistis — faith, faithfulness, reliability.
- c) **Colloquial translation:** *Even if some people are unfaithful to what God entrusted to them, so what? Does their unfaithfulness make God unfaithful? Absolutely not! On the contrary, God is always faithful. What He promises will surely come to pass, while humans are unreliable and false. As Psalm 51:4 says: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."*

1. The Advantage of the Jews, 3:1–7

d) **Discussion:** *God entrusted His word to the Jews so that they would keep it, obey it, and pass it on to their descendants. God's word contains promises—especially the promise of the Messiah. If some people are unfaithful to God's trust or do not believe His promises, does that make God's promises fail? Of course not. God's word is always true, and His promises will certainly be fulfilled. Instead, when God's promises are fulfilled, the unfaithfulness of those who did not believe will appear utterly foolish.*

1. The Advantage of the Jews, 3:1–7

3. Human Argument: God Should Thank Us!

- a) *But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? (Romans 3:5–6 NIV)*
- b) **Colloquial translation:** *Some people argue: If our unfaithfulness highlights God's faithfulness, and if our filthiness makes God's righteousness shine even brighter, then shouldn't God thank us? Why would He still be angry with us? Wouldn't that make God ungrateful and unjust? Of course not! If God were unjust, how could He judge the world?*
- c) **Discussion:** *This argument assumes that God is selfish and only cares about His own glory. Therefore, as long as I can highlight God's glory, God should thank me. "Okay, I admit I am unfaithful, but because of my unfaithfulness, God's faithfulness is shown even more clearly—so God should be happy!" Such thinking not only distorts God's goodness but also slanders His righteousness and love.*

1. The Advantage of the Jews, 3:1–7

4. Human Slander: Christians Are People Who ‘Do Evil So Good May Result’!

- a) *Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?” Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is just. (Romans 3:7–8 NIV)*
- b) **Colloquial translation:** *Some people slander us, saying: “Christians are terrible! They believe that the more false they are, the more they can show God’s truthfulness. Among Christians there is a saying: ‘Do evil so that good may result’—as if the darker the background, the brighter the light appears.” Those who slander us in this way deserve God’s judgment.*

2. All People Are Sinners, 3:9–20

1. Time to Draw a Conclusion

- *What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. (Romans 3:9 NIV)*
- **Colloquial translation:** *After saying all this, what conclusion should we draw? Are we Jews better than the Gentiles? Of course not! We have already proven that no matter who you are—Jew or Gentile—everyone has sinned.*

2. The Universality of Sin

- *As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:10–18 NIV)*

2. All People Are Sinners, 3:9–20

- Paul uses four “no one” statements (“no one righteous,” “no one understands,” “no one seeks God,” “no one does good”) and surrounds them with two “not even one” statements (3:10, 12), enclosing all humanity within the category of “sinners.”
- These “no one” statements are from God’s perspective. Are there righteous people in the world? Many would say, “Yes—I am righteous! Compared to certain people, I am very righteous.” But God looks at you and says you are not righteous. Even if you sometimes do good, your actions still contain unrighteous elements. You are not truly righteous. God looks at every person and says, “You are not truly righteous.”
- A righteous person is “one who meets God’s created standard.” Humans were created in God’s image and should reflect His righteousness. God created us to reach a “10,” but we can only reach a “2” or “3.” Therefore, there is no righteous person—not even one.

2. All People Are Sinners, 3:9–20

- *The same logic applies to “no one understands,” “no one seeks God,” and “no one does good.” According to the standard we ought to reach, no one truly understands, no one truly seeks God, and no one truly does good. No one can meet these standards.*
- *The reason is that all people have sinned. Sin, in essence, is “not wanting God”—removing God from the throne and placing oneself there. Sin is driving God out of your heart—either by denying His existence or by saying “I don’t care whether God exists”—and living a self-centered life.*
- *Even if someone says he is “seeking God,” or says, “I’ve been seeking God for so long—why hasn’t He answered me? Is there really a God?”—in reality, every person’s “seeking” contains selfish motives. From God’s perspective, he is not truly, wholeheartedly seeking God. Therefore Scripture says: “There is no one who seeks God.”*

Theological Note: Total Depravity

- **(The following explains the theological concept of Total Depravity. This does not mean I adopt this view, nor does it mean you must accept it.)**
- *This passage describes the throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, and eyes—all corrupted. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit; the poison of vipers is on their lips; their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet rush to shed blood; there is no fear of God before their eyes. The detailed description shows that every part of humanity is corrupted. This is what theology calls “Total Depravity.”*
- *Total depravity does not refer to “**the degree**” of corruption but “**the extent**” of corruption. Not “**the depth**” but “**the breadth**” . It does not mean a person is as evil as possible. It means every part of human nature—mouth, eyes, thoughts, emotions, reason, spiritual life—is affected by sin.*

Theological Note: Total Depravity

- *Total depravity does not mean your mouth has spoken the worst possible words, or your mind has imagined the worst possible thoughts. Everyone still has “room to get worse.” Total depravity simply means every part of human nature is corrupted.*
- *Therefore, you cannot say, “My speech is bad, but my heart is good.” No—your heart is not good. Nor can you say, “My mind is confused sometimes, but my emotions are pure.” No—your emotions are not pure. Sin permeates human nature; every part of us is affected. Some people have bigger problems in one area, others in another.*
- *Humans are “totally depraved,” but not “utterly depraved.” People still show glimpses of goodness. A robber may help an old lady cross the street; a swindler may give money to a beggar. But these occasional “bright spots” cannot hide the fact that human nature is thoroughly corrupted.*

3. No One Can Be Justified Before God by the Works of the Law

• *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. (Romans 3:19–20 NIV)*

• **God's law is written in two places:** first, on the hearts of all people (2:15); second, in the written law given to the Jews (2:17–18). Since everyone has God's law, has anyone kept it perfectly? Has any Jew or Gentile ever said to God, "I have kept all Your law—declare me righteous"? The answer is no: "No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law." Because of human weakness, no one can keep the whole law (James 2:10). The law cannot remove sin; it only reveals sin.

3. No One Can Be Justified Before God by the Works of the Law

- **Courage to Face Sin**

- *Modern people are very good at protecting their inner dignity and finding excuses. When something goes wrong, they say: “It’s because of my childhood... my parents... society... my classmates...” but they never say, “I am wrong. I sinned.” Anything can be said—except the word “sin.”*

This mindset affects Christians when they share the gospel. Some Christians talk endlessly about how good God is, how blessed life is with God, how faith helps family and life—but they do not dare say, “We are all sinners.” This attitude is the opposite of Scripture.

- *Romans spends three chapters proving that “**all have sinned.**” If “all have not sinned,” then “all do not need the gospel.” Because all have sinned, there is the atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, and therefore the message of repentance and forgiveness (Luke 24:47). Scripture boldly confronts human sin because behind sin stands the redemption of Christ. We should also boldly face sin.*

4. *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31*

- *The most central doctrinal passage in Christianity: Romans 3:21–26*
- *But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

4. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31

- *Five Core Questions of Justification by Faith (3:21–26)*

1. **What?** *What is the main point? The righteousness of God.*

1. *This passage (3:21–26) is the most important doctrinal text in Christianity. Its central theme is “the righteousness of God.”*
2. *What is the righteousness of God? First, righteousness is God’s attribute—God is righteous. Second, righteousness is God’s gift—given to those who believe in Jesus.*
3. *Here, “the righteousness of God” refers to the second meaning: God’s gift of righteousness. We may call it “the righteousness of grace.”*

4. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31

2. Where? *Where is God's righteousness revealed? Apart from the law.*

- *But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (Romans 3:21 NIV)*
- *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:17 NIV)*
- *Romans 3:21 should be read together with 1:17, because both speak of **the revelation of God's righteousness**. 3:21: “has been revealed” (past) 1:17: “is being revealed” (present)*
- *“Has been revealed” refers to the cross of Christ. “Is being revealed” refers to the ongoing proclamation of the gospel.*
- *God's righteousness is revealed “apart from the law”—meaning it is not obtained by keeping the law. God's righteousness is revealed “in the gospel”—meaning it is freely given through faith in Jesus Christ.*

4. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31

3. Who? *To whom does God give His righteousness? To all who believe in Jesus.*

- *This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference. (Romans 3:22 NIV)*
- *To whom does God give His righteousness? He gives it to all who believe in Jesus Christ. It is not given to those who merely believe that God exists, not to those who believe that God is powerful, not to those who believe that God is great, but to all who believe in Jesus Christ: “given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”*
- *God has one requirement for faith: one must believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Only those who believe in Jesus are justified; only those who believe in Jesus can be saved. If a person believes in God but does not believe in Jesus, such a person is not justified and cannot be saved.*
- *God’s righteousness is to be given to “all who believe.” No distinction of race, no distinction of gender, no distinction of wealth or poverty—no distinctions at all. As long as a person believes in Jesus Christ, anyone can be saved. God loves the world, and the ones He desires to save are the people of the world.*

4. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31

4. Why? Why do we need God's righteousness? Because all have sinned.

- Why do we need the righteousness of God? “Because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” If God does not give us this “righteousness of grace,” we can only stand in the position of sinners and receive God’s judgment.
- In the previous three chapters, Paul has already proven that all people have sinned. Because all have sinned, all have fallen short of the glory of God.
- What does “fall short of the glory of God” mean? It means that our lives perform very poorly in reflecting the glory of God. It is like a car with terrible performance—originally designed to reach a top speed of 100 miles per hour, but now can only reach 20 miles per hour. People see this car and shake their heads, saying, “This brand is no good; it cannot display the glory of its manufacturer.” God created humans in His own image—a masterpiece— so that we might reflect His glory. But because human life has been affected by sin, the masterpiece has become a defective product, and thus we fall short of the glory of God.

4. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, 3:21–31

5. **How?** *How does justification by faith happen? Through the redemption of Christ.*

- *And all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (3:24)*
- *The foundation of justification by faith is the cross of Jesus Christ. Without the cross of Jesus Christ, there is no justification by faith. How does all of this happen? There are four main steps:*
 1. **Grace:** *Justification by faith is God’s grace. Because God loves us, He freely gives us this grace.*
 2. **Substitution:** *Jesus Christ bore our sins, died in our place, and on the cross paid our debt of sin.*
 3. **Faith:** *God decided that He would give salvation to people through “faith.” Whoever believes in Jesus receives the redemption of Jesus, is forgiven, and is saved.*
 4. **Justification:** *Those who are saved by Jesus are not only forgiven but also justified. Forgiveness declares you “not guilty”; justification declares you “righteous.”*

Forgiveness is negative—it says, “You have no more guilt; you may go.”

Justification is positive—it says, “You are a good person; welcome into My house, come and be with Me.”

5. Further Explanation of Justification by Faith, 3:27–31

• Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law

5. Further Explanation of Justification by Faith, 3:27–31

- *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith.*
- *First, the word “law” here is nomos, meaning “law,” not “method.” The “law of works” is the law of works, and the “law of faith” is the law of faith.*
 - *A person is justified by God not because he is clever and has found the correct method, but because he submits and operates according to God’s principle.*

“Law (nomos)” means “principle.” A person is justified based on the principle of faith, not the principle of works.
 - *If only those with exceptionally good behavior were justified (the law of works), then they would have something to boast about. But God does not look at human behavior. As long as one believes, anyone can be declared righteous. In this way, justification becomes God’s grace. Since it is God’s grace, there is no room for anyone to boast.*

5. Further Explanation of Justification by Faith, 3:27–31

- *For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too.*
- *Scripture repeatedly declares that God does not show favoritism. God is the God of the Jews, and He is also the God of the Gentiles. Jews can be justified by faith, and Gentiles can also be justified by faith. Therefore, those who preach the gospel must not show favoritism, because God does not show favoritism. Those who preach the gospel must not be narrow, because God is not narrow. Those who preach the gospel must not care only for their own people, because God loves the world.*

5. Further Explanation of Justification by Faith, 3:27–31

• *Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.*

• *At first glance, justification by faith seems very permissive. It only requires you to believe, and does not place moral or spiritual demands on you. If that is the case, doesn't faith abolish the law of God?*

On the contrary, faith does not abolish the law—it upholds the law.

• *Everyone who believes in the Lord is given a new life by the Lord. The old self dies with Christ, and the new self rises with Christ. And the Holy Spirit lives within him, guiding him, exhorting him, and enabling him to walk according to God's will.*

Compared to those who do not have new life and try to practice righteousness by their own strength, those who are justified by faith have greater ability and greater motivation to obey God's will—and therefore they uphold the law even more.

Justification vs. Sanctification

Justification	Sanctification
<i>Declared righteous</i>	<i>Truly becoming righteous</i>
<i>A one-time declaration</i>	<i>A long-term process</i>
<i>Positional</i>	<i>Practical / in daily living</i>
<i>Received by believing in Christ</i>	<i>Received by obeying Christ</i>
