

The background of the slide is a photograph of a landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of evergreen trees and the roofs of houses. In the distance, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

Romans 9-13

NT #29 Bible Reading Class
Pastor: Wentang Wang

B R C
Study the Bible
and follow Jesus

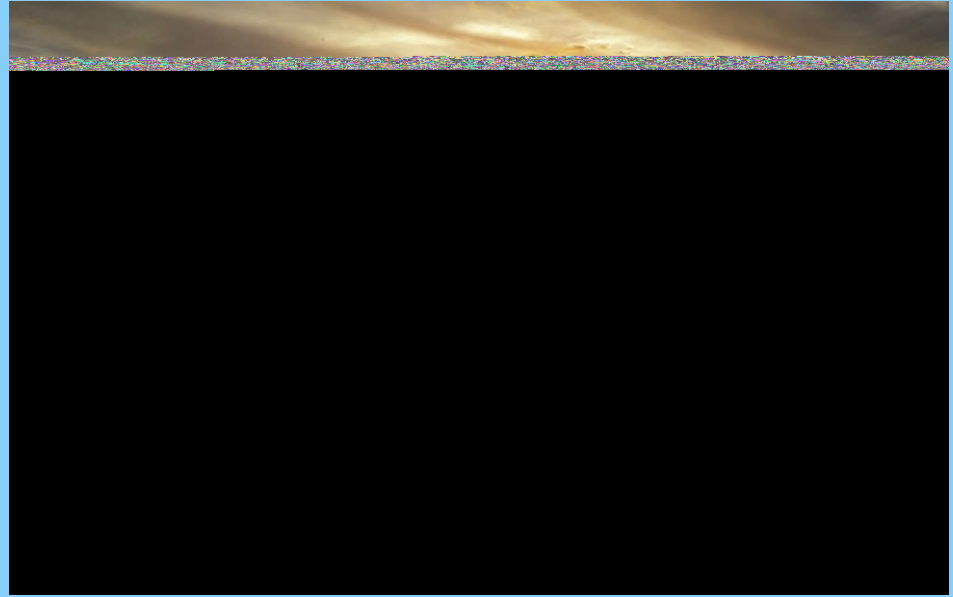
A Bible Reader's Conviction

- *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)*

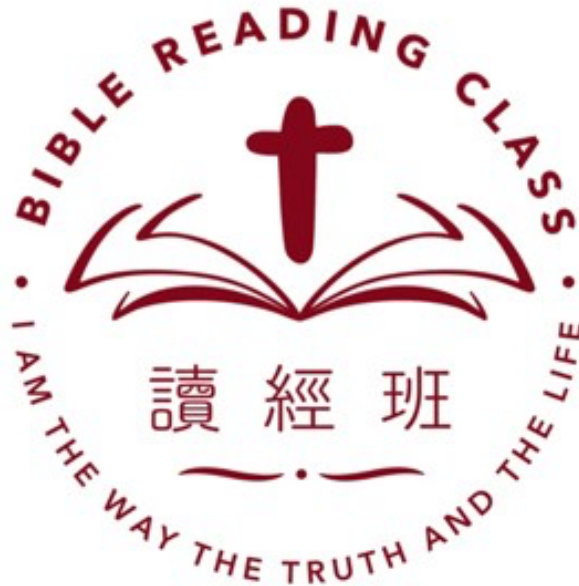
A Blessed Journey

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

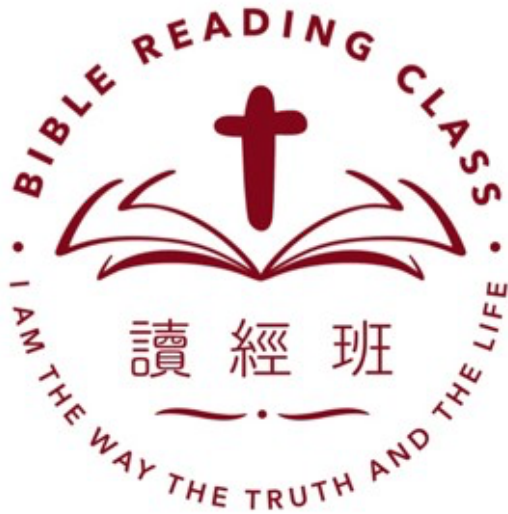


The Guiding Principles of BRC



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

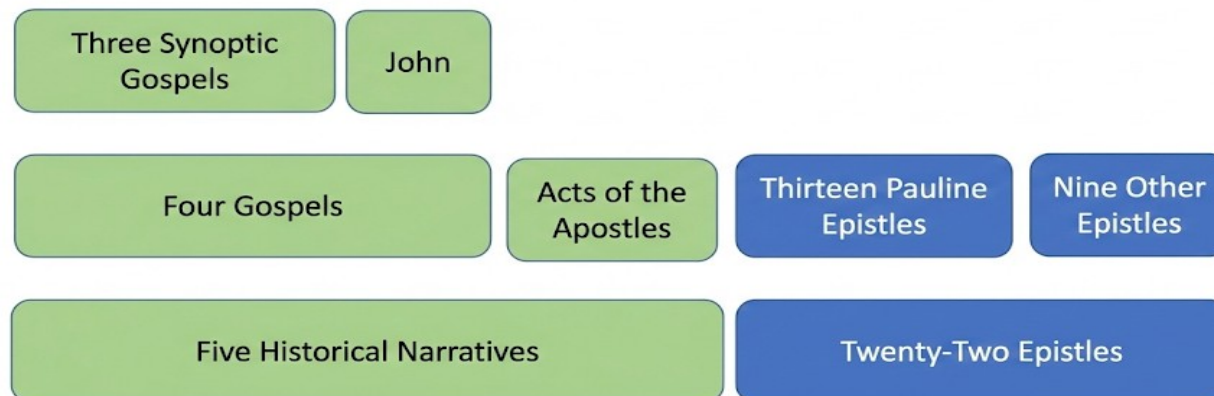
BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



- *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*





Romans Chapter 9

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Theme and Outline of Romans

- **Theme:** *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*
- **Key Verses:** *Romans 1:16–17*
- **Outline:**
 - *Preface (1:1–17)*
 - *I. The Gospel and Justification by Faith (Chs. 1–4)*
 - *II. The Gospel and Sanctification by the Lord (Chs. 5–8)*
 - *III. The Gospel and the Israelites (Chs. 9–11)*
 - *IV. The Gospel and Christian Living (Chs. 12–15)*
 - *Greetings (Ch. 16)*

Key Verses of Romans

- *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**.” (Romans 1:16–17 NIV)*
- *Three Key Words*
 1. *Gospel*
 2. *Righteousness*
 3. *Faith*

The Complete Gospel of Jesus Christ

1. **Justification**: Sins forgiven through faith in Jesus; justified freely.
2. **Sanctification**: Overcoming sin; a life that resembles Jesus.
3. **Glorification**: Bodily resurrection; inheriting the children-of-God inheritance; revealing God's glory.

Romans 9–11: The Gospel and the Israelites

- 1. The past of the Israelites: Chosen — Chapter 9***
- 2. The present of the Israelites: Unbelief — Chapter 10***
- 3. The future of the Israelites: Final salvation — Chapter 11***

Romans Chapter 9: The Past of the Israelites

- *What advantage (benefit) do the Jews have?*
 - *“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.” (3:1–2 NIV)*
 - *“The people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” (9:4–5 NIV)*

Romans Chapter 9: The Past of the Israelites

- **The Eight Advantages of the Israelites (9:4–5)**

1. **Adoption**: *Adopted by God as His children*
2. **Glory**: *The LORD as Israel's glory, revealed in the tabernacle and temple*
3. **Covenants**: *Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic covenants*
4. **Law**: *The Law, the Word of God*
5. **Temple Worship**: *Worship rituals*
6. **Promises**: *Promises of being God's people, land, and blessing*
7. **Patriarchs**: *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob...*
8. **Christ**: *In the flesh, Jesus Christ is a Jew*

Who Are God's Children?

- **Scripture:**

- *“In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.” (9:8 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. **Becoming God's children has nothing to do with bloodline.** *“Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel” (9:6).* Likewise, children of Christians do not automatically become Christians.
2. **Becoming God's children is related to the promise.**
3. **God's promise is in Christ.**

Who Are Called by God?

- **Scripture:**

- *“Even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?” (9:24 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *God’s calling is not limited by ethnicity.*
2. *God’s desire is for all nations to be saved.*

Who Are God's People?

- **Scripture:**

- **Gentiles:** *“As he says in Hosea: ‘I will call them “my people” who are not my people; and I will call her “my loved one” who is not my loved one,’ and, ‘In the very place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” there they will be called “children of the living God.”’” (9:25–26 NIV)*
- **Israelites:** *“Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.’” (9:27 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *“God’s people” was originally a title belonging to Israel. Because they did not believe in Jesus, they lost this blessing. Gentiles, by believing in Jesus, received this blessing and became God’s people.*
2. *“God’s people” is unrelated to ethnicity or bloodline; it is related to faith. Whoever believes in Jesus—Gentile or Israelite—can become God’s people.*

Who Is Counted Righteous by God?

- **Scripture:**

- *“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.” (9:30–32 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *“Being counted righteous by God” is the spiritual state Israel pursued. Negatively, it means “forgiven by God”; positively, it means “accepted by God”—**the normalization of the God–man relationship.***
2. *Israel pursued righteousness but did not obtain it. Gentiles did not pursue righteousness, yet once they believed, they obtained it. Why? Because Israel sought righteousness by works, while Gentiles received righteousness through Jesus.*
3. *It is like crossing the Pacific Ocean: some try to swim across, others take an airplane. Those who swim—no matter how strong—will eventually sink. Those who board Jesus’ “salvation airplane” easily reach the other shore.*

Where Is the Problem?

1. *There is one God.*
 2. *The relationship between God and humans is broken (sin).*
 3. *Both God and humans desire to resolve this problem (justification).*
 4. *God's solution is faith in Jesus (God's righteousness / justification by faith).*
- *Israel accepts 1–3 but rejects 4 (they believe in God, acknowledge sin, desire justification, but reject Jesus).*
 - *The problem lies in their unbelief in Jesus. They pursue righteousness but reject the righteousness God provides.*

Stupid, it's the relationship!

- *In recent years, during U.S. elections, a sarcastic phrase often appears: “Stupid, it’s the economy!” meaning the key issue is the economy. If a candidate fails to grasp the main point and focuses on secondary matters, they will not win.*
- *Applying this phrase to Christian faith, we may say: “Stupid, it’s the relationship!” The core of Christian faith is the God–man relationship. Not forms, not rituals, not anything else—but the relationship. If one fails to grasp the main point and spends time on secondary matters, it is all in vain.*

Whoever Believes in Him Will Never Be Put to Shame

- **Scripture:**

- *“As it is written: ‘See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.’” (9:33 NIV)*
- *“Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:11–12 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *To those who do not believe, Jesus Christ is a stumbling stone. To those who believe, Jesus is the precious cornerstone: “In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21–22 NIV)*
2. *Those who trust in Jesus will never be put to shame, because He is the true God.*

Theological Study: Predestination

God's Sovereignty and Election

- *Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”*
What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. (Romans 9:10–16 NIV)

Basic Understanding

- ***(Statement: The following explains the doctrine of predestination in theology. It does not mean I hold this view, nor does it mean you must accept it.)***
 1. *Predestination is a theological viewpoint related to salvation. It teaches that before creation, God had already predetermined who would be saved. Within predestination, there are further distinctions, making it a complex theological concept.*
 2. *Note that “theological viewpoints” and “fundamental doctrines” are different. Fundamental doctrines are the most basic and essential truths, such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and justification by faith. These are accepted by all Christians. Theological viewpoints belong to certain denominations or theological systems, are debatable, and not all Christians accept them.*

Studying Predestination

The Attitude We Should Have

1. **Humility**: Predestination is extremely complex. Many believers and theologians throughout history have studied it, and some difficulties remain unresolved. We should not assume we are wiser than those before us; we simply seek to understand and learn.
2. **Acceptance**: Different believers hold different views. Presbyterians follow Calvinism; Methodists follow Arminianism. Yet both are redeemed by the blood of Christ. We should not attack another camp but accept one another in love.
3. **Trust**: Human wisdom is limited. Some things God reveals clearly; some He does not. We should accept what is clear by faith and entrust what we do not understand to God. Do not be wise in your own eyes; do not interpret Scripture by personal bias.

Principles for Establishing Beliefs

1. *Scripture as the Highest Authority*

- ***Principle: God's wisdom is higher than human wisdom.***
- *Christians take Scripture as the highest authority. All beliefs must come from Scripture, not from a theological system, denominational stance, or personal experience. Our basic stance is “obey God,” not “obey man.” If we elevate a theological system, denominational stance, or personal experience above God's Word, we violate this foundation.*
- ***Three sources that come from humans:***
 1. *Personal experience*
 2. *Denominational stance*
 3. *Theological system*

1. *Scripture as the Highest Authority*

- **Examples :**

1. **Personal Experience:** *Charismatics are experience-centered, emphasizing tongues, healing, exorcism. Orthodox Christianity is Bible-centered, emphasizing God's revelation guiding experience. The former is human-centered; the latter is God-centered.*
2. **Denominational Stance:** *From a broader perspective, Catholics pray to Mary, and Mormons regard the Book of Mormon as equal in authority to the Bible. Among the orthodox Christian denominations, although there is agreement on the most essential doctrines, Baptists and Lutherans differ in their practice of baptism, and Methodists and Presbyterians hold different views on God's predestination. Christians must be able to discern what is heresy that contradicts Scripture and what are acceptable differences in viewpoint.*
3. **Theological Systems:** *Augustine's theological system, Calvin's theological system (Reformed theology), Dispensational theological system, Karl Barth's neo-orthodox theological system...*

2. Do Not Go Beyond Scripture's Revelation

- **Principle:** Do not build doctrine where Scripture is silent.
- Two different areas:
 1. **Application:** Using the principles revealed in Scripture and applying them to the areas of life where Scripture is silent
 2. **Doctrine:** Using the truths revealed in Scripture to form the standards of our shared faith
- The Bible is God's selective revelation. In some places it gives detailed instructions, but in many places it provides only principles. In daily life, we may apply these principles flexibly; for example, the Bible does not mention television or computers, yet you can still live a modern life according to biblical principles. However, in matters of doctrine, we must never use human wisdom to supplement God's wisdom. Where Scripture is silent, we must not use human reasoning to construct doctrine. A theological system (a collection of doctrines) is formed through human reasoning—some parts reflect God's revelation, while other parts, frankly speaking, are merely human reasoning.

3. Discern the Source of Beliefs

- **Principle: All beliefs must be filtered through Scripture.**
- Two different things:
 1. Biblical teaching
 2. Theologians' opinions
- *If something is explicitly taught in Scripture, Christians are obligated to accept it. If it is the opinion of a theologian, Christians are not obligated to accept it. What Scripture explicitly teaches has been tested over two thousand years and has become the core beliefs commonly recognized by Christians. The opinions of theologians, however, differ and remain debated even today. When someone teaches a still-debated theological opinion as if it were unshakable biblical truth, Christians must have the ability to discern. The only way to increase one's discernment is to read the Bible diligently.*

Presuppositions of Predestination

1. ***Original Sin:*** *After Adam sinned, sin entered human nature. All humans are born with a sinful nature.*
2. ***Total Depravity:*** *Human beings are not only born with a sinful nature, but human nature is totally depraved. The term “total” means one hundred percent—human nature is one hundred percent corrupted, without even the slightest trace of goodness. Humanity is not only morally corrupt (having no ability to do what is good), but even the will is corrupted (having no ability to choose what is good). A person believes in the Lord only because of God’s help. God works in that person’s heart, causing him to be born again, and only then does he have the ability to receive salvation. Without God’s help, no one would accept salvation.*

Presuppositions of Predestination

3. **God's Election:** *Before the creation of the world, God chose certain people among all humanity to be saved. For those whom God has chosen, He grants them special grace and works both in their hearts and in their circumstances. His work in the heart is to cause their spiritual life to be reborn so that they are able to make the choice to believe in the Lord. His work in their circumstances is to give them the opportunity to hear the gospel. All who are chosen by God will believe in the Lord and be saved; not a single one will be lost.*
4. **God's Sovereignty:** *The core doctrine of predestination is the sovereignty of God. Why does God choose person A and not person B? The answer is: this is God's sovereignty! God has sovereignty—He chooses whom He chooses, and He saves whom He saves. God's sovereignty is irresistible; whatever He has predestined will certainly come to pass. Those whom He has chosen, no matter how hardened they may be, will ultimately believe in the Lord. All who believe in the Lord will never lose their salvation, because salvation originates from God's sovereignty, and those who are saved will be kept by God to the very end.*

Predestination: Single or Double?

1. ***Single Predestination:*** *God chooses those who will be saved, but does not choose those who will be condemned. A person is condemned because of his own sin. Sin is like a raging ocean in which all humanity struggles. God's salvation is like a lifeboat that pulls aboard those predestined to be saved, while those not predestined remain in the sea. Note that according to single predestination, God does not predestine anyone to be condemned; He only predestines who will be saved.*
2. ***Double Predestination:*** *God not only chooses some to be saved, but also chooses some to be condemned. Those who drown in the sea of sin do so because God has ordained it; both salvation and condemnation come from God. The outcome of single and double predestination is the same—some are saved and some are condemned. The difference lies in whether condemnation is also the result of God's predestination. Calvinism holds to double predestination.*

Foreknowledge and Predestination

- Two interpretations of foreknowledge:

1. **“Know” means “to know beforehand”:**

God, before the ages, foreknew who would believe in the Lord and receive salvation. Those who believe, God then chooses, so that they are justified by faith and receive salvation. According to this interpretation, salvation depends on a person’s decision—those who are willing to believe in the Lord will be saved. God merely knows in advance how people will respond and does not interfere. God invites people to receive salvation, but He does not force anyone to receive it.

2. **“Know” means “to draw near relationally”:**

God, before the ages, predetermined who would be saved. For those predestined to be saved, God actively draws near to them, softens their hearts, and causes them to be willing to believe in the Lord, resulting in salvation. According to this interpretation, salvation depends on God’s election, not on human choice. If God chooses someone to be saved, God will draw near to that person and change his heart and mind so that he becomes willing to receive salvation.

Foreknowledge and Predestination

• Two views of predestination:

1. **Predestination of “the purpose of salvation”**: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” (Romans 8:29 NIV) God saves people with the purpose that they may be conformed to Christ and become like Him. This purpose of salvation was predestined by God before the ages. Although the “predestination of the purpose of salvation” is often neglected in practice (especially under the influence of the modern prosperity gospel, where many believe the purpose of faith is to receive God’s favor and blessings rather than to be conformed to Christ), it is not theologically controversial.
2. **Predestination of “the recipients of salvation”** : What is commonly called “predestination” refers to the predestination of who will be saved. Among all humans throughout history, God predetermined who would be saved—this is God’s sovereign election. The “predestination of the recipients of salvation” has been a major point of theological controversy throughout church history.

Two Parallel Lines That Never Intersect?

1. *God's sovereignty — The Divine Sovereignty*
2. *Human free will — The Human Free Will*

God's Sovereignty

1. *God has absolute sovereignty.*
2. *Nothing frustrates God's will.*
3. *Everything that happens must pass through either God's ordination or God's permission.*
 - A. **Ordination:** *God's active will*
 - B. **Permission:** *God's passive will*
4. *In the world, some are saved and some are not.*
5. *Whether a person is saved is under God's sovereignty; it is God's unilateral decision.*

Human Free Will

- 1. Free will is a gift God gives to humans.*
- 2. Only a will “not influenced by external force” is truly free will.*
- 3. For a person to be saved, he must decide to accept Jesus as Savior.*
- 4. If God influences a person’s decision, then that person’s will is not free.*
- 5. Because humans have free will, they can decide for themselves whether to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.*

The Problem

- *Emphasizing God's sovereignty means God can intervene in human will; whoever He wants to save will certainly be saved. If God can change a person's will, then the person has no choice, meaning human will is not free.*
- *Emphasizing human free will means humans can reject God's grace. Although God desires all to be saved and none to perish, some reject God's salvation and thus perish—this would imply God's sovereignty is frustrated.*
- *Are God's sovereignty and human free will truly two parallel lines that never intersect? This is a question that must be faced when discussing predestination.*

Introduction to “CALVINISM”

John Calvin, 1509–1564



Brief Introduction to Calvin

- *Calvin was born in 1509 in Noyon, France.*
- *He studied law.*
- *He carried out the Reformation in Geneva, Switzerland.*
- *He established **representative government** in politics and the **presbyterian system** in the church.*
- *In 1536 (at age 27), he published **Institutes of the Christian Religion**, which had great influence.*
- *John Knox was taught by Calvin and returned to Scotland to establish the Presbyterian Church.*
- *Calvin's followers on the European continent established Reformed Churches in various places.*

“The Five Points” of Calvinism

- ***The “TULIP” of Calvinism***
 1. **T**otal Depravity
 2. **U**nconditional Election
 3. **L**imited Atonement
 4. **I**rresistible Grace
 5. **P**erseverance of Saints

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

1. Total Depravity

1. **Humans have original sin** : *“Original sin” is not “the first sin” (first sin, referring to Adam’s sin), but means that every person is born with a sinful nature. Regarding the origin of original sin, there are two theories:*
 - A. *The Realist View*
 - B. *The Federal or Representative View*

2. **Total depravity of humanity**: *Sin affects the whole person, including the body, mind, will, and emotions. The human body is corrupted, so people age and die. Human thinking is corrupted—left to himself, a person either thinks wrongly or thinks crookedly. Human will is corrupted—left to himself, a person will never choose to believe in the Lord and be saved. God must first change a person’s nature through regeneration, and only then will he believe in the Lord.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

2. Unconditional Election

1. *God's election is not influenced by any factor (unconditional). God does not choose you because He foresees that you are a good person, nor does He choose you because He foresees that you will believe in Jesus. If that were the case, "whether you are good" or "whether you believe" would become factors influencing God's decision, which would infringe upon God's sovereignty. God's choosing of a person is entirely His unilateral decision; humans can do nothing to influence God's decision.*
2. *God's election is double: He chooses some to be saved and also chooses some to be condemned.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

3. Limited Atonement

- 1. The atonement of Jesus Christ brings salvation.*
- 2. Only those chosen by God are saved.*
- 3. Because the number of the elect is limited, and because the atonement of Jesus Christ is received only by those who are saved, Christ's atonement is therefore limited. In other words, Christ died on the cross only for those who are chosen, not for all humanity.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

4. Irresistible Grace

1. *Those whom God chooses will certainly be saved.*
2. *Because human nature is totally depraved, if God does not work, a person will absolutely never believe in the Lord on his own. A person must first receive God's special grace so that his heart becomes willing to believe in the Lord, and only then can he believe.*
3. *Those whom God has chosen will certainly receive grace and be saved, because God will first give them special grace, causing them to want to believe in the Lord, leading them to repent, believe, and receive salvation.*
4. *For this reason, God's call to the elect is an "effectual calling." All who are called will say "yes" to God; no one will say "no." Therefore, God's grace is "irresistible grace": whoever He wills to receive grace will receive grace; whoever He wills to be saved will be saved. No one can resist God's grace.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

5. *Perseverance of Saints*

1. *God's sovereignty is above all things. If God wills for a person to be saved, that person will be saved to the end under God's sovereign preservation; no one can violate God's sovereignty.*
2. *God does not change His own decision. God will not originally will for a person to be saved and then later change His mind and decide not to save him.*
3. *Therefore, once saved, always saved. Those whom God has chosen will never lose their salvation.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Calvinism on God's Election

1. *God's election arises from God's sovereignty (Election is sovereign).*
2. *God's election is unconditional (Election is unconditional).*
3. *God's election is effective (Election is efficacious).*
4. *God's election is unchangeable (Election is immutable).*
5. *God's election is from eternity (Election is from eternity).*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Calvinism on Human Free Will

1. *Human will is bound by sin.*
2. *Human will is only “free within sin,” choosing this sin or that sin. Humans do not have the freedom not to sin.*
3. *Humans do not have the ability to choose God. Like a bird with a broken wing, it may have the “freedom” to fly, but it has no ability to fly.*
4. *A person must rely on God’s grace to first change his life so that he has the ability to choose Jesus, and only then will he believe in the Lord.*
5. *According to Reformed theology, “regeneration comes before faith.” Christians believe because they are regenerated, not regenerated because they believe.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Understanding “ARMINIANISM”

James Arminius, 1560–1609



Introduction to Arminius

- *He was Dutch, a pastor and theologian.*
- *He originally believed in and taught Calvinism.*
- *The Dutch church sent him out to defend Calvinism, and during this process, he studied deeply and eventually departed from Calvinism.*
- *He especially opposed the Calvinistic doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace. Arminius believed that God's salvation is given to all humanity, and that humans have free will to accept or reject God's grace.*
- *Methodists, Baptists, and most evangelical churches tend to follow Arminian views.*
- *Some Baptists, however, do believe in Calvinism.*

Main Points of Arminianism

- 1. God's desire is for all people to be saved and for none to perish.*
- 2. The atonement of Jesus Christ is prepared for all humanity.*
- 3. God calls all people to repent and believe in Him.*
- 4. Every person has the ability to decide whether to accept or reject salvation.*
- 5. God foreknows who will believe in Him, and those whom God foreknows, He predestines to be saved.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Protests Against Calvinism

1. **Calvinism is fatalism.** *If everything has already been decided by God, then humans cannot change their destiny at all. Even the wrong things we do in life and going to hell after death would all be predetermined. If so, what right does God have to blame us? Everything is simply following His plan.*
2. **Calvinism makes evangelism unnecessary.** *If God has already decided who will be saved and who will not, then why preach the gospel? Since the elect will certainly be saved, why should I still evangelize?*
3. **Calvinism reduces motivation for living a sanctified life.** *If the elect will certainly be saved and will not lose salvation no matter how corrupt their lives are, then why pursue holiness?*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Calvinism's Response

1. *God has absolute sovereignty; the created cannot talk back to their Creator.*
2. *Evangelism is also predestined by God: God uses the gospel to save those who are predestined to be saved. In other words, both who will be saved and how they will be saved (through hearing the gospel) are predestined by God. We must obey God; therefore, we preach the gospel and present the way of salvation to those predestined to be saved.*
3. *Those who are truly saved have new life and will naturally obey God's Word and live a holy life. If a person lives in corruption and refuses to obey God, it proves that he was never truly regenerated and saved.*

**This text is a theological explanation and does not represent personal views.*

Romans Chapter 10



W.Wang

Romans Chapter 10: The Present State of Israel

- **Scripture:**

- *“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.” (Romans 9:33 NIV)*
- *“Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:11–12 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *For those who do not believe, Jesus Christ is a stumbling stone. For those who believe, Jesus is the precious cornerstone: “In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21–22 NIV)*
2. *Those who trust in Jesus will never be put to shame, because He is the true God.*

Gospel of John 1:17

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (NIV)

Deuteronomy 30:12–14

- *“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?’ 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?’*
- *No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.”*

Romans 10:6–8

- *“Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring **Christ** down) or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’ (that is, to bring **Christ** up from the dead). But what does it say?*
- *‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,’ that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim.”*

The concrete content of faith

- *“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.” (Romans 10:9 NIV)*
1. *The object of faith is Jesus.*
 2. *To “believe in Jesus” one must believe that He rose from the dead; if one does not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, it cannot be called “believing in Jesus.”*

The Importance of Confessing with the Mouth

- *“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. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” (Romans 10:9–10 NIV)*
- *“Believing in the heart” and “confessing with the mouth” are the two sides of salvation; both are necessary. Having the inward “believing in the heart” must be accompanied by the outward “confessing with the mouth.”*
- *Saying you believe in your heart but refusing to confess with your mouth is false faith. Having only outward confession but no inward belief is false confession.*

The Importance of Confessing with the Mouth

- **Public confession**

- *“Confessing with the mouth” is a public declaration (confess = declare), letting others know that you have believed in Jesus.*

- **What is confessed?**

- *“Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord”:* acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord. Not only accepting Jesus as Savior, but acknowledging Him as the Lord of your life.

- **Confessing Christ before people**

- *Jesus said: “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 10:32–33 NIV)*

Sent, Preach, Hear, Believe, Call on

The process of events:



How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?

(10:14-15)

How did you come to believe in the Lord?

- *Some believe in the Lord because their prayers were answered.*
- *Some believe in the Lord because they were moved by love.*
- *Some believe in the Lord because of a special spiritual experience.*
- *Some believe in the Lord because they heard someone's testimony.*
- *Some believe in the Lord because of a particular need.*
- *Some believe in the Lord because...*
- *But the Bible says: "Faith comes from hearing the message." (Romans 10:17 NIV)*
- *Because someone preached Jesus, someone heard Jesus; because someone heard Jesus, someone believed in Jesus.*

Faith Comes from Hearing

Romans 10:17



So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by **the word of (concerning) Christ**. (NASB)

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through **the word about Christ**. (NIV)

Jesus Is the Word of Life

- *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.” (John 1:1, 4 NIV)*
- *Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6 NIV)*
- *Preaching the word is preaching Jesus.*
- *Hearing the word is hearing Jesus.*
- *Believing the word is believing Jesus.*

A Disobedient and Contrary People

• Why did the Israelites not believe in the Lord?

1. ***Not because they did not hear*** : “***But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: ‘Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.’”*** (Romans 10:18 NIV)
2. ***Not because they did not know*** : “***Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, ‘I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.’ And Isaiah boldly says, ‘I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.’”*** (Romans 10:19–20 NIV)
3. ***But because they were disobedient to God*** : “***But concerning Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’”*** (Romans 10:21 NIV)

Believe with your heart

and

Confess with your mouth

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith

Romans

10: 9-10

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.

Romans Chapter 11



The Future of Israel, Romans 11:1–36

1. Israel is not **entirely** unbelieving, 11:1–10
2. Israel is not **forever** unbelieving, 11:11–32
3. A doxology from the heights of spiritual understanding, 11:33–36

I. *Israel Is Not Entirely Unbelieving, 11:1–10*

• *Scripture:*

- *“Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:*
- *‘Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me’?*
- *And what was God’s answer to him? ‘I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’” (Romans 11:2b–4 NIV)*

• *Meaning:*

1. ***“Elijah’s misunderstanding”**: Elijah mistakenly thought he was the only faithful one left, but God told him there were seven thousand more.*
2. ***The remnant is more than one**: Paul uses this example to warn us not to fall into “Elijah’s misunderstanding,” thinking all Israelites rejected the Lord. There is still a “remnant chosen by grace,” more than just one person.*

The Grace of Election

- **Scripture:**

- *“So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.” (Romans 11:5–6 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. **Election is grace**: Election is God’s unilateral action, rooted in His love. Being chosen is God’s grace, giving salvation as a free gift.
2. **Election includes more than one**: How many Israelites are chosen? A group—the “remnant.” Though small, it is more than one.
3. **Election has no conditions**: Election is grace, therefore “not by works.” Did God choose the seven thousand because they had “not bowed to Baal”? Of course not. Their significance is to show “the existence of a remnant”, not “the conditions of election”. God’s election is unconditional.

Did God Make Them Blind?

- **Scripture:**

- *“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day.” (Romans 11:8 NIV)*
- *“Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.” (Romans 9:18 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. *At the beginning, it is humans who refuse to see; humans harden their own hearts first.*
2. *God never hardens those who were not already hardened; God never blinds those who originally could see.*
3. *“God hardening” means God “allows” those already hardened to continue in their hardness. “God making their eyes unable to see” means God “allows” those unwilling to see to remain blind.*

Fulfillment of Scripture

- **Scripture:**

- *“And David says: ‘May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.’” (Romans 11:9–10 NIV)*

- **Question:**

- *This passage comes from Psalm 69:22–23, originally referring to David’s enemies. Why is it applied here to the Israelites who rejected Jesus?*

- **Three levels of fulfillment:**

1. *Fulfilled in David’s time*
2. *Fulfilled in Jesus*
3. *Fulfilled in the last days*

II. Israel Is Not Forever Unbelieving, 11:11–32

- **Scripture:**

- *“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved.” (Romans 11:25–26a NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. **Israel has experienced a hardening in part:** Not all Israelites are hardened; only “in part” are hardened.
2. **The fullness of the Gentiles:** In God’s eternal plan, there is a number called “the number of Gentiles who will be saved.” When this number is complete, all Israel will be saved.
3. **All Israel will be saved:** The nation of Israel will, as a whole, turn to Christ and be saved. This does not mean they are saved without believing in Jesus; like all people, they are saved through Christ. It means that as a nation, Israel will corporately turn to the Lord.

The Wild Olive Branches

- **Scripture:**

- *“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.” (Romans 11:17–18 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

1. **Wild olive branches:** Gentile believers in Jesus.
2. **Original branches broken off:** Israelites who did not believe in Jesus.
3. **The root of the olive tree:** The patriarchs (Abraham, etc.). Being grafted into the root means becoming Abraham’s descendants by faith (4:11b).
4. **The gardener:** God. God removes the old branches and grafts in the new ones.

God's Kindness and Severity

- **Scripture:**

- *“Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.” (Romans 11:22 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

- **God's kindness:** *Gentiles believe in Jesus and are grafted into the olive root.*
- **God's severity:** *Israelites who do not believe in Jesus are broken off.*
- **You must continue in His kindness:** *Those who truly believe in the Lord will not depart from God, and therefore they will “continue in His kindness.” Only nominal Christians—those whose seed fell on “rocky ground”—easily abandon the Lord. You must examine whether your faith is genuine faith that can withstand testing, or false faith that cannot endure trials?*

A Doxology from the Heights of Spiritual Experience 11:33–36

- **Scripture:**

- *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?’ For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”
(Romans 11:33–36 NIV)*

- **Meaning:**

- *A concluding doxology for chapter 11: Romans 1–11 explains God’s entire salvation plan—the full gospel. From sin to justification, from justification to sanctification, from sanctification to glorification, from Israel to the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles back to Israel.*

A Doxology from the Heights of Spiritual Experience 11:33–36

- ***Knowledge before praise***: Paul used an entire chapter to explain God's salvation plan, and only then did he begin to praise God. Praise is not empty or ornate language, but heartfelt gratitude and worship that arise after gaining a deep understanding of God.
- ***A mountaintop doxology***: Romans 11:33–36 is a masterpiece of praise! Paul explains step by step, rising higher and higher, until he reaches the summit—beholding the beauty of God from the heights of spiritual experience and writing an incomparable hymn of praise.

Romans Chapter 12



W.Wang

The Theme and Outline of Romans

- **Theme:** *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*
- **Key Verses:** *Romans 1:16–17*
- **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)

Romans Chapters 12–15: The Gospel and Christian Living

1. *The Christian and God, 12:1–2*
2. *The Christian and Himself, 12:3–8*
3. *The Christian and Others, 12:9–16*
4. *The Christian and Enemies, 12:17–21*
5. *The Christian and Government, 13:1–7*
6. *The Christian and God’s Law, 13:8–10*
7. *The Christian and Life Attitude, 13:11–14*
8. *The Christian and the Weak in Faith, 14:1–15:13*
 - *Appendix: Paul’s Final Sharing, 15:14–33*

I. The Christian and God: Offer Your Body and Your Heart

- Romans 12:1–2
 - *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (NIV)*
- **What does “in view of God’s mercy” mean?**
 - *Paul says, “Therefore, brothers and sisters.” This “therefore” concludes everything he said earlier. What did he say earlier? In the first eleven chapters, Paul explained God’s salvation plan. This plan can be summarized in one phrase: **God’s mercy**. Our sins are forgiven, we are accepted as God’s children, and we enjoy heavenly blessings—not because of our merit, but because of God’s mercy.*
 - *Since we understand God’s mercy toward us, what should we do next? Paul says the next step is to offer your body and your heart to the God who loves you.*

I. The Christian and God : Offer Your Body and Your Heart

- **Offer your body**

1. The “body” (soma) refers to your physical being—your eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, feet, and entire frame. Paul means that offering yourself to God is not merely an intention or a feeling, but a concrete offering of the body you use in daily life—your thoughts, words, and actions—to glorify God.
2. Such an offering, Paul says, is your “true and proper worship.” The Israelites used the word “service” to describe what they did when worshiping God; therefore “worship” and “service” are closely related. (Even today, English uses the word “service” to refer to worship.)
3. Paul is saying that true, logical (logikos) worship is not merely performing rituals or singing in the temple, but living for God with your body and glorifying Him in daily life.

I. The Christian and God : Offer Your Body and Your Heart

- *Renewing of the mind (offer your heart)*

1. **Do not conform to this world**: *“Conform” means “to be shaped,” translated as conform. Paul is saying that if you want to offer yourself to God, you must not let “the world” shape your mind; you must not adopt the world’s values and worldview.*

- ❖ *The world refers to worldliness—the collective mindset, trends, and pursuits of humanity. The Bible’s “world” refers to worldly ideas, worldly currents, and the things admired and pursued by society.*

- ❖ *We were born and raised in the world, shaped by it from childhood. Our thinking is naturally worldly. We love money and pursue fame. To stop conforming to the world is not something achieved instantly.*

- ❖ *The Bible does not demand that you immediately achieve “not conforming,” but that you first achieve “do not.” Your heart must first say, “I do not want the world to shape me.” Without this “I do not want” in your heart, you cannot stop being shaped by the world. The result is that a Christian ends up resembling the world rather than God.*

I. The Christian and God : Offer Your Body and Your Heart

- **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind**: “Transform” means a complete change of form, translated as transform. Like the “Transformers,” it is not a cosmetic change but becoming something entirely different. To offer yourself to God, your inner thinking must undergo a complete transformation—toward God—by allowing your mind to be renewed by Him.
- How do we receive God’s renewal? Through Scripture and the inner work of the Holy Spirit.
 1. **Scripture** : Scripture is God’s Word. We grew up receiving worldly ideas (human words). After believing, we must receive God’s words. Those who do not read Scripture remain old, worldly, and discouraged in their thinking. Regular reading of Scripture renews your mind, making it lively and strong.
 2. **The Holy Spirit** : If you are God’s child, the Holy Spirit dwells in you. If you follow the Spirit’s leading and do not quench His prompting, your mind will be continually renewed. Worldly thinking leads to disappointment and discouragement. The Holy Spirit does the opposite—He draws us to God, lets us drink from the fountain of life, renews our minds, and strengthens us again.

II. The Christian and Himself : Think with Sound Judgment

• Romans 12:3–8

- *“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” (NIV)*

II. The Christian and Himself : Think with Sound Judgment

- What does “think with sober judgment, according to the measure of faith God has assigned” mean?
 - **Measure of faith:** the Greek phrase *metron pistis* has many interpretations. Two are most likely:
 1. **The measure of faith as the standard of belief:** “Pistis” = faith; “metron” = measure. The “measure of faith” is the standard by which faith is evaluated—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each person must evaluate his own faith according to the gospel. Do you believe in Christ, or merely in religion? Everyone must judge his own faith correctly.
 2. **The measure of faith as the gift given by God:** “Metron” can also mean “what the measure contains,” referring here to spiritual gifts. Thus *metron pistis* means “the gift measured out to you by faith.” God gives different gifts to different believers; each should think of himself according to the gift he has received.
 - ❖ The Chinese translation “信心的大小” (“the size of faith”) can mislead people into thinking God gives some people big faith and others small faith, making lack of faith God’s fault. This interpretation is incorrect.

Seeing Yourself as Part of Christ's Body

- *Just as the members (hands, feet, eyes, mouth...) are parts of one body, every believer is a part of the body of Christ (the church). Looking only at yourself creates illusions—preachers see only the importance of preaching, singers see only the importance of singing, fellowship leaders see only the importance of fellowship, those who serve see only the importance of service... Only by seeing yourself within the whole can you think with sound judgment.*
- ***The purpose of gifts is service. They are not for showing off, nor for hiding, but for serving the church and building up the body of Christ. Whatever God has given you, you must use. If God gave you the gift of preaching, then preach; if teaching, then teach; if caring for others, then care; if leadership, then lead... Work together with the other members, fulfill your role, and do not remain a spectator.***

III. The Christian and Others : Love One Another

- Romans 12:9–16
 - *“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.” (NIV)*

III. The Christian and Others : Love One Another

- **Brothers and sisters in the Lord should love one another:**

1. **Be sincere**: Love must not be hypocritical.
2. **Be discerning**: Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
3. **Be affectionate**: Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.
4. **Be respectful**: Honor one another above yourselves.
5. **Be fervent**: Never be lacking in zeal; keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.
6. **Be patient**: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.
7. **Be generous**: Share with the saints who are in need.
8. **Be hospitable**: Practice hospitality.
9. **Be kind**: Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
10. **Be compassionate**: Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.
11. **Be peaceable**: Live in harmony with one another.
12. **Be humble**: Do not be proud; associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own eyes.

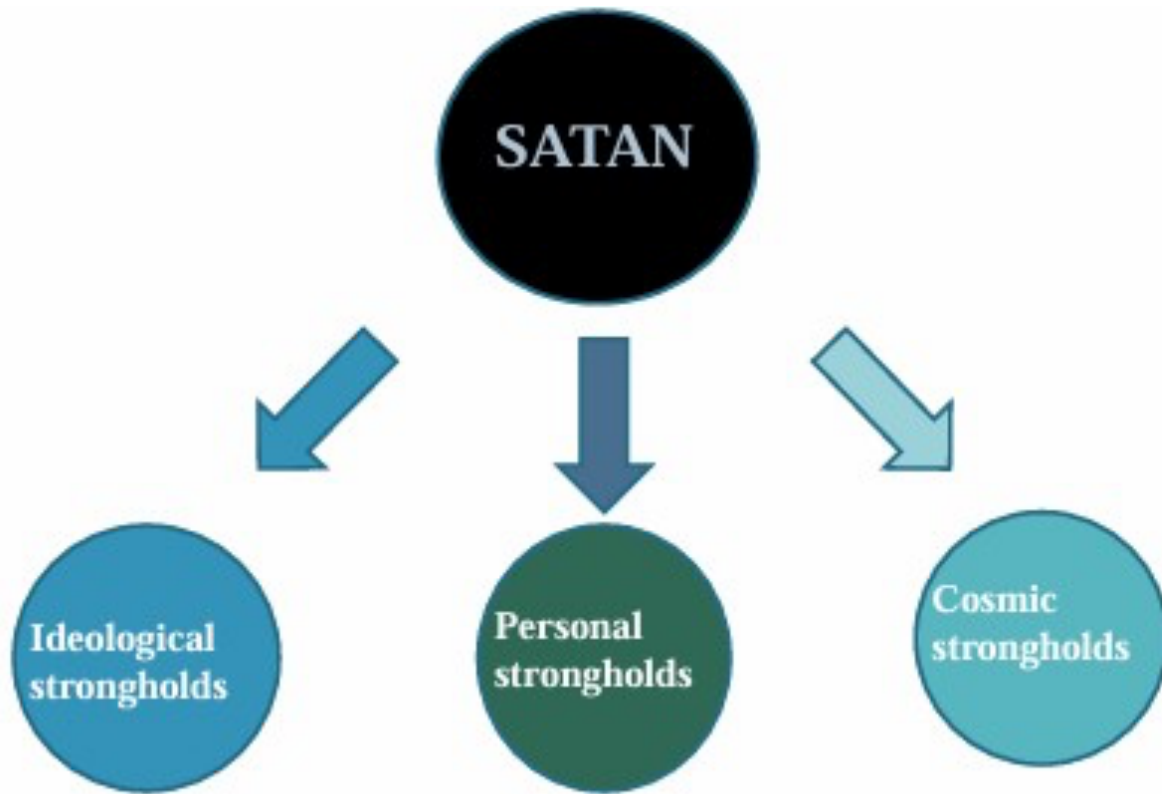
IV. The Christian and Enemies : Overcome Evil with Good

- Romans 12:17–21
 - *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (NIV)*
- **What does “heap burning coals on his head” mean?**
 - *This quotation from Proverbs 25:21–22 means: when your enemy harms you, you instead feed him and give him drink. By repaying evil with good, his conscience becomes uneasy—like carrying burning coals on his head. In this way, you soften his heart and win your enemy. Proverbs adds: “The Lord will reward you.”*

IV. The Christian and Enemies : Overcome Evil with Good

• **How to deal with enemies: four “do not’s” and four “do’s”**

1. **Do not curse; instead bless** : *“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (12:14)*
2. **Do not repay evil for evil; instead pursue peace** : *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” (12:17–18 NIV)*
3. **Do not take revenge; instead leave room for God’s wrath** : *“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath.” (12:19 NIV)*
4. **Do not be overcome by evil; instead overcome evil with good** : *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (12:21 NIV)*



Personal Strongholds in the Heart



Conceptual Strongholds



Universe of Strongholds

SATAN

Rulers

Authorities

Powers of this dark world

**Spiritual forces of evils in the
heavenly realms**

Romans Chapter 13



V. The Christian and Government : Submit to the Authorities

- Romans 13:1–3

- *“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.” (NIV)*

V. The Christian and Government : Submit to the Authorities

• *Four models of Church–State relations:*

1. ***Erastianism***: *Government has supreme authority and controls the church.*
2. ***Theocracy***: *The church controls the government.*
3. ***Constantinianism***: *Mutual benefit—government favors the church, and the church pleases the government to maintain privileges.*
4. ***Partnership***: *Church and government each fulfill their God-given responsibilities and cooperate with one another.*

❖ ***(Scripture supports the fourth model.)***

The Authority of Government

1. *Government authority comes from God*

- *“There is no authority except that which God has established.” (13:1)*

2. *Resisting government is resisting God’s appointed authority*

- *“Whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.” (13:2)*

The Responsibilities of Government

1. Government is God's servant for your good

- *“For the one in authority is God's servant for your good.” (13:4)*

2. Government is God's servant to punish evil

- *“They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.” (13:4)*

3. Government is God's minister, serving God

- *“This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.” (13:6)*

Must we obey every kind of government?

- **Government authority comes from God; obeying government is obeying God.**
 - *Government exists to serve the people, reward good, and punish evil. Christians are good citizens—they recognize that governmental authority is from God, and therefore they pay taxes, obey the law, and cooperate with the government.*
- **But must we obey evil and brutal governments?**
 - *If a government is wicked—like the Hitler regime—must Christians obey? The answer is no. The well-known German Christian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed for resisting the Nazi regime. Christians obey government because it is God’s appointed authority. But if a government refuses to obey God and acts wickedly, harming the people, then Christians may disobey, because the government has first disobeyed God.*

“The principle of obeying God rather than men”

- **The example of the apostles**

- According to Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested for preaching the gospel. The authorities forbade them to speak in Jesus’ name, but Peter and John replied: **“Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19–20 NIV)** When the government disobeyed God, the apostles chose to obey God rather than men.

- **Everything begins with obeying God**

- God has established three spheres of authority on earth: government, church, and family. Citizens obey government, believers obey pastors, children obey parents. But government, pastors, and parents must first obey God. If those in authority disobey God, those under authority may choose to “obey God rather than men.”

Practical caution

- **Generally, we must obey**
 - *Under normal circumstances, Christians should obey the government. Governments usually acknowledge that they exist to serve the people. They may not know their authority comes from God, but Christians know. According to Scripture, we should obey the government and be good citizens.*
- **When necessary, only civil disobedience—peaceful noncompliance**
 - *Christians love peace and do not use violence. Even when disobeying, Christians remain peaceful. During the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, Christians peacefully expressed the belief that “all people are equal.” Even when beaten or attacked by dogs, they “did not fight back or curse,” and ultimately prevailed.*

VI. The Christian and God's Law :

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

- Romans 13:8–10
 - *“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (NIV)*
- The three “is” of love
 1. **Love is “a continual debt”** : *Christians must owe no one anything—debts must be repaid, taxes must be paid. But in loving others, we must always feel indebted. We should always feel we have not loved enough, not cared enough, not considered others enough. With such a heart, families are blessed; with such a heart, churches are blessed.*

VI. The Christian and God's Law :

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

2. **Love is “the fulfillment of the law”** : *God gave many commandments through Moses—what to do and what not to do. All these commandments can be summed up in one word: **love**. God’s law is a law of love—love God and love people. If Christians act in love, even if they cannot remember all the rules, they will fulfill the law without realizing it. If they do not act in love, even if they keep several commandments, they still fall short of the law.*
3. **Love is “not harming others”** : *The Ten Commandments include prohibitions against adultery, murder, theft, false testimony, etc. All these “do nots” mean “do not harm others.” Love means not hurting others. Beyond the major commandments, Christians must also watch their daily words and actions, avoiding harm caused by selfishness or stubbornness. Such behavior is not acting in love.*

VII. The Christian and Life Attitude :

Clothe Yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ

• Romans 13:11–14

- *“And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.” (NIV)*

VII. The Christian and Life Attitude :

Clothe Yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ

- *What does “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” mean?*
 - *Romans teaches that God’s salvation is complete and long-term. It has three stages:*
 1. *Past: Justification*
 2. *Present: Sanctification*
 3. *Future: Glorification*
 - *“Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” means that God’s salvation plan for us is moving closer to completion. The final stage will be completed when Christ returns. Compared to when we first believed, we are now closer to Christ’s return, when we will be raised in glory and reign with Him forever.*

VII. The Christian and Life Attitude :

Clothe Yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ

- *What does it mean to “put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light”?*
 - *Christian living involves “putting off” and “putting on”: putting off darkness, putting on light; putting off the old self, putting on the new self; putting off evil, putting on Christ.*
 - *God wants Christians to be children of light, to “put aside the deeds of darkness,” removing all shameful acts such as “**carousing and drunkenness, sexual immorality and debauchery, dissension and jealousy**” (13:13), or anything displeasing to God.*
 - *“Putting on the armor of light” means “putting on the armor of God” (see Eph. 6:10–17). Christians must wear truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God—that is, express these qualities in their behavior. Such conduct equips you for spiritual battle, enabling you to overcome spiritual enemies and live a life that glorifies God and benefits others.*