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Romans Overview (Part 4)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this fourth part of his overview of Romans, Steve Gregg addresses the difficult passage in chapter five regarding the concept of original sin. He discusses the various beliefs held by Christians regarding the impact of Adam's sin on humanity and whether or not babies are born with a sinful nature. Gregg also delves into the topic of the war between the flesh and the spirit, emphasizing the importance of striving to walk in the Spirit in order to fulfill the law of God and overcome sin. Finally, he examines chapters nine through eleven, discussing God's plan of redemption for both Jews and Gentiles and the role of the faithful remnant within Israel.

Transcript

The three passages we want to look at more carefully are intriguing and controversial and perplexing. And therefore, I think they're verses that we should take some time to look at a little more carefully than just in a rapid survey. If you turn to Romans chapter five, let me read this passage to you.

Paul says in verse twelve, Therefore, justice through one man sent into the world, and death through sin. And thus death spread to all men because all sinned. For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin was not imputed, where there's no law.

Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of him who is to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men, resulting in

condemnation. Even so, through one man's righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.

So also by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound, but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I do not know very many Bible teachers who would not be quick to say, as I am going to say, this is one of the most convoluted passages in terms of sentence structure. Of all of Paul's writings and possibly in the whole Bible. I always found it difficult.

I mean, just as an uneducated kid reading the Bible and coming to this point, I was like, where is he going with this? I don't understand. How's that phrase go? I don't get it. And I just thought, well, it's just me.

I just I'm just dull. And then some years later, I was listening to a recorded lecture by a man I highly respected. It's very brilliant.

A Bible teacher. He's going through Romans. We came back.

He said, he says, now this is perhaps one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. And I think most people would say the same thing. And one thing that makes it difficult is we might bring to it certain assumptions about what it means because of longstanding church tradition.

Which I'll talk about in a moment. Another thing that makes it difficult is that it's not entirely clear how Paul means some of the statements, even if the statements are rather clear in themselves. There's some ambiguity that could kind of go one way or some or another.

And it's not all that clear. But one of the things that's very basic to make it difficult is the structure of it. It's got a long parenthesis.

And that always makes things a little more complicated. He starts to say something. He cuts himself off, has a long parenthesis.

And then he has to resume what he started many verses earlier to say. Now, in that long parenthesis, there's a shorter parenthesis in the parenthesis. So Paul is starts saying something.

Then he starts saying something else. Then he starts saying something else, a smaller parenthesis. Then he closes the big parenthesis.

Then he gets back to his original subject. Now you can see that, although, by the way,

the parentheses as markers in your Bible, they're not in the Greek. They don't show.

This is what the translators have pointed out. They see a parenthesis there. They only mark one long parenthesis.

They mark it from verse 13 through verse 17. That is a long parenthesis. And you can see that in your Bible, there are parentheses around that section.

But there are no parentheses in the Greek. And one can put them in where they see them needed. If I were a translator, and that would be disastrous since I don't read Greek.

But if I was choosing where the parentheses go, I would put another parenthesis within that, or brackets, which would encompass verses 15 through 17. So the last three verses of this long parenthesis are a smaller parenthesis, it seems to me. Now what you'll find, then, in trying to follow as Paul trains a thought, we need to read what comes before the parenthesis, and then skip to the end of the parenthesis, because that's how parentheses are.

They kind of are a side. If you have a true parenthesis, then what follows it comes immediately after, logically, immediately after what came before it. So, Paul begins with this statement, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned, dash, he doesn't finish the sentence.

You can tell it's not a complete sentence. He does have some complete clauses in it. For example, the statement, you know, death spread to all men because all sinned, that's a complete sentence.

But it's a clause within the sentence. He says, through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, that's a complete sentence, too. But that's really just a clause within the sentence.

The whole sentence begins with just as, and should end with so also. Because Paul's comparing something. When you say just like this is true, so also this is true.

That's what he's doing. And he says, just as this is true, and then it gets sidetracked. And he goes off on a tangent.

Now, I'm sure he had good reasons for this. Paul was not the easiest writer to follow, because he got, do you know there's actually one sentence in Ephesians chapter 1 that in the original Greek Paul wrote 13 verses without a period. It's the longest sentence in the Bible.

When you have a sentence that's 13 verses long, you've got all these subordinate

clauses and these different directions, these clauses. It's just complicated to read. In a sense, those who really like to put in the time to study hard can find that to be thrilling, can find that to be intriguing.

But for the average reader, it's just complicated. And here we have a long parenthesis. And he does not finish the sentence.

He begins in verse 12. He goes into this long parenthesis, and then he realizes he's gone so far. He can't just finish the sentence.

He has to start it over again. Because he knows the reader's forgotten verse 12 by the time he gets to verse 18. Verse 18, he picks it up again.

Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation. Even so, see that's what we were looking for at the end of verse 12, the even so. Now, what he says there in the first half of verse 18 is just a repetition of the same information in verse 12.

He started there and got sidetracked. And now he's got to come back to it, so he's got to start the sentence over again. So if we would for the moment, leave out the parenthesis and just read the section without, we'll come back to the parenthesis and see what that's doing.

So verse 12, therefore, justice through one man, sin entered the world and death through sin and thus death spread to all men because all sinned. Verse 18, start that again. Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation.

Even so, through one man's righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So also by one man's obedience, many will be made righteous.

Okay, let's stop there. He had some more detail in verse 20:21, but this is his main point that's so garbled in this section. This is the section and frankly, the only section in the New Testament that St. Augustine used to create the doctrine of original sin, as most of us know it.

Now, I'm not saying that the doctrine of original sin is false or that it's true. I'm just saying Augustine is the one who formulated it around 400 AD. What we call the doctrine of original sin is not formulated or enunciated by any of the church fathers prior to Augustine.

That's almost four centuries after Christ. What is the doctrine of original sin? Well, the way Augustine put it together was this. When Adam sinned, because we are all in Adam, because the whole human race was in fact in Adam, Adam had no children yet.

All the humanity came out of him after that. So while we were all in Adam, he sinned. Thus, we sinned in him.

They would say it's similar to when the writer of Hebrews says, you know, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, Levi, who is still in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek. And the writer of Hebrews is basically saying, thus we know that the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood, because even Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek. However, that whole thing happened before Levi was born.

Levi was like the great grandson of Abraham. So when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, it says in Hebrews chapter 7, so Levi also paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham, because he was still in the loins of Abraham. Now that idea, that's something your father did, in a sense is something you're doing if you were not born yet, is, I've heard people tell me, like Watchman Knee had some interesting illustrations.

He said, suppose your grandfather had died before you were born. What would have happened to you? You would have died in him. Right? Your grandfather died before you were born.

You would have died in him. Or he said, suppose I take a piece of money and stick it in a book and mail it. He was in China.

He says, I mail it to Shanghai. What happened to that piece of money? Well, it went to Shanghai too, in the book, because it's in the book. It now is experiencing the fate of the book, as it were.

So also when we're in Adam, what Adam did, we've done in him. Now, this cannot be argued as a universal principle, because my father did a lot of things before I was born that I haven't done. And I'm not responsible for.

Not that he did anything bad. It's just that, no, not everything that your ancestors did have you done in them. It would apply to some very unusual cases identified, like Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek.

And that's probably more of a rhetorical device than a genuine case. I don't think that the writer of Hebrews is saying that Levi literally did pay tithes to Melchizedek. What he's trying to say is that Melchizedek priesthood is superior to Levi.

After all, Levi's great-grandfather honored Melchizedek. And Levi later came from that, so in a sense, he was involved in that too, in a way. But what Augustine taught is that when we were in Adam, we sinned in Adam.

And therefore, human beings are sinners from the moment they're conceived in the womb. The baby formed in the womb and the infant born is a sinner. Now, you might say, okay, well, we know that babies are born sinners because they're, you know, selfish.

They can be rebellious, you know, you don't have to teach them to do bad things. They do those by nature. True.

And therefore, we could say that they have a sinful inclination or sinful nature. But Augustine wasn't just saying that. He did believe that babies are conceived and born with a sinful inclination in nature.

But he said they also have a rap sheet. When a baby is conceived, he's already sinned by being in Adam. Because everyone in Adam sinned when Adam sinned.

Which means the baby already has guilt from a sin which the baby has never committed. Because Adam's guilt belongs to the whole race that came from Adam. That's Augustine's view.

So we've got two aspects of this doctrine of original sin. When Adam sinned, we all sinned is the main thing that Augustine got from this. And therefore, if a baby dies in the womb, it dies a sinner.

It dies with sin on its record. Not all Calvinists see this the same way, but a Calvinist I debated believed that if a baby dies in the womb or shortly after birth because it never did become a Christian, and if it was elect, God would have sovereignly allowed it to become a Christian, would not let it die before it became a Christian. Therefore, it goes to hell.

And he himself had lost like a two-year-old daughter who had died. And he believed his daughter was in hell. Because she was born in Adam's sin.

And she did not live to become a convert. According to Calvinism, if you are elect, God will sovereignly make sure that you live to become a converter. And if you die before that happens, you weren't elect.

Now, not all Calvinists see it that way. That's a very harsh Calvinist view that my friend had that I debated. Many Calvinists will say, well, it's not that they aren't elect.

It's that we will never know if they were elect, but God knew. God knew if they were elect or not. If they were elect, they would have become a believer if they'd lived.

That's the kinder, gentler Calvinist view. But how do we know that a baby even has guilt of Adam's sin? The fact that it may have a sinful nature, meaning that it's more likely to do selfish and sinful things than righteous things, doesn't tell us about guilt. An animal has its nature.

A mosquito has a horrible nature. But it doesn't have any guilt. It's not a moral agent.

You know? If a bear breaks into your backyard and kills your dog or a cougar does, it's not guilty of anything. It's following its nature, and its nature happens to be very

inconvenient for you and your dog. But the fact is to have a certain nature to do a certain thing is a different issue than having guilt.

A child, for example, of an addict, a cocaine addict. The child may be born without addiction, but not guilty of it. It's not the child's fault, and God doesn't even think it's the child's fault, that the mother was an addict.

But the child is born with that inclination to be addicted to cocaine. In other words, the way your nature is, is one thing. The way your record before God stands is another.

Now, those who are not Calvinists generally believe, as I do, in something called the age of accountability. That, yes, we are born with a tendency to sin, no question about that. And children do sin very early on.

But they don't know better. And until they get to an age where they do know better, God doesn't hold them accountable. They would therefore be under the blood.

They'd be under the grace of God. As Adam's act had an impact on all people, Christ's act had an impact on all people. Now, of course, Adam's offspring naturally do sin, but they can choose eventually to repent and be saved.

Likewise, I think babies are born under grace, under Christ's mercy, but they can choose, when they have the accountability to do so, to go wrong, and they always do. I mean, it's a person who doesn't have Christ and is above the age of accountability, is a rebel against God. Now, the child before that was still doing sinful things, but he didn't know it.

He wasn't doing it because he's rebellious, he's just doing it because he's what he is. You know, if your cat eats your parakeet, it's not being rebellious, it's just doing what cats do. It doesn't know any better.

And so, a child also, a newborn, doesn't know right from wrong, and the Bible even talks about that. It says that in Isaiah chapter 7, verse 16, it says, a child is going to be born, and before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good. Certain things will happen.

The Bible acknowledges that children who are born don't immediately know to choose the good and refuse the evil. They do at a certain point, but not immediately. I don't know what the age of accountability is, I'm not even going to guess about that.

I'm just saying that a non-Calvinist would not say that because of being sinning in Adam, a child is born guilty, and if they happen to die in that condition, they go to hell because they have Adam's sin on them. Now, what does it say? Does it say that we have Adam's guilt upon us? Well, it doesn't. It says, in fact, in verse 12, through one man, sin entered the world, okay? The first sin came into the world by the actions of a man, Adam.

So the whole concept of sin invaded human history through this one man's act, and death also invaded human experience through this man's act, death through sin, and thus, death spread to all men because all sinned. Not because Adam sinned. Because all sinned.

Now, Augustine didn't read Greek. He was a great theologian, many people would say, but he didn't read Greek, he read Latin. He had the Latin Vulgate, I believe the Vulgate was the old Latin he was using.

I think he had the Vulgate. But in the Latin, it doesn't say, because all sinned. It says, in whom all sinned.

In the Latin, which is a mistranslation of this verse, which Augustine used because he didn't know Greek, it says, in that last line of verse 12, in whom all sinned. Whereas Paul actually said, because all sinned. Now, in whom Augustine took to be that one man, Adam.

Through one man, sin entered. In whom all sinned. So he's saying, we all sinned in Adam, and therefore we're all guilty of that sin.

By virtue of just being in Adam. And that was true as soon as we became in Adam, which we were conceived. But Paul didn't say that, and the Bible doesn't say that anywhere.

Paul says that all die because all sinned. Now, how was it that the sin of one man passed on to all other men? How is it that death spread to all men through that one man's act? Well, quite simply, I think, the Bible indicates that Adam and Eve were made mortal, but potentially immortal. There was a tree of life in the garden.

If they ate of it, they'd live forever. If they ate of the other tree, God would forbid them to eat of the tree of life, and they would not live forever. They'd die.

They had life and death as options, potential before them. If they obeyed God, they could eat of the tree of life and live forever. If they didn't obey God, they would not be able to eat of the tree of life, and they'd die.

Why? Because people do die. Naturally, all creatures die. Everything except God dies.

The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6.16, God alone possesses immortality. People don't possess it, but we can have it as a gift of God. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So if we believe in Christ, we can have immortality. That's like Adam eating the tree of life. We eat of Christ.

He's our tree of life. The point is that people were made capable of dying or capable of living forever, depending on which choice they made between those trees. Now, Adam

chose the wrong tree.

He was banished from the tree of life, sent out of the garden, had no access to it. None of his offspring had access to it. So he died, and so did all his offspring.

Death spread to the whole race because he got us banned from the tree of life. Now, Jesus came as a, as it were, a second tree of life himself so that those who eat of him can have eternal life. But death spread to all of Adam's seed because Adam, before any of us were born, was banished from the tree of life.

God put a cherubim with a flaming sword to keep anyone from getting to it after that. So death came to us all. Not because we were personally judged for sins we committed or even for sins Adam committed.

We just were not able to have access to eternal life until Jesus came and brought it. And those who don't have access to eternal life die. Death is all that's left for mortals, unless they can get immortality somewhere.

So Adam's sin caused him to die and caused everyone else to die too. Death spread to all men. But he says, because all sinned, and that is to say, not only did Adam sin, we all did.

Now, it's possible that we all did because we have a sinful nature, and that's very, I believe that's a reasonable suggestion. It's also possible to say that what we call the sinful nature is simply carnality. I mean, animals have it too.

Animals are carnal also. The difference is animals don't have any moral standards they're supposed to live up to. If an alley cat mates with a whole bunch of other cats and even eats some of its babies, we think, oh, that's disgusting, but that's what cats do.

They're not held to a higher moral standard. They're just following their carnal, fleshly nature. Well, we have carnal, fleshly nature too.

We have sex drive, we have drive for food, we have a craving for sleep, which is sometimes inappropriate, especially if you're a sentry. I mean, we have natural drives just like animals do. The difference is we are told that there's wrong ways to use those drives, and legitimate ways to use them.

And our flesh does not distinguish between the right ways and the wrong ways. Our flesh just knows what it wants and when it wants it. We are supposed to govern those drives by our will and by our spirit and by our knowledge of what God wants.

Animals don't. But the fact that we have these drives, they are not sinful in themselves. Your sex drive is not sinful.

God made that. That's a result of certain chemicals in your body that you didn't create,

God did. He has use for them.

Same thing with your hunger for food. If a person becomes a drunkard or becomes a glutton, that's because they have God-given hunger and thirst, but they're supposed to govern it differently than that. In other words, we could call our sinful nature simply our animal nature.

And this, I think, is... I may be wrong about this, but I think it makes more sense than what Augustine's view is. Augustine believed it's almost like there's a genetic factor that came down from Adam that was a sin element in us. And the answer is, well, where does the Bible speak about that? When God told Adam and Eve that if they ate the earth, they would surely die, He didn't mention, and you'll also have this change in your nature, this element that will be passed down to all your offspring, there's no mention of that anywhere in the Bible.

And Paul doesn't say so here. We do all sin because we all have these drives, and by nature, we're alienated from God. Adam and Eve, before they sinned, at least had God there to encourage them and to have a relationship with them that could keep them from sinning if they wished.

But they chose to sin anyway, and we are no better than they. We have chosen to sin too, and therefore, the death that came on Adam is ours as well. But Augustine had one other verse for his doctrine.

Interesting that such an important doctrine in his theology would be based essentially on two verses. One was Romans 5.12, and the other is Psalm 51.5, where David said, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Now this statement, in sin my mother conceived me, is taken by Augustine and frankly most theologians who follow him, to mean that there was a sinful nature that his mother had, which was passed on to him through conception.

Just like his curly hair or his brown eyes were passed down from his mother at conception. So this element of sin was a hereditary thing, genetically passed down or somehow passed down from his mother. She had it and she passed it on him.

In sin my mother conceived me. Well, that and Romans 5.12 are the entire biblical case for original sin. No wonder it took 400 years for someone to come up with that doctrine.

Such sparse biblical witness. And such ambiguous biblical witness. I've already pointed out that Romans 5.12 doesn't necessarily say what Augustine said.

Neither does this. If I told you my mother conceived me in sin, what would you think I meant? You'd think I was illegitimate. Exactly.

And that would be the natural meaning of the words, would it not? It could possibly mean

something else more esoteric. And you might assume that it did if there was some other evidence or some other reasons to believe that some esoteric thing had happened that is not explained anywhere else in scripture. But in the absence of anything in scripture saying that there's this genetic sinfulness that's passed down from mother to son or father to son, then the statement of David is far from clear.

I mean, maybe he was saying something like Augustine said. Although it took 400 years for someone to assume that he meant that. And I don't see a real good reason to assume it.

If he's saying I was an illegitimate child, then he'd say it in those exact words. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother did conceive me. I mean, that'd be very plain.

Now you might say, but the Bible doesn't say David was illegitimate, does it? Not in so many words. It is interesting that David seemed to be somewhat despised by his family members. We know of another Hebrew in the Bible in the book of Judges named Jephthah who was the son of a prostitute.

And his father's other children rejected him and kicked him out of the family. David wasn't exactly kicked out of the family, but he was kept kind of at... They steered a wide berth, kept him out in the field with the sheep. When he went to visit his brothers, they spoke abusively to him without any provocation, if you remember that.

Also, when Samuel came to Jesse and said, Bring all your sons in here, I'm going to anoint one of them to be king. He brought in all of them except David. And when the Lord said to Samuel, It's none of these.

Samuel said, Don't you have any other sons? He said, Oh yeah, well, there's David. He's out with the sheep. Samuel said, Get him in here.

Why didn't his father call him in with the rest? Why did the brothers resent him when he hadn't done anything wrong? Why does David say in Psalm 27:10, When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. I'm not saying that these things prove that he was illegitimate, but his own statement here, along with these hints, may point that direction. I don't know.

All I can say is these two verses, Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12, are far from an adequate proof of such a strange doctrine that would suggest that a baby is born guilty of Adam's sin. Now that a baby is born with human lusts, and without the restraints of the Holy Spirit in his life, and grows up to express those lusts in sinful ways, it's very clear. I mean, sure, everyone does that.

Everyone has sinned. We all stand condemned of sin. But is it because Adam forced us or not? Well, I mean, some think that that's what Paul is saying in Romans 5. But

obviously those words can be taken another way.

Now, the parentheses in there are confusing. And I'm not going to try to sort them all out, because frankly, I'm not sure they can be. I welcome you to try, and maybe you can do better than I did.

But I've thought through Romans at least 30 times, read as many commentaries on Romans, and meditated on Romans all my life. I remember one night, I was in Korea, and I was there to teach through Romans for YWAM School of Biblical Studies. And before my teaching, I was laying in bed, just thinking of the book of Romans.

I was just going through the whole book in my mind, because I knew the whole book in my mind. I didn't memorize it, but I knew what's in every chapter in a way. And I mean, that was back when I was in my 20s.

Familiarity with Romans is not a problem for me. It's understanding what in the world he's saying here. That's a problem.

And I'm not the only one who has a problem with it. But one thing he's saying is, there is a parallel of sorts between what happened to humanity in Adam, and what happens to humanity in Christ. And he even says that he was a type.

Adam was a type of him who is to come. He says that in verse 14. That's Adam's a type of Christ, in that there's some parallels here.

Each of them is the head of a new humanity. Adam, the old humanity, it was new at the time. Adam is the head of a humanity, a man, an anthropos.

And he does talk about there's one through one man, through one man, through one man. And then in chapter 6, verse 60, he says, knowing this, that our old man was crucified. Old man, anthropos.

The word anthropos means man or humanity. Adam represents a humanity. Christ represents a corporate humanity, the body of Christ.

And you are either in Adam or in Christ. Paul is definitely saying that if you are in Adam still, you're subject to death. If you're in Christ, you have been justified through his righteous act.

Now, he does, in that parenthesis, seem to try to say, yeah, but the parallels are not exact. I mean, even though there's some parallel there, it's not really kind of exactly the same. You know, the free gift is not like the offense.

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. I mean, it sounds like he's just kind of walked back some things in that parenthesis. What he is affirming without the parenthesis is we've got some parallels here between Adam as the head of a

condemned humanity and Christ as a new Adam, the head of a redeemed humanity.

But in the parenthesis, I think he's saying, yeah, but not everything is exactly parallel here. There are definitely as many differences as there are similarities. And that's what I think is going on in chapter 5. Now, I don't have time to go into that more because I have another passage or two to take up.

That whole business of original sin and whether this passage teaches or not is the main controversy, I suppose. Now, when you come to chapter 7, it's verses 14 to the end of the chapter. Paul says, For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For what I am doing I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice. But what I hate, that I do.

If then I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells.

For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good, I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do. But the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

Now, if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.

Now, what Paul describes as an all too familiar struggle that everyone has. You resolve to do good and you fall short of what you resolve to do. And you resolve to stop doing things that are bad, and you slip into them again.

In other words, our resolves and our ambitions, our moral ambitions, are above our reach, in a way. In the flesh, anyway. We do not have, in our flesh, the power to do that.

In my flesh, there dwells no good thing. He said, I don't have it in my natural capacities, which is what flesh means. I don't have it in me to live the perfect life that I'm wanting to live.

In my mind, I agree that the law of God is good. I want to obey, but I do not find in myself the power. I can will it, but I can't perform it, he says.

Because there's this law in my members, and that is sin. Now, some of you say, well,

doesn't that prove that we have a sinful nature? Well, yeah, as adults we certainly do. I mean, if we're born with it or not is open to question.

But certainly, once you have sinned, you become a slave of sin. It's like a drug that you only have to use once to become addicted to. And there are some drugs like that.

But, you know, once you've chosen sin, you're an addict. And it's built into your psyche and so forth. He says it's in his members.

But what is he talking about? Now, here's the thing. Many Christians reading this assume he's talking about himself as a Christian having this struggle. This is actually what I believe he is talking about.

But there are problems with this suggestion that some object to. They say, for example, why would Paul say, I am carnal in verse 14? Isn't carnality something that's opposite of being spiritual? And isn't Paul a spiritual Christian? He also says in verse 14 that he's sold under sin. Well, how can a Christian be said to be sold under sin? I've been redeemed.

I've been bought by Christ. So this must be a reference to the former life. And, of course, all this defeat and frustration, they say, seems like it would not work with chapter 6. Where he says in verse 12 of chapter 6, Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts.

And in Romans 6, 14, Sin shall not have dominion over you. For you're not under the law but under grace. So if Paul says sin won't have dominion over you, isn't he describing something different here? And on this basis, many have suggested Paul is arguing here, not arguing but representing the frustration of an unconverted man.

Now, there's two really possibilities that people have brought up. One, he's describing his own frustration or that of mankind in general. But he was a Pharisee who loved the law or wanted to keep the law.

But before he was a Christian, he couldn't keep it. He was always struggling and failing. So some feel that this is Paul in his pre-conversion days as a picture of every man who's not converted.

There are some who argue that he's not describing an unconverted person because the person really does want to do what God wants. And unconverted people, by definition, haven't made that their choice yet. But he's weak.

And therefore they say it might be a convert who needs a second work of grace. Now, some might say he needs entire sanctification, depending on their traditions. Some might say he needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In any case, some would say there are Christians who are definitely living below their

privileges. And one of our privileges is to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh. And we even see in chapter 8, he says in verse 4, that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh.

And in verse 2 of the same chapter, chapter 8, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is made me free from the law of sin and death. So some say chapter 7 describes the carnal Christian who has not yet been sanctified or has not yet had the breakthrough, has not yet come into God's rest, has not yet been baptized in the Spirit. Whatever the teacher's favorite second work of grace is, this is a person who has a work of grace because he's got this inclination to obey God, which is a work of grace.

But obviously he's falling short of normative Christian behavior, which would be victory over sin and fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law through the Spirit. Now, so you've got several different views. Is this a non-Christian who finds relief by conversion? It doesn't seem like it because in the very last verse, he says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. Now he's already introduced Jesus as the solution in verse 24. He says, who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sounds like he's saying, oh, yay, the solution was Jesus. I became a Christian now, but then the last line is, but I still serve the law of sin with my flesh. In other words, you know, Jesus is already introduced in the picture, but the same problem is said to be present.

So it doesn't seem like he's giving us a pre-conversion story. And another reason for thinking so is all of these verbs are in the present tense. Whereas just a little earlier in the same chapter, he talked about his past using the past tense.

And now he changes over to the present. He says in verse eight or verse seven, is the law of sin on the contrary? I would not have known sin except through the law. I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said you should not covet.

But sin taking opportunity by the commandment produced in me, past tense, all manner of evil desire. And apart from the law, sin was dead. I was past tense alive once without the law.

But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died past tense. But then when you get to verse 14, he says, I am carnal, sold unto sin. I find that I am doing such and such.

I want to do this, but I don't do it. In other words, he's given some autobiographical verses there earlier on, speaking in the past tense. But now he's not in the past tense.

It sounds like he's talking about his present tense. Now my friends who take the other

view and think he is talking about a pre-Christian experience, they say, oh well, you can find places in literature where people use the present tense and they're really talking about the past. Well, fair enough.

I don't doubt that that may be true. But it's very marked here where he changes from consistent use of the past tense, talking about his past, and now he's no longer talking about the past. He has introduced Jesus as the solution but still says, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Now there's something else that makes me think he's not talking about his past. Because he says in verse 17, but now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that draws to me. And then in verse 24, if I do what I will not do, it is no longer I. No longer means something is different than before.

It used to be me. It's no longer me. I used to sin and that was me.

I now when I sin, that's not me. That's not what I want. That's not who I am.

It's no longer I doing this. He's not trying to shirk responsibility. He's saying that's not who I am anymore.

I was. When I did these sins, it was I, I, I all the way. But now he says because I hate the things I'm doing.

That proves that I love righteousness. It proves I'm a different person. I've been converted.

When I was unconverted, I loved sin and it was me all the way. I've converted now. And as a convert, I love righteousness.

I love the law of God. I want to do what's right. And therefore, when I do sin, it goes against me.

It isn't me. It's this thing, this sin in my members is getting the better of me. But I'm somebody else.

I'm a new creation of Christ. I'm somebody who loves righteousness. So when he says it's no longer, I, he seems there's something has changed.

It used to be this, but it's no longer that. So it seems to me like the whole drift of the passages. I'm not a non-Christian anymore.

And this is still my frustration. Now, I will say this. If someone says, but Paul was a spiritual man and Christians have the, you know, we've gotten beyond this.

We don't have this struggle that non-Christians have. Well, you might want to look over

at Galatians chapter 5 because that's written to Christians. I have no question that Paul's audience are presumed to be his converts.

The ones he's led to Christ. And he speaks as if it's a very normal thing. In Galatians 5 17, for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.

And these are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things you wish. Doesn't that just sound like an encapsulation of these verses in Romans 7? It's the very same teaching, but he's clearly talking to Christians. You have a flesh, you have the spirit.

These are contrary to each other. There's a war going on. And when this flesh wins, you don't do what you wish you could do.

And that sounds to me what he's saying in Romans 7. So why in the world would we say that Romans 7 can't be talking about the same person that Galatians 5 17 is talking about? Now notice in Galatians 5, the verse before that, verse 16 says, I say walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. That's the same thing Paul mentions here in Romans 8 4. Those who walk according to the spirit, the righteous requirements of all are fulfilled. So what do we have here? We've got a situation where Paul, it's not realistic to my mind to say he's talking about pre-conversion.

And yet he's a spiritual man. Why would he say he's carnal? The word carnal just means in flesh. I am in flesh.

My body is flesh. I'm not carnally minded. In chapter 80 says to be carnally minded is death.

But this one's not carnally minded. He's got the law of his mind is a contrary to the law of his flesh. His flesh is fleshly, is carnal.

His mind is not. In his mind he approves of the law of God. He says in verse 23, I see another law in my members, meaning his flesh, warring against the law of my mind.

My mind is on God's side here. I've got this other part of me that isn't, but it's not me. It's my enemy.

It's at war. And I have to walk in the spirit so I don't fulfill its lust. I believe what Paul is describing here is the experience of a Christian who does not walk in the spirit.

Now, that's not the same thing as saying someone who has not had a second work of grace. It's not saying, well, what he's got in mind here is someone needs to have entire sanctification or needs to be baptized in the spirit or needs to have, you know, enter God's rest or something like that. There's lots of people who have different ideas of what it is that the Christian he's describing here lacks.

What this person is, is a normal Christian who isn't always as nobody is. Always walking

in the spirit, walking in the spirit is something you do on purpose, step by step, day by day. And sometimes you don't.

You should, but sometimes you don't. It's just realistic. If you're walking in the spirit, you do not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The spirit of God is the power that God gives to live according to the spirit and not of flesh. But anyone here would have to tell me, if you're being honest, you don't walk in the spirit all the time. You're not always obedient to what the spirit is prompting you to do.

You're not always trusting in the Holy Spirit to give you total victory over the temptation you're facing. You are not always taking every step in a spiritual reliance on the Holy Spirit. We can and should, but no one really does.

And that's another thing that makes it seem so strange that some say, oh, that can't be a Christian's experience. Really? Isn't it yours? Do you know any Christians that don't have this experience? I don't. Why could Paul not have it? He was a Christian.

You have it. You're a Christian. This is what all Christians experience.

If you do not walk in the spirit, you find there's something that's stronger than your own will in your flesh that you cannot overpower. But walking in the spirit does overpower, but that's step by step. That's not you don't just the Bible ever says flow with the spirit.

Why? Because if you're flowing like downstream, it doesn't you just jump in at the headwaters and just float on down. It's effortless. It's walking.

Walking isn't flowing. Walking is taking steps one at a time. Now, let me show you in Romans 8, 2, where he says, the law of the spirit of life in Christ.

Has made me free from the law of sin and death. Now, that law of sin and death is what he's struggling with in chapter seven. OK, the law of the spirit of life in Christ has made me free.

Now, he makes it very clear in verse four. He means when he's walking in the spirit, not according to flesh. The spirit of God can make you free from the law of sin and death when you're walking in the spirit.

And to my mind, it's like saying this. And this is not at all an original illustration. Many preachers have used it.

I think it's very profound. The law of gravity prevents me from levitating. From flying.

I can't fly. I can't levitate. The law of gravity is stronger than me.

I can use all my strength and jump as high as I can. But gravity is going to pull me right down. Gravity, I'm a slave to it.

But if I get an airplane, because there are other laws besides gravity, like the laws of aerodynamics. With the proper thrust and lift and so forth, you can actually defy gravity. Birds do it all the time.

Hot air balloons do it all the time. Airplanes do it all the time. You can actually stay off the ground.

In fact, as long as the laws of aerodynamics are in use, you can stay up permanently. Now, if I'm in an airplane, I can say the laws of aerodynamics have made me free from the law of gravity. Because I can see way down there.

That's where gravity wants me to be. And I'm way up here. And it's true.

As long as I am exploiting the laws of aerodynamics. If I step outside the airplane while it's in flight, I will find that I'm no longer exploiting the laws of aerodynamics. And the law of gravity is still as strong as it ever was.

And therefore, if I'm not exploiting the law of the spirit of life in Christ, which he mentions in verse 2, which makes me free from the law of sin and death, then the law of sin and death beats me again. I have to walk in the spirit and I will not while doing so fulfill the lust of the flesh. What Paul is describing at the end of chapter seven is a Christian's experience at times when that Christian is not walking in the spirit.

He's not saying that we should not walk in the spirit. Paul's realistic. He says the flesh lusts against the spirit.

You don't do what you want to do. What you do, hopefully most of the time, but sometimes, you know, the idea is to get better at it, to get better at walking in the spirit, to walk in the spirit habitually. But even then you can still stumble.

So I believe Romans 7 is not describing an unbeliever and certainly not describing the ideal for the Christian. But is describing what the Christian life comes down to if you're not walking in the spirit. And when you are walking in the spirit, you do fulfill the law of your mind rather than the law of the flesh in your memory.

And that's what I think Romans 7 is about. Now, one other passage we need to take. To me, it's criminal to go this quickly through this material.

But let's face it, we get through Romans in two months, that is in two sessions. Four actually is pretty much a criminal enterprise to Romans 9 through 11. We can't read this in its entirety right now together, but we can summarize it.

Paul begins in the first five verses talking about his brethren, the Jews. Now, the reason

this comes up, I believe, is because at the end of chapter eight, he says something like in verse 28. All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

And someone's going to say, well, weren't the Jews called according to his purpose? How come it's not working out so well for them? How come Jesus came and saved a bunch of people? But the Jewish people, in general, typically are still unsaved. Aren't there promises God made to the Jews to save them? There are. In Isaiah, chapter 45, verse 17, it says Israel shall be saved in the Lord.

In Jeremiah 23, 6, I think it is. It says in his days, it's a messianic passage, in his days, Judah will be saved. In other words, the promise is the Messiah will come and he'll save Israel.

Now, Paul is saying that Jesus is the Messiah. He's come and someone's going to say, wait a minute. Wasn't he supposed to save Israel? How come the Jews in general do not accept Christ? How come the Jews in general are lost still? I mean, sure, there's some who are saved, who have received him, but certainly more than 95 percent of the Jews worldwide still reject Jesus Christ.

They're not saved. If he was the Messiah, why didn't he save them? That's the issue. I thought all things were supposed to work together for those that God called.

And he called them. How come? How come they're not saved? How come it's not working together for them? Paul says, well, let's talk about that. He says, I grieve over the fact that my brethren are not saved, my brethren, the Jews.

And God has invested heavily in them, he says. In verse four, he says, there are Israelites to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God and the promises of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is overall eternally blessed God. They've had all kinds of benefits.

And by the way. Well, I won't go into this because it raises a different controversy I won't get into. But the idea here is he's saying, yeah, God made these promises, these covenants.

He gave them the Torah. He he sent Christ to them. It's a it's it's a shameful waste.

That they're not saved. He said, I could wish myself a curse from Christ that that would save them. That's how much I want them saved.

And God wants them saved, too, by the way. But in verse six, he says, but it's not that the word of God has taken no effect. What word of God? He has in mind those scriptures that the Jews counted on, that the Messiah will come and he'll save Israel.

Well, Paul's saying the Messiah has come, but doesn't look like Israel saved. So has the word of God failed to come true? The promise that he'd save Israel has taken no effect. He says, no, it's not that that's it's not that the word of God has taken no effect, for they are not all Israel who are of Israel.

Now, what he's saying is, yes, there are promises of the salvation of Israel. But we need to know what is meant in those promises. Who is this Israel that these promises belong to? Not all who are of Israel are Israel.

Now, what he means by that is those who are of Jacob, those who are descended from Jacob or Israel. That's all the Jewish people. Not all of them are who God's talking about when he talks about Israel.

Every Jew is of Israel, but not all of them are Israel, Paul says. Now, he's going to explain himself here. But let me just say.

There are two very different views about where Paul's going in this argument. One is the dispensational view. And that is the view that Paul is saying, I know you're wondering why the Jews are not yet saved.

If Jesus is the Messiah, be patient. Someday they will be. In the end, all Israel will be saved.

They think he Paul is saying true Israel. These words of salvation, it hasn't come true yet, but it's you're just too early. It's going to be a while, maybe 2000 years.

And then at the end, then those promises will come true and all Israel be saved, just like the prophets. That's the dispensational view of Paul's argument in these next three chapters. Paul's answer is quite different than that.

He doesn't make any such reference to eschatology in the passage. He doesn't argue that there's that these people have been temporarily rejected, but they're going to turn around. It's not in there.

I know some people interpret some of the verses near the end of chapter 11 that way. But if you look at the words of the verses, they don't say that. And we will look at them.

But what is Paul saying that he's saying this? The promises coming Israel have not failed to come true. He says it outright in verse six. It's not that these promises have not taken effect.

They have the promises are, in fact, fulfilled or are are in the process of being fulfilled because it's a long process to bring all of Israel in. But he's saying there is an Israel within Israel. It's that remnant within Israel that God is promising to say.

Not every person who's Jewish by blood is Israel in terms of the promises God made.

God's promises are to the remnant of Israel. Actually, in the Old Testament prophecies, many of them say as much.

Sometimes they just say Israel be saved. Sometimes they say the remnant. It's always going to be the remnant, though, because there's always been the majority of Jewish people in every generation who worship either Baal or Moloch or something else in the Old Testament.

And a small remnant were faithful. It's true today. The small remnant follows Jesus.

They're the faithful remnant. What about the rest of them? Well, like they're like the Jews were in the days of Ahab and Jezebel. They're not following God.

They think they are, but they're they're doing so by rejecting the Messiah. You can't just make this up as you go. I can't make up your own religion as you go along.

When God sends the Messiah, you can't just say, well, do I want to go that way? Do I make up my own religion? I'll go with my own religion. That's what they're doing. They're not following Moses because that temple is destroyed.

You can't follow Moses without animal sacrifices and a priesthood and all that in the temple. That's not possible. Hasn't been possible since the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. The Jews made up their own religion after that that did not involve sacrifices.

It was a man-made religion. We call it Talmudism. They follow the Talmud.

It's also called Rabbinism. It's the rabbi's religion. They made the rabbinic religion.

It has some elements from the law of Moses, but then it has their own elements that they made up because they can't do most of what the law of Moses required them to do, which is the sacrificial system. And so they have a man-made religion. Now, just like Jezebel and Ahab led Israel into worshipping and Manasseh led Israel into worshipping wrong religion and wrong gods.

So most of the Jews today, they reject the Messiah. They've made up a religion of their own to replace it. It's always been that way.

It's always been the case that most Jews have been just like most Gentiles. But there have been a remnant within Israel who truly were faithful to God. They followed Elijah and Elisha.

They followed Jeremiah. They followed the prophets. They followed the Messiah when he came and became his people, his church.

But the thing is, Paul is saying these promises are in fact fulfilled in the remnant. In chapter 11, he goes so far as saying, God hasn't cast away his people whom he

foreknew. I'm a Jew and I'm saved.

I'm not cast away. Right. I mean, he makes a point.

And he says, even now, at this present time, there remains a remnant. He says in chapter 11 and verse five. Even so, then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Now, again, the dispensationalists think that Paul's message is essentially, yeah, it's true. Israel has not been saved. They will someday.

But this is all about eschatology. Paul doesn't say anything about eschatology. He says at this present time, there is a saved remnant.

That's the Israel. That is Israel. Remember, Jesus said to the Jews in John chapter eight, he said, I know you are descendants of Abram.

But if you are the children of Abraham, you do the works of Abraham. You don't deserve to be called the children of Abraham. You're of your father, the devil, he said.

The ones who do the works of Abraham, the faith of Abraham, they're the true Israel. Paul says not everyone who's Jewish is Israel. God made promises to save Israel.

He meant the faithful remnant of Israel. And in case anyone wonders whether Paul meant that, you see it in chapter nine, verse 27. He says, Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved.

He's quoting there Isaiah 10, 22. But the point here is this. This is Paul's argument.

He's not saying they're all going to be saved someday. But at the moment, you know, they're not. But some have managed to get in somehow.

No, he's saying you misunderstood the promises. You have thought the promises are that everyone who's descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is in this thing. Not so only those who are of faith are in this thing, Jew or Gentile.

And that's only a remnant of Israel that could be saved. Now, how he argues this in verses six and following, he says, but it's not that the word of God, I heard that they're not all Israel of Israel, verse seven, nor are they all children because they're just the seed of Abraham. But in Isaac, your seed should be called.

He says, now they think they're chosen because Abraham's their ancestor. But Abraham had a lot of kids that aren't chosen. Esau was descended from Abraham.

Ishmael descended from Abraham. Keturah, Abraham's second wife, had six children

who are descended from Abraham, but they're nobody. The Midianites, the Shulites and people like that.

No, only one son of Abraham of all the many was selected to carry on the family name. And he quotes it from Genesis in Isaac, your seed should be called only Isaac, not all the other sons of Abraham. Then verse eight, that is, those who are the children of the flesh, meaning people are physically descended from Abraham.

They are not. The children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. That's interesting.

Paul uses the term children of the promise because Paul says to the Galatians in Galatians four, says we like Isaac was are the children of the promise, children of the bond of the free one. He says, we're the children of the promise. Jews and Gentiles who are Christians are the children of promise.

Now, then you come to verse 10 and not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even our father, Isaac. Let's see what Paul's done. He said, not everyone descended from Abraham is really special because only Isaac was.

None of the other sons of Abraham. And even of Isaac's sons, there were two of those and only one of them was special. When she conceived by one man, even our father, Isaac, for the children not yet being born nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand not of works, but of him who calls.

It was said to her, the older she'll serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob, I have loved that Esau I've hated. Now, Esau and Jacob were both children of Abraham and Isaac.

So they were, you know, they were both equal as far as relationship to Abraham and Isaac, but only one was chosen and the other. Now, he doesn't carry this on down further because then, of course, Jacob, who was chosen, had 12 sons. And it was Judah who was chosen among them to be the one to carry on the messianic blessing.

You see what he's describing here is not people chosen to be saved or lost. That's important to know, because Calvinists like to say, let's talk about unconditional election. Some are elected to be saved.

Jacob was elected to be saved. Esau to be lost. The Bible nowhere tells us that Esau was lost.

We do not know that Esau died in unbelief. He did some bad things when he was younger. He sold his birthright.

That was a bad thing. That's the thing that's remembered against him in the book of Hebrews. He had carnal interest and sold his birthright for a bowl of punch.

But that was decades before he died. The later mentions of Esau, he seems like a good guy. He and Jacob were friends and they buried their dad honorably.

I mean, for all we know, Esau might be in heaven as much as Jacob. There's no question here of who's in heaven and hell. That's not what's being discussed.

Abraham was never told that his offspring would go to heaven. What was he told? He was told that through his offspring, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This is an earthly promise, not a heavenly promise.

Who's going to bring the Messiah into the world to bless all the nations? Abraham is and his seed. Well, which of Abraham's seed? Well, Isaac. Well, which of Isaac's sons? Well, Jacob.

Which of Jacob's? Well, Judah. Which of Judah's? David. What he's saying is the purpose, the promise God made to Abraham had nothing to do with going to heaven or hell.

Nothing to do with what we call personal salvation. This is not in the discussion. The promises God made had to do with an earthly destiny for this man whose seed was going to bring blessing to all the families of the earth through the Messiah.

And so the choice of Isaac wasn't a choice that Isaac would go to heaven and Israel was going to go to hell. The choice of Jacob is not that he's going to go to heaven. Esau is going to hell.

There's not the slightest suggestion of it anywhere in the Bible. What the choice was is, OK, the Messiah can't come through all these guys of the same generation. You got to pick one guy to be the one that the Messiah is going to come through.

That's the promise, the Abrahamic promise, going to be fulfilled through him. That's what Paul is talking about here. Also, by the way, this, you know, the children hadn't done good or evil and God chose one over the other and said, you know, the older shall serve the younger.

Jacob, I've loved you, Esau, I've hated. This is talking about men who became nations and it's the nations that became significant. At this present time in history, Jacob is not significant, but his nation became significant.

Esau's nation became significant, but they had different destinies. When he said the younger shall, the older shall serve the younger. This has nothing to do with salvation.

He's quoting from Genesis 25 and verse 23, I think it is. Am I right? Let's see here. Genesis 25, 23.

If you look at the context there, Rebecca is pregnant with twins. They're fighting inside of her. She says, what's up with that? She goes and inquires of the Lord.

And the Lord said this to her. Two nations are in your womb. Two peoples shall be separated from between your feet and the older shall serve the younger.

The older what? He talks about nations. The man Esau never served the man Jacob ever, ever. Jacob bowed down to Esau seven times later in his life.

But Esau never bowed to Jacob. When he says the older, which is Esau, shall serve the younger, which is Jacob. If this is about individuals, it was a lie.

It was a false prophecy. Esau never served Jacob. But it's talking about nations.

God said two nations are in your womb, two peoples. And the older will serve the younger. Esau's nation, Edom, will serve Jacob's nation, Israel.

And that did happen. Israel conquered Edom and had them under tribute. That materialized.

But this is not about individual people. This is about a nation chosen to be blessed by God so as to bring forth the promise he made to Abraham, namely the Messiah. The Messiah didn't come through Edom or Esau, he came through Jacob.

And the promise that is quoted from Genesis has nothing to do with afterlife destinies or eternal destinies. Only earthly destinies. Now what about that other verse he quotes in verse 13? Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.

Now this actually was not uttered while they were in the womb. This is in Malachi chapter 1. So the first thing Paul quotes is from the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis. And the second quote is from the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi.

Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated. But as you read on it says, speaking of Esau, And I laid his hills waste and desolate. He's talking about the Edomites.

The Edomites were wiped out. Israel was to but God restored Israel. That's what Malachi is referring to.

God has restored Israel at that point in time from Babylon, not the Edomites. God has shown preferential treatment to the Jews and not to the Edomites. This is not talking about two men.

It's not even talking about eternal life or eternal damnation. This is talking about God's fulfilling his purposes that he promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Through individuals, not everyone who is a descendant from Abraham or Isaac or Jacob had any special promises.

And that's why Paul says not all who are of Israel are Israel. When God made promises to Israel, he didn't mean everyone who was a descendant from Abraham or Isaac or Jacob.

Even in their generations.

There was only one person each generation that was really in the deal. So when people make this a doctrine of election to salvation or election to reprobation, their way off. He goes on and talks about how God selected Israel over Egypt and Israel's leader Moses over Pharaoh.

And then he comes to this. Verse 19. Well, verse 18.

Therefore, he has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills. He heartens. Well, of course, God has mercy on who he wants to have mercy on.

But the Calvinist says there's no reason. God just through sheer sovereignty selects some people have mercy and overturned and ignores others. No, the Bible says he gives he he resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Jesus said, bless her, the merciful. They shall obtain mercy. God shows mercy on who he wants to.

Who does he want to show mercy on? The humble, the merciful people of a certain sort. Now, the Calvinist says God doesn't see any difference between anyone. Everyone's totally depraved.

And therefore, he selects the elect without reference to anything that is in them, because none of them have any good in them at all. But the Bible says he does. If you're merciful, you'll obtain mercy.

If you're humble, you'll receive grace. Yeah, that's God's choice. He can decide which category he's going to bless and which categories not.

That's his business. He can make those choices and he can harden who he wants to harden. By the way, this is not suggesting that all people are hardened.

He's not a pharaoh. Pharaoh was an unusual case. God hardened his heart.

He heard in the Old Testament. God hardened a few other people's hearts, too, but not most people's hearts. Most people's hearts God hasn't hardened.

That's a special act of judicial judgment that he'd done on some very wicked people, including Pharaoh. But then he says in verse 19, you will say to me, then, why does he still find fault for who has resisted his will? Now, this these are two rhetorical questions. Why does God find fault is suggesting God shouldn't find fault.

Who has resisted his will is suggesting no one has resisted. I mean, that's that's what the rhetorical question is suggesting. Since no one has resisted his will, how can God find fault? He shouldn't.

That's the objector. They're saying that, Paul, are you saying that everything that happens is just God's sovereign decrees and no one has a choice? And how can God find fault? And the import of their question is, since this is so. Since no one can resist God's will, because God's will is always done and he's the one who foreordained it and predestined it, then he can't find fault legitimately.

Now, Paul's answer is, but indeed, oh, man, who are you to reply against God? Now, here's the Calvinist thinks that the objector is, in fact, correct. The objector has concluded from Paul said that no one resists God's will. And the Calvinist says that's true.

No one has. The objector has that right. But the objector, they say, has made a false inference from that, that therefore God cannot find fault because no one has resisted his will.

And that Paul's answer, who are you, oh man, to resist speaking against God? He's just saying, hey, this is God's business. None of your business. Shut up and sit down and be quiet because you've got no business answering against God.

In other words, they're saying, yeah, God does whatever he wants. He makes people do whatever he wants them to do. No one resists his will.

He still finds fault. That's not your problem. That's for God to sort out.

You just leave it and accept it. But that's not what's going on here. Paul doesn't agree with the objector on either point.

See, Calvinists think that he agrees with one of their points, but not the other. That he agrees with them saying no one has resisted God's will, but he doesn't agree with him saying, therefore, God can't find fault. No, Paul disagrees with both points.

They say no one has resisted God's will, but they do. They themselves are doing so. Who are you? You're resisting God.

You're speaking against God. What do you mean no one resists his will? And it's interesting how he states it as a rhetorical question, too. They say, well, who is resisting his will? Well, who are you? You're answering against God.

Isn't that resisting his will? Didn't Stephen say to the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 7, you people always resist the Holy Spirit. Doesn't it say in Luke chapter 7 and verse 30, the scribes and Pharisees rejected the will of God for themselves in not being baptized by John. Didn't Jesus say in Matthew 23, 37, I think it was 27, 37, I think it is.

He said, oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times I would have gathered you, but you would not. Yes, people resist God's will. Lots of people resist God's will.

Everybody sometimes resist God's will. God is not Paul is not saying, yeah, no one can

resist God's will. But hey, grin and bear it.

He's still going to find fault. It's a mystery. You know, how can you find fault? That's a mystery.

Just accept it. No, Paul is rejecting both objections. The objector is logical.

If indeed no one can resist God's will, then God can't reasonably find fault. Paul saying, but your whole proposition is wrong. You can resist.

Who are you? You're resisting God. You're your exhibit A of people resisting God. You're answering against God.

Who are you? You a piece of clay answering against the potter. Doesn't the potter have the right to do what he wants? Now, here's the thing. When he says in verse 21, does the potter have not power over the clay from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another to dishonor? The Calvinist thinks this means that God has just taken the clay of humanity and made a few little vessels for honor, a few vessels for dishonor.

And that's just his predestination and so forth. No, he says he's using an illustration of Isaiah and from Jeremiah. Jeremiah 18, especially where Jeremiah went to the potter's house.

Isaiah also uses the expression, Lord, we are the clay. You're the potter. Israel is the clay.

God is the potter. Can't the potter take Israel, the one lump of clay and make two different Israels from it? One for honor, one for dishonor. And and he could do so based on this is the faithful remnant of Israel.

I'm going to make vessels of honor from them. These are the apostate Israelites. I'm going to make them into a vessel of dishonor.

He doesn't talk about making lots of vessels, he's talking about two vessels. One lump of clay, which is Israel, two vessels. And so what Paul is saying here, if you Jews think that because you're Jews, then every promise God made to the Jews is yours.

You need to realize that not every Jew is a Jew in that sense. In fact, Paul said in Romans 2, 27, 28, 29, he is not a Jew who's one outwardly. Neither that circumcision, which is outward and of the flesh, but he is a Jew who's one inwardly.

And that circumcision, which is of the heart. So Paul has said being naturally Jewish doesn't make you a Jew as far as God's concerned. Being naturally Israelite doesn't make you an Israelite as far as God's concerned.

You have to be the faithful. You have to have the circumcised heart. You have to be the

faithful remnant.

And God can make those choices if he wants to. He's not obligated to make every part of the clay have the same destiny. If not, every part of the clay is the same.

He's got an unwieldy part of clay here. I'm going to just make a dog food bowl of that. And here's a really nice compliant bit of clay.

I'll make a vessel for honor out of that. That's what he does. Israel is two vessels.

The natural Israel is divided into two. The faithful remnant who are followers of Christ and the apostate. Okay.

Now there's much quotation of the Old Testament, much other stuff. Suffice it to say nothing Paul says in Romans 9 or 10 makes any predictions about a future for Israel. People sometimes think he does in chapter 11.

And we'll look at that real quickly and we'll be done. And I thank you for your patience. Chapter 11 is winding this whole thing up.

And in verse 20 says, I say, then has God cast away his people? Certainly not. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. God is not cast away his people whom he foreknew.

Or do you not know what the scripture has said of Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel saying, Lord, they've killed your prophets and torn down your altars. And I alone am left and they seek my life. But what does the divine response say to him? I have reserved for myself 7000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

Even so, then at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it's no longer by works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, then it's no longer grace.

And this last line that doesn't make sense is not in all translations. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect, that is the remnant, have obtained it. And the rest, the apostate, were hardened.

So he says Israel has two parts. Part of Israel is the elect who believe in God. The other part is the apostate.

The apostate will die and be lost. The remnant will die and be with God. And they will be used of God to fulfill his purposes in their lifetime.

Now, what the dispensationalist says about this is this. The opening verse, I say then, has God cast away his people? They want to stick the word permanently in there. Has God cast away his people permanently? Certainly not.

Now, you see, if you stick in the word permanently, he says certainly not. Then he means no, only for the time being. He's cast them away for the moment, but this is not permanent.

He's later going to gather them back. The only thing is Paul didn't say anything about permanently. He said God has not cast away his people whom he foreknew.

Where did you get that line? Back in Romans 8. Whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. That's the believers. Paul is one of them.

He says I myself am of the tribe of Israel. I'm an Israelite. I'm not cast away.

I'm part of his kingdom. I'm following Christ. I'm part of the Messiah's movement here.

And he says just like in Elijah's day, Elijah thought they were all gone too, but God had 7,000 remnants who hadn't bothered. That's how it is now, even at this present time. Verse 5, there's a remnant.

Paul's not talking about future things. He's not contrasting anything present with something in the future. Like now the Jews are rejected, but later they'll be accepted.

No, he's talking about at this present time. He's got no future thing in his purview here. He's saying not when will Israel be saved.

The question is how. This is how. By saving the remnant.

That is the fulfillment of the promise. He did promise Israel, but he meant the remnant. And he says I'm one of those.

There was a remnant in Elijah's day, not many. And there's a remnant now. And he says, so then Israel as a whole has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect, that is the remnant, have obtained it.

And the rest were hardened. So again, that doesn't say that's temporary. He didn't ask any questions about the future.

Right from the beginning in Romans 9, 6, he said, it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. He didn't say as the dispensation says, yes, the word of God has not taken effect yet, but it will. And in verse 1 of 11, he does not say, has God cast away his people permanently? As if to say, yes, the Jews are in fact cast away now, but not permanently.

But Paul says, no, he has not cast them away. The ones he foreknew. Permanently or otherwise.

There is, there's never been a time when God has cast away the faithful of his people. He says, I'm one of them. Elijah was one of them.

There were 7,000 in Elijah's day. There's some now. They have found what the others of Israel have not found.

Now, he then goes on and quotes some Old Testament passages about how God has blinded them because of their rebellion and so forth. And he says in verse 11, I say that have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not. That is to say, is the whole effect of their stumbling simply their downfall? Is there no upside to this? He says, no, there's an upside.

Through their fall, God has used that to provoke them to jealousy. And to provoke them to jealousy, God's salvation has come to the Gentiles. So the Gentiles are coming in as a result of their fall.

And God hopes to use that as, you know, to make the Jews jealous. This is not talking about eschatology. Any Jew living at any time could be jealous.

Say, wow, I used to be God's people. Now these Gentiles are, they know God and I don't. You know, maybe I should come to Jesus.

There's no, there's no predictions here. It's just saying that God is using the inclusion of the Gentiles to render Jews jealous. Maybe they'll get saved too, as a result could be.

Now, if their fall is the richest for the world and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness? Now, most people think this means if the Jews fall, brought riches of the Gentiles in, how much more will the Jews coming in? But that's not actually said there. It says now if there, that is, the Jews fall is richest for the world. And there, the Jews failure is richest for the Gentiles.

How much more their, whose their fullness? Well, the nearest antecedent is the word Gentiles. And interestingly enough, Paul is talking as if it's a given that their fullness will happen. Whose? There's no promise previous in the Romans or anywhere else that the Jews are going to come in.

He's made no such prediction, but he does predict in verse 25 that the fullness of the Gentiles will come in. The last line in verse 25, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. He speaks of the fullness of the Gentiles.

He never speaks of the fullness of the Jews. And so when he says, if there, that is, the Jews failure is richest to the Gentiles, how much more their, that is, the Gentiles fullness? For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh, and save some of them. Now here's another verse they use.

For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Who's there in the second case? Now, I won't go into this in

detail, but he could be saying, if the world who is being reconciled by their being cast away is accepted, that's going to be like life from the dead. Maybe it's even talking about the resurrection of the dead will happen when this has been fulfilled, I'm not sure. Then he says, but if the first fruit is holy, the lump is holy.

If the root is holy, so are the branches. Now he's got an image of an olive tree here, very important. The olive tree with broken branches comes from Jeremiah 11.16. He says to Judah, you were called a green olive tree.

Your branches have been broken off. He's talking about branches, Jews who were taken into Babylon at that time. But Israel is the olive tree.

Paul picks up that image from Jeremiah and says, okay, if some of the branches were broken off and you being a wild olive tree, meaning Gentiles, were grafted in among them, among who? That is, the branches are still on the tree. Some of the Jewish branches have been broken off, we'll see, because of unbelief. Some of them were not.

Some of the Jewish branches have never been anywhere else but there. They were faithful remnant. And the Gentiles who have become faithful now are grafted in among the Jews who are faithful.

So you've got a tree comprised of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, which is an entity we also call the church, which Paul is identifying with Israel, the olive tree. He says, do not boast against the branches, but if you boast, remember that you do not support the root, the root supports you. You will say, then, branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.

Well said, because of unbelief, they were broken off. And you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

For if God did not spare the natural branches, he may not spare you either. Therefore, consider the goodness and the severity of God on those who fell severity, but toward you goodness, if you continue in his goodness, otherwise you will also be cut off. So even believers can be cut off if they don't continue in Christ.

Just like the Jews who didn't believe have been cut off. He says you can too, if you don't continue. But you have received goodness now.

So you really are a Christian now. You are partaking of the root and the fatness of all the trees, says in verse 17. You're really part of this tree.

You're really part of Israel. You're part of Christ, his body. And, but you can be cut off from that if you don't continue.

And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to

graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree, which was wild by nature, and were grafted in contrary to nature, to the good olive tree, how much more will these who are natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? Now some take that as a prediction.

He's not saying it's a prediction. He's already said it's conditional in the previous verse. If they do not remain in unbelief, they'll be grafted in.

He's not saying that's going to happen. But if they don't remain, they can get saved too. A Jew that's been cut off from unbelief can repent and become a Christian.

He can be in there again. He's not, just like we who are Gentiles can be cut off. What he's saying is being on the tree is entirely a matter of believing in Christ or not.

A Jew who believes in Christ is a natural branch still in the tree. A Gentile who believes in Christ is from a different tree, but grafted into that tree now. And it's now part of Israel.

If that Gentile doesn't remain, well he'll be removed from the tree. If the unbelieving Jew doesn't stay unbelieving but repents, he can be in the tree. It's all, it's a principle.

It's not a prediction. And he says, because if God could grant you, how much more will he grant a repentant Jew access again? Sure. Now this is the big question.

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. Now this is the first time that we have a word like until, which sounds like it might look forward to something in the future. It doesn't have to, but it might.

And this is how people understand this verse. Let me read it inserting the words that the dispensationalists insert in their minds. Read along in the verse and let me read it how they would read it.

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that temporary hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in, and then all Israel will be saved. Now what that would mean is that there's a temporary rejection of Israel at the moment, until the Gentiles are all in. Then Israel will no longer be rejected, but they'll come in too.

So the Jews and the Gentiles will all be in. But he doesn't say any of those words. He doesn't say temporary.

He said hardening in part has happened to Israel. That's not temporary. He's just said in verse 7 of the same chapter, What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks, the elective to inherit, but the rest were hardened.

Part of Israel have been hardened. There's no suggestion that it's temporary. But what about until the fullness of the Gentiles become in? The word until here, I believe, refers to purpose, not duration.

The reason what God is doing in the meantime is bringing in Gentiles. Now God sometimes uses the word until when he doesn't mean what we think of that word meaning. For example, when he's told Jacob, I will not leave you or forsake you until I have fulfilled everything I promised you.

Okay, does he say, then after I fulfilled my promise, I'm going to leave you and forsake you? No, he's just saying that, you know, as you're anticipating me fulfilling everything I promised you, don't think that anytime during then I will have left you or forsaken you. And that's like this. Until the fullness of the Gentiles have come in, don't think that a partial hardening of Israel will cease to be.

There will always be a hardened part of Israel. And in verse 36, he doesn't say, and then all Israel come in. The word is so or thus in the Greek.

It means in this way. He doesn't say at that time, but in this way. That's the whole point.

His whole discussion is not about when will the promises be fulfilled, but how, in what way are they fulfilled? They're fulfilled by God blinding the unbelieving Jews and retaining only the branches that have not been cut off. Then adding to them the believing branches, the Gentiles coming in. And in this way, all Israel, the whole tree with Gentile and Jewish branches is saved.

This is how he's saving Israel, by saving the remnant and adding to them the believing Gentiles. That's what Paul says. This is just the summary of the olive tree illustration, which doesn't predict anything about the future of Israel, nor does he predict anything about the future of Israel here.

And then he quotes some scripture about it. And then, you know, he says in verse 20, concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election, they are beloved for the sake of their fathers. Now, this verse is sometimes taken to mean that Jews still are special, more than Gentiles to God.

But I think they misunderstand because first of all, there's some words added. You see them in italics in the text, which means they're not in the Greek. Literally, what Paul said is concerning the gospel, enemies for your sake, but concerning the election, beloved for the sake of their fathers.

If you know where it says they are, that's in italics, that's not in the Greek. It's not talking about the same group. The ones who are enemies are, of course, the unbelieving Jews.

Who are the election? Well, if you look back at verse 7, it says, what then Israel has not

obtained what seeks the election in the Greek, it's the election have obtained it and the rest were hardened. The remnant are called the election. Now, this word is found in both places and only in these two places in Romans 11, that he refers to the remnant in verse 7 as the election.

He uses the same word in verse 28 to contrast them from the ones who are the enemies. The words they are do not belong there. Concerning the gospel, enemies for your sake.

Just a rather abrupt denunciation of the unbelieving Jews. But concerning the election, which is the term he uses for the remnant, beloved for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. God has not taken away his gift and calling from Israel and the remnant has come into it.

And any other Jew can if they want to, as well as Gentiles. He hasn't he hasn't revoked the calling. They're still called.

It's as far as you were once disobedient to God and have now obtained mercy through their disobedience. Even so, these also have now been disobedient that through the mercy shown to you, they also may obtain mercy for God has committed them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all. What he means by that, I think, is this.

Their disobedience has given the Gentiles a chance to become obedient Christians. Now, God would like to see our obedience become an avenue for bringing them around. We both had our chance to be on the outs with God.

Israel was God's people when the Gentiles were the enemies. Now, many Gentiles who become Christians are God's people while Israel are the enemies. So all need mercy.

No one's going to be in on any terms other than mercy. No one's going to be saved because of their good works or they're keeping the law or anything that God has to have mercy on all. He's commanded them all Jews and Gentiles to disobedience so that he might have mercy on all.

That is to say, in saving anyone, Jew or Gentile, it's going to be mercy all over. Because no one has any innate right, the Jews nor the Gentiles, to be saved. Then he just rhapsodizes about the wisdom of God and there he ends it.

And there we have to end it. Run quite long. I didn't tell Paul how much to write, so that's his fault.