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Romans Overview (Part 3)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this overview of the book of Romans, Steve Gregg highlights the two main sections of the book, namely theological and practical. The first eight chapters focus on the gospel, while chapters 9-11 concentrate on Israel and whether God's promises to them have been fulfilled. Throughout the book, Paul addresses the idea of Jewish superiority, emphasizing that being faithful to God and doing good is more important than following the law. The practical section of the book deals with relationships and different convictions within the church, with Paul emphasizing the importance of loving one's neighbor and doing no harm to them in the final chapter.

Transcript

We are going to finish Romans tonight, one way or another, and I have a plan. And that is to have two sessions, as we sometimes do, with a break in between. In the first session, I'm just going to continue as we began to, but I kind of got bogged down.

It's hard to just breeze through Romans when there's so much to comment on. But I'm going to breeze through the book and give the overview. And then I want to come back, after we take a break, anyone who wants to stay for that.

In the second one, we're going to be covering some of the more difficult passages, three in particular, if not more. One of them would be Romans 5, verses 12 to the end, which is one of the most difficult passages in the entire Bible, judging from most commentators' opinions, and I think they're probably correct. Also, the latter part of Romans 7, which has a variety of opinions about what Paul said he does, the things he hates.

There are very different opinions about what he's talking about there. And then, of course, what he talks about Israel in Romans 9 through 11. These are probably the three parts of Romans that I think are the most challenging to most people to understand what Paul is saying.

And so I want to just take the second session to just look at those three sections. But first, I want to go through the remainder of the book, which we began last time. We had an introduction to Romans, and we had two sessions then, too.

In our second session, we began to survey the book, but as I said, it's hard to survey Romans, especially the first three chapters are hard to survey because I am mindful of the fact that almost all teachers and almost all commentators I'm aware of take it a certain way, which I have to say I was taught to take it that way, and I took it that way for the most part, uncritically, until having taught through Romans a number of times, I began to see a different pattern from what I've been taught, and now I can't see it differently. I mentioned that Romans divides into some major sections. The two major sections are the theological portion and the practical portion.

This is true of many of Paul's letters. Ephesians divides half and half that way. The first three chapters of Ephesians is theological.

The last three chapters are practical. Colossians, same way. Colossians, first two chapters theological.

The last two are practical. Romans doesn't divide exactly into half that way. In fact, Romans is much more theological.

The first 11 chapters are theological, and then Paul crams a whole bunch of practical things into verses, chapters 12 and 13 and 14, largely. Chapters 15 and 16 are pretty much winding it down. He sends greetings, talks about his travel plans.

There are interesting things to comment on in those chapters, but he definitely is winding down the main themes of the book. But for the most part, chapters 1 through 11 are theological, and chapters 12 through, I'd say, 14, part of 15, are the practical application. Now, of the first portion, that divides into two very different portions, too.

Of the theological section, the first 11 chapters, the first eight chapters definitely are different in direction and orientation than chapters 9 through 11. Chapters 9 through 11 are still within the theological discussion of the book, but they are focused on the subject of Israel, and how is it that God has made certain promises to Israel, which do not appear to have been fulfilled. At least, they have not been fulfilled in the manner that Israel hoped they would be.

And Paul's explanation of that difficulty is in Romans 9 through 11, and that's how he closes the theological portion of the book. But chapters 1 through 8 is also theological, and he hasn't even touched on that subject there. Instead, most commentators would agree that Paul's dealing in the first eight chapters with the gospel itself.

He introduces the gospel as his theme in verse 16 of chapter 1, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God to salvation, to all who believe, to the Jew first, and also the Greek. And then in the next verse, he says, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

And so the righteousness of God, we could say that is definitely a major theme in the

first eight chapters, especially the earliest portion. Now, almost all commentators see the first eight chapters of Romans as a section of such great magnitude that it's worthy of a treatment by itself. Even one commentator just wrote a commentary on the first eight chapters and just left the rest undone because the first eight chapters are considered so important.

And again, so important as a presentation of the gospel. Many people believe, since Paul had not yet visited Rome when he wrote this, and they had not heard the gospel from his own lips, that he is writing an epistle particularly to present the gospel, not to people who'd never heard the gospel, because he addresses it to the saints who are in Rome. So they're obviously Christians.

They obviously have heard the gospel. But some say, well, Paul wanted to expound the gospel as his own particular way of presenting it. He was coming to Rome, and he wanted them to be forewarned of what his message was going to be.

They already had a church there, already had preaching and teaching there in the church, but he wanted to acquaint them with specifically his take on the gospel. Now, I don't think that Paul's take on the gospel is really any different than anyone else's in the Bible. And although it is true that the gospel is certainly presented in the book of Romans, I don't see Romans quite in the same way that some do, because many commentators say that Romans is the least personal of the epistles of Paul.

And this is probably true, apart from the last chapter, chapter 16, where he greets a bunch of his friends, who he knows personally. Apart from that chapter, there's nothing personal, really, that he doesn't address any situations that are going on in the church directly. He doesn't mention any people directly.

Again, he has not been to that church before. They know of him, he knows of them, and he has a lot of friends that he's met elsewhere who have now moved to Rome and are in the church there, so he greets them in the final chapter. But until he gets to the final chapter, you really have something more like a treatise than a personal letter.

And thus, Romans is, no doubt, the least personal of his letters. So impersonal, in fact, that some say it's not even, as Paul's other letters appear to be, what we call an occasional document, meaning occasioned by something. Most of Paul's letters, perhaps all of them, are occasional, which means that there is something going on in the church that has occasioned his writing it.

He sees a need to address something. He wouldn't have perhaps written these letters if not for this problem that had to be addressed. Now some say, well, Romans is the only one of his epistles that really isn't an occasional document.

It's more like a theological treatise. He could send it anywhere. It'd be equally helpful to

any church at any time.

And in many respects, that could be probably true. But I disagree in the suggestion that it is not an occasional document. I believe it is addressing a problem in the Church of Rome.

True, the same problem might be found in many churches besides the Church of Rome. But it was definitely a problem in the Church of Rome. Now those who see this as more of a generic, just an unoccasional presentation of the gospel usually break those first eight chapters into smaller sections.

The first three chapters, at least up to verse 21 in chapter 3, are considered to be laying out the problem that the gospel solves. And the problem that the gospel solves is sin. It is generally argued that in chapter 1 he condemns the Gentile world of sin.

In chapter 2, he condemns the Jewish world of sin. And in chapter 3, he summarizes that, as he says in chapter 3, verse 9, we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they're all under sin. So again, the common way of looking at this, and I'm going to have a slightly different take on this, but the common way is to see that Paul is speaking about the Gentiles in chapter 1, the Jews in chapter 2, and in chapter 3 he summarizes Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, as he says in chapter 3, verse 23.

So having laid out the problem, the problem is sin, he goes on to talk about how sin occasions death. And eventually he gets to chapter 6, verse 23, the wages of sin is death. And this is what we call, at least some people call, the Romans' road.

People who do personal evangelism often follow a train through Romans. First Romans 3.23, then Romans 6.23, eventually maybe Romans 8.1 and 2, and then you get to Romans 10.9 and so forth. So, you know, it's the moving through Romans.

Many people have used this as a template for presenting the points of the gospel in proper order. And the fact that they appear in Romans in that order, which is useful for that, it only goes to confirm the notions that some people have, that Paul's just really laying out a gospel sermon, really, or a gospel treatise. But I believe there's something else going on in these first chapters.

And I mentioned in our introduction, this was written probably in 57 or 58 AD, as Paul was, I believe, running from Corinth in this case, and on his way to Jerusalem, where he unexpectedly got arrested. And then he was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years. Then he took ship to Rome, got shipwrecked, and ended up under house arrest in Rome for two years.

And that's the last we know of Paul from the Book of Acts, because the Book of Acts ends with Paul sitting under house arrest in Rome for two years. And that's the end of the

Book of Acts. Of course, there was more to Paul's story, but it's not written out for us in the historical narratives.

We can deduce some things from his latest epistles, which are the pastoral epistles, the epistles he wrote to Timothy and Titus. He does mention places in Timothy and Titus that he had been, and sometimes that he had taken them with him, which we have no record of Paul going to those regions in the Book of Acts at all. So the assumption is that when Paul, after Acts closes and Paul is awaiting his trial in Rome, that trial turned out well for him, and he was released.

In fact, in 1 Timothy, excuse me, in 2 Timothy, he says that he was at his first trial. He said, no one stood with him, but all abandoned him. But he said, but the Lord stood with me, and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion, which might mean that he would have been fed to the lions had he been found guilty by Nero, or maybe Nero himself was considered the lion.

But in any case, there is a suggestion there that Paul did stand trial after the close of the Book of Acts. He was acquitted. He did travel some other places that are mentioned in the pastoral epistles.

Then he was arrested again in 2 Timothy. He again is arrested. And he's in prison again when he writes 2 Timothy, and he does not expect to get out that time.

He says, I'm ready to be offered up. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and to not only me, but all who love his appearing, he's expecting to die. I've run the good race.

I fought the good fight, he says. So he's kind of closing down his life in 2 Timothy. But Romans was written before any of these imprisonments happened.

He was at liberty. He had been in jail before in certain places, but not for long periods of time. And he was traveling, hoping to go to Rome after a visit to Jerusalem.

Now, I said this was probably 57 or 58 AD. There are a few other opinions about the possible date, but they're all right around there. I mean, some might think 56 or something like that, but I think 58 is 57 or 58 most would agree.

But what we know happened in Rome in the year 49 or 50 was during the reign of Claudius Caesar. And we know that he was upset because of riots and disturbances that were caused in Rome over Christ. And as a result of these, he kicked all the Jews out of Rome.

They had to leave. They'd live somewhere else. All the Jews.

Now, this would suggest that since it was over strife over Christ, that just as we see

happening in many of the other places that Paul went, the Jews in those towns stood up trouble against Paul in the gospel and over the matter of the gospel in Christ. And sometimes the authorities in Thessalonica and some other places in Corinth were a little impatient with the Jews for causing this trouble. Apparently, Claudius had the same problem with the Jews in Rome, but this is before Paul got there.

There were Christians in Rome, obviously, because that's what this conflict is over. But when when Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome, the church there would have had some Jews and some Gentiles in his largely a Gentile city, though in almost every church, the original members were Jews. So at the time that Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome, the church was no doubt some Jews and some Gentiles, but all the Jews had to leave.

Priscilla and Aquila were among the Christian Jews who had to leave Corinth. It says that in Acts that they were banished by Claudius. And the Roman historians also mentioned Claudius doing this.

I think Josephus even mentions it. I know that another Roman historian does. So that Claudius did this, we know is around 49 or 50 A.D. And certain Jewish Christians, along with the rest of the Jews, had to leave Rome.

If you were Jewish, you couldn't stay. That means the church in Rome for a period of time was all Gentile. It had been, you know, its original members no doubt were Jewish.

And then Gentiles had joined them. Then the Jews are gone, probably for years. Claudius died a few years later, and after his death, it is assumed that the Jews who wished to went back to Italy.

We know Priscilla and Aquila did because Paul ran into them originally in Corinth because they had been banished from Rome. But when he wrote Romans, they were back in Rome. And he sends greetings to them in chapter 16 to Priscilla and Aquila and the church that is in their house.

So people like them, Jewish people who had been banished from Rome, did go back. But when Jewish Christians returned to Rome, which would be prior to the writing of this epistle, probably only a few years prior, they came back to a church that had been very exclusively Gentile for some years. The Jewish influence had been gone because the Jews had been gone.

And the Jews, of course, tended, as we know from the church in Jerusalem's example, tended to be more interested in keeping dietary laws and festivals and things like that that the Jews had always been raised doing. And Paul never had any problem with the Jews doing that. He just didn't want the Gentiles to be made to do that.

But the Gentiles had no interest in doing those things, which means that when the Jewish

believers came back to Rome and, of course, became part of the church that had been for some years strictly Gentile, there were some cultural issues because the Gentiles didn't care to eat a kosher diet. The Jews did. The Gentiles didn't care to keep festivals and holy days.

The Jews wanted to. And this would be like taking a modern, you know, Messianic synagogue and merging it with a Calvary chapel or something like that. And, you know, you'd certainly have this stark difference in cultures and assumptions about the law and about Judaism.

It is to that tension that Paul writes, I believe. So that's why I think it is an occasional document. I think there was you can see there's tension.

Some of the places you see this, for example, in Chapter 14, where Paul mentions these very differences in the church in Chapter 14, verse one, he says, Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes or doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things. He who is weak eats only vegetables.

Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat. Let not him who does not eat judge him who eats. For God has received him.

Who are you to judge another? Verse five. One person esteems one day above another. Another esteems every day alike.

Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. Now he's saying some of you people want to restrict your diet and restrict your activities on certain holy days. Others see no need for that kind of thing.

Well, that's causing problems. Don't judge each other. Don't despise each other.

Give liberty to each other. Say, which obviously suggests that was something that they needed to hear that they needed to do. Likewise, in Romans chapter 11, Paul tells the Gentiles not to be proud in looking down on the Jews in the church or even outside the church.

He said in Chapter 11, verse 18, speaking to the Gentiles, he says, Do not boast against the branches, meaning the Jewish branches. But if you do both, remember, you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say them 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. Now, these Gentiles apparently were tending to be haughty and kind of looking down on the Jews.

Now, why would you look down on them? Of course, these were the unbelieving Jews.

He says the branches that were broken off because of unbelief. But he specifically indicates that the Gentiles need to be aware of thinking they're better. Now, I won't go into all that I want to say here, because I talked about some of this last time.

The main thing I want to point out is that I believe in chapters one through three, Paul's focus is not first on the Gentiles, then on the Jews. But with only a slightly alteration, I believe it's all about the Jews. I believe that what he's addressing is the fact that the Jews have been raised all their lives with the idea that because they were circumcised and the Gentiles were not.

Because they, the Jews, had the Torah and they alone were given that privilege by God. But the Gentiles were not. That the Jews felt simply by being Jewish, they were better than Gentiles.

And this, whether the Gentiles were Christians or not, they just, there was something about the Jewish mind that felt that they were just better because they were Jewish. Not because they kept the law, but because they had it. Not because they lived better than the Gentiles, but because they were circumcised and the Gentiles were not.

Because they belonged to the chosen people. Now, what Paul has to argue with them is this. You know, it's not that you have the law, that's not what matters.

You have to do the law if you're going to be better than someone else. And he says that in exactly those words. In chapter 2, he says, verse 13, he says, For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

And he says in verse 17 of chapter 2, Indeed, you are called a Jew, and you rest on the law, and you make your boast in God, that you know his will, and that you approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, that is, you Jews who think this way about the Gentiles, do you not teach yourselves? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob idols? A temple scooting. Now, notice he's trying to dress down the snobbish Jewish mentality that we have the law.

We know things the Gentiles don't have. We are the wise. We're the teachers of the foolish babes, the Gentiles.

They need to come to us to know what's going on because we know and we are the people of God. We make our boast in the law, he says. He says, but yeah, but do you steal? Do you commit adultery? Those are things your law tells you not to do.

And by the use of the rhetorical question, he's implying some of them do. Now, this is a very important thing for us to know. We think very much in individualistic terms.

The Jews did not. The Jews thought of themselves as a race or a class that were better than other races and classes, not because every Jew behaved well, but because every Jew had the law and was circumcised. And just being circumcised made you a part of the superior people.

Everyone else was a lesser breed without the law. They were filthy, uncircumcised. And so what Paul is saying, yeah, you guys do have the law.

You always have had the law and you should have benefited more than you did from having the law. But the truth is, you guys still do these other things. Now, there no doubt would be a number of Jews reading this where he said, do you commit adultery? Do you steal? Or they could probably say very honestly, no, I don't.

Because not everyone steals. Not everyone commits adultery. Those are things that some people do, but some people avoid.

And I'm sure there are many devout Jews who did avoid it. And therefore, you might think, well, then then Paul's rhetorical question is going to just bounce off them like water off the duck's back. It's not going to make them feel convicted.

But it is that would only be true if he's speaking to them as having an individual mindset. An individual Jew might say, no, I don't steal. So there, Paul.

No, I don't commit adultery. So there. But he knows the Jew knew, as we do not instinctively know, that he thought he was better mostly because he was a Jew, not because of the specific fact he didn't commit adultery or steal.

He knew that some Jews do those things. And that means that Jews, by being Jewish, aren't necessarily better because you can find Jews who do commit adultery. You can find Jews who do steal.

In other words, if you're taking pride in your race, being part of the chosen race, you've got to admit there's people in that race who do bad things just like the Gentiles do. And therefore, having the law didn't do them that much good. If you look at Chapter three, verse one, he says, what advantage then has the Jew or what profit is there in circumcision? He says much in every way.

The Jews had a great advantage, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. It means the scriptures. They had the scriptures.

What a tremendous advantage they had over the Gentiles. But in verse nine, he says, what then are we better than they? Meaning are we Jews better than the Gentiles? Not at

all. No, we have we had advantages they didn't have, but we're not any better than they are because we didn't live up to our privileges.

And he quotes like six passages, six or seven, something like that there in Romans 3, 10 through 18. That are all passages in the Psalms and Isaiah, which condemn sinners among the Jews. He says, as it is written in verse 10, there's no one righteous, no, not one.

There's none who seeks God. There's none who understands their throat is an open tomb. The poison of asbestos under tongues, their mouth is full of cursing and bitters, blah, blah, blah.

And then in verse 19, after he's made all those quotes, he summarizes. Now we know that what the law says, it says to those who are under the law. Who are they? The Jews.

Well, what law? These passages he's referring, he's summarizing these as the law, you know, the Jewish scriptures. These are from the Jewish scriptures. They are not describing Gentiles.

David and Isaiah were describing their own nation. They were describing their own fellow Jews. And they use the most, you know.

You know, severe. Criticisms of them that you could you could make these same statements about Gentiles. Paul's not denying that Paul's not denying that Gentiles are like this, too.

But he's point out that's irrelevant to his point. He doesn't need to convince the Jews that the Gentiles are this bad. What they're pretending is that they're not as bad.

But these are all statements about Jewish people. By Jewish prophets. So what the law says, it's speaking to those who are under the law.

So that the whole world may be condemned before God. And so what he's saying is being Jewish doesn't help that much. I mean, it's an advantage if you're raised knowing the law of God.

That certainly gives you a leg up. But it doesn't count for good if you don't obey. It just a bad the Gentiles.

Now, having said all that, I just want to say about chapter one. I went through this last time. That's what took up all our time last time.

That many times when Paul talks about those who knew God. But did not wish to retain the knowledge of God. And they, you know, they changed the glory of the incorruptible God to the image of men and animals and birds.

And then God gave them over to their own lusts. And God gave them over to a reprobate mind. This description, which is in Romans chapter one.

Verses 18 through 32. This is the passage that most commentators and Bible teachers. This is where he's describing the Gentiles.

Because he first, they say, indicts the Gentiles in chapter one. Then the Jews in chapter two. We've seen in chapter two he does indict the Jews.

And in chapter three. But I'm suggesting in chapter one, he doesn't really have the Gentiles in mind. Not that these things would not be true of the Gentiles.

But they were more true of the Jews. And it was seen by the fact that Paul uses language and phrases. In his description of these people.

That the Old Testament uses of the Jews. The very idea that God gave them over to their lusts. That's a statement from the Psalms.

Talk about Israel. How God gave them over to their lusts. And to do abominable things.

He says they knew God. But they suppress the knowledge of the truth in their unrighteousness. And wrath has come.

He says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them. Over in 1 Thessalonians 2. Paul says that the Jews. They not only prevented Paul from.

They didn't want the gospel. They prevented Paul from preaching to the Gentiles. He said the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

They were certainly suppressing the truth in their unrighteousness. And he talks. He uses a great number of things.

I went through them in detail last time. And they are in the notes. If you have the notes on Romans there.

There's a little chart there that shows. The parallels between what Paul said in Romans 1. And their Old Testament equivalents. Which means.

Paul is not saying he's talking about the Jews in chapter 1. Because he doesn't want their guard up. He wants them to think he's talking about the Gentiles. So he doesn't mention these people having the law.

He mentions these people. You know the things that people can know about. God can be seen from the things he's made.

Anyone can see there's a God. They're without excuse. But he then goes on and talks about this corruption.

This increasing spiral of corruption. That they are so evil. And he expects the Jews to say.

Yeah that's the Gentiles he's talking about. They made idols. They're filthy idolaters and so forth.

But in chapter 2 verse 1. After he said all that. He says. Therefore you are inexcusable O man.

Whoever you are who judge. For in whatever you judge another. You condemn yourself.

For you who judge practice the same things. Now. When David sinned with Bathsheba.

Nathan the prophet wanted to confront him about that. But he didn't come up and say. David you sinned with Bathsheba.

David is not in a humble state of mind at that point. He probably would have been. You know resistant.

Probably would have made excuses. But Nathan came and said. There was this man who had.

A lot of sheep. And there's another man who had only one sheep. And the man with a lot of sheep.

Had a guest come. And he wanted to feed him sheep that night. So he went and stole.

The one sheep of the neighbor. Now Nathan comes as if he's presenting a legal case. For David to adjudicate.

David said the man shall die. That might seem like a rather severe. You know judgment for someone who just stole a sheep.

But David had been a shepherd. And you know. The shepherds lay down their lives.

Trying to keep people from stealing their sheep. And animals. David had wrestled a bear and a lion.

To keep one of his sheep from being stolen. Someone walks up and takes your sheep. And doesn't need it.

And he's got a lot of them himself. That makes a shepherd's blood boil. And he said that man should die.

And Nathan said you're the man. Because I just described you. But in a parable.

I described you in terms that would not make you defensive. So that you could judge objectively. And you've just given the correct judgment against yourself.

Jesus did the same thing in the parable. In chapter 21 of Matthew. Of the vineyard and the vineyard keepers.

How they killed all the servants. And then when the son came they killed him too. And Jesus said now what will the owner of the vineyard do to those who killed his son.

And his listener said oh he'll miserably destroy those wicked men. And lease his vineyard out to others who will bring forth the fruits in their seasons. And Jesus said yeah therefore the kingdom of God is taken from you.

And given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it. You're the man. And Paul is doing that with the Jews here I believe.

He is describing the Jews own behavior. Without reference to anything that's distinctly. Sets it off as Jewish.

If he mentioned the law or circumcision that would give the game away. He just talks about you know they knew God. They knew there's a God.

Anyone can see that from the creation. They didn't want to remember God. They made idols.

They worshipped idols. They became sexually corrupt. They became sexually perverted.

They became as bad as you can be. And the Jewish readers expect to be reading. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Those Gentiles are everything you're saying and more Paul. And then he snaps the track. Therefore you Jew.

Are inexcusable because you who condemned those people. Who do such things. You're them.

You're the man. I just described you. Your own scriptures testify that this is what your people did.

And again this is part of Paul's way of saying. You think that being Jewish is better than being a Gentile. Well it could have been because you had more light than they had.

But you didn't come to the light. You didn't obey the light. Your nation national history is fraught with idolatry.

Rebellion against God. Judgment that God had to bring upon you. Sometimes the prophet said they'd become more corrupt than the Canaanites and the pagans around them.

So I mean their perversion was very bad. So again Paul I think is in the first three

chapters addressing a particular thing. And that is a Jewish sense of snobbery.

Now we might say was it was to say this to the Christian Jews. I think that the Christian Jews. At this point before Paul came to Rome.

Were probably not identifying themselves completely separate from the Jewish community in general. I can't say this for sure but we do see in Jerusalem. This is the case James leading the church there.

They kept they went to the temple. They were zealous for the law. Why? Well they lived in a Jewish society.

They're Jewish. Their identity has always been Jews from the day they're born before they were Christians. Now they're Christians but now they're just Jews who embrace the Messiah.

As far as they're concerned they're still Jews. And so they feel a solidarity with their Jewish people. Just like many Jews today do who become Christians.

The messianic movement is generally speaking a movement of people who as Jews. They don't want to just identify as Christians. They want to identify as Jews who are completed Jews or Jews who are have found the Messiah.

They want to share in the Jewish community in a way while they're still Christians. And I think that would be the way it was here probably after Paul came. That might have attitude might have been challenged a little more but.

But there's no reason that they would have specifically made it such a distinction between themselves. That is the Christian Jews are the unbelieving Jews. Because I'm sure the Christian Jews just saw every unbelieving Jew as a potential messianic too.

They haven't seen Jesus yet but they will. You know they're Jews. They're part of Abraham's seed.

They're like us. And so Paul addresses the whole idea in these chapters that being Jewish is somehow in itself better than being Gentile. Which he says it is not.

More advantage. Yes. But it didn't turn out better.

Now in Chapter 3 at the end there he has definitely said that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Meaning Jews and Gentiles as well. But he didn't have to make he didn't have to devote any ink to proving that the Gentiles were sinners.

Both the Gentile Christians and all Jews knew that pagans are sinners. I mean the pagan world was just full of idolatry and immorality and disgusting abominations. And the Gentiles who had gotten converted they recognized that.

They didn't have to be told what they'd come out of. And the Jews I mean they were very sensitized to how awful the Gentiles were. Paul didn't have to use any of his ink condemning the Gentiles.

The sinfulness of pagans was a given. What had to be established was the sinfulness of Jews. Is really not any different.

And so he says in verse 23 for there's no difference. At the end of verse 22. For there is no difference.

That is between Jew and Gentile. For all Jew and Gentile have sinned. And fall short of the glory of God.

But he says in verse 21 he says but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Now there's a righteousness of God apart from the law. The law to the Jew meant Torah observance.

It included their circumcision their Sabbath keeping their dietary rules all that stuff was the law. He says now there's a righteousness that's not related to any of that. It's apart from that.

But the law did speak about it. The law anticipated it's born witness to in the law and the prophets. And of course in many ways he quotes throughout Romans both from many parts of the Old Testament to show that what he's saying is indeed found in the law and the prophets.

But he has to say that here because he says there's a righteousness that doesn't involve the law. Well the Jews going to naturally say wait a minute. You're coming against the law.

No no the law actually predicted this the law and the prophets actually testify to this. I'm just saying the same thing the law and the prophets actually say about this. He says in verse 23 or verse 24.

We're justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God set forth to be a propitiation or a sacrifice that ameliorates the wrath of God by his blood through faith to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance. God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. I believe this reference is back to Old Testament saints God forgiving people like Abel Noah Abraham and other sinners who were saints.

I mean all men are sinners but some were forgiven. But how did God justify that. Well he he justified it by sending Jesus.

Yeah he did the forgiving before Jesus came but not before God knew that Jesus was

going to come. He forgave them on credit knowing that Jesus was going to come and pay the price. Thus by setting out Jesus he shows that he was just and righteous even though he had passed over sins that were previously committed prior to the time of Christ by the by believers in the Old Testament.

And also to demonstrate at this present time verse 26 his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. So God wants to forgive sinners. But how does it ever just judge let a criminal go free.

He doesn't unless he can find a way to do that. And Paul says God found a way to do that how he could be just while he's acquitting justifying means to acquit acquitting the sinner who believes in Jesus. Well how can you acquit a criminal and be just in the act.

Well because we know that God has put forth Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement which means according to the concepts of the Old Testament sacrifices that the sins of the people are transferred to the victim. The lamb or whatever. And then the lamb is substitutionarily.

Killed. And that is a. Transaction. That means that God does take the sins of the people seriously someone has to die.

He's not just letting anyone off but God will supply a substitute and the substitute can die and that's what Jesus became. So God could forgive people who believe in Jesus without compromising his own justice. Verse 27 where is boasting that it is excluded by what law of works no but by the law or the principle of faith.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law or is he a God of the Jews only. Is he not also a God of the Gentiles. Yes of the Gentiles also since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Do we then make void the law through faith certainly not on the contrary we establish the law. Now this is the point we got to last time we got into the next chapter a few verses before we ran out of time. Basically saying we establish the law and some people mistakenly think that he's saying we still keep the Jewish law.

No he says we're establishing what the Torah said this is after all he said in verse 21 a righteousness apart from the law. But it was witnessed to by the law and the prophets. So this is what he says here verse 2 for if verse 1 what should we say then that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh.

Now Abraham stories found where it's found in Genesis and Genesis is found where in the Torah. So he says we are not contradicting the Torah we're confirming the very thing the Torah says namely Abraham was in the Torah. And the Torah records how it says Abraham believed God verse 3 here and it was accounted him for righteousness.

So Abraham without the law because he lived centuries before the law was given in Sinai. Abraham was many generations before Moses yet he was able to be justified by faith. Genesis 15 6 which he quotes says he believed in God that's faith and it was counted him for righteousness that's justification.

So Paul says you see the law itself speaks about a righteousness a justification that is unrelated to the law. Abraham was his whole life was unrelated to the law it didn't exist yet. Now he anticipates the Jew might say yeah but then the law was given.

I mean centuries after Abraham it may be but the law did come and since the law came now it's indispensable. Now the law becomes the means of righteousness not faith. Yeah God had to do something different for Abraham and those guys before the law but then the law came and that changes things.

Paul says no it doesn't what about David. David lived under the law yet he committed deeds that the law could not justify. You know the deeds of especially adultery and murder that David was guilty of in his later life.

There was no sacrifice available for that. The law would just say kill him. Death was the only you know remedy.

There was nothing the law could do to justify an adulterer or a murderer. In fact God even said nothing can atone for the innocent blood in the land except the death of the man who shed it. You can't send it can't atone with an animal sacrifice.

The killer has to die. David lived under that system. And when Nathan said this man took the sheep and so forth David the man shall die.

Nathan said you're the man. In other words David had just pronounced accurately the death sentence against himself. But David repented and then Nathan said the Lord says you're not going to die because you repented but you're going to suffer consequences anyway.

And we won't go into that now but but when David was forgiven in verse 6 here Romans 4 6 is just as David also described the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. And he quotes Psalm 32 which David wrote after this sin with that Shiva says blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whom to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.

So David testifies that he knew the blessedness or the happiness of being forgiven without he offered no sacrifice. You know and he also wrote Psalm 51 at the same time and in that song he says if you wanted sacrifice I'd offer but you don't want to sacrifice. The sacrifices of God are broken and contrite spirit he said these things the Lord you will not despise.

That's what he said as part of his repentance in Psalm 51. But there was no sacrifice in the law that could cover him. Only mercy only grace and that without the law.

So it's Paul done. He said before there was the law God was imputing righteousness through faith as in Abrams case and even after the law was given. God imputed righteousness to David without the law.

So he's made it very clear righteousness is something God imputes to people by faith. And this was true in the Old Testament as much as now you read Hebrews chapter 11. It starts with Abel and goes through all the main characters of the Old Testament says by faith he did this by faith he did this by faith he did this by faith he did this says all these received a good testimony by faith as God spoke well of them because their faith.

It's in the Old Testament as well as the new people were always justified by faith. Now. Now the blessedness of being forgiven in verse 90 says does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only or upon this uncircumcised also.

For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted while he was circumcised or uncircumcised. Not while circumcised but while uncircumcised Abraham was imputed righteous in Genesis 15 6. He believed in the Lord and it was imputed him for righteous two chapters later.

God commanded him to get circumcised which he did. But he was not a circumcised man when God imputed him righteous. He was just like any other Gentile.

It wasn't a Jew. There weren't any Jews yet. He was just like any other uncircumcised man when he believed God and his counting for righteousness.

He got circumcised later but what Paul is saying is that this imputation of righteousness by faith it applies to circumcised and uncircumcised like Abraham was. It says in verse 11 he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was still uncircumcised. Okay so he goes on through chapter 4. We can't read all the verses anymore.

We got to move more quickly and talks about how Abraham's faith was quite remarkable. How that even though he was a hundred years old when God told him that he was going to have a son and not only was Abraham pretty much too old for that. His wife was way too old.

She was 90 and had been barren all her life. But it says Abraham believed it anyway. In verse 20 it says he did not waver at the promises of God through unbelief but was strengthened in faith giving glory to God and being fully convinced that he was what he had promised he was able to perform and therefore quote it was accounted him for righteousness.

Now that therefore is very important because we know that faith is accounted him for righteousness but it says the reason it was therefore means because of this. The reason it was imputed him for righteousness is because this was the kind of faith he had. He was not doubting.

He was not shaken. He glorified God. He was convinced that God was able to do it.

He believed with all his heart. He changed his name over it. He just he he changed his whole identity and his whole purpose in living.

And because his faith was that kind of life changing faith. Therefore it was counted him for righteousness. Unlike say the demons faith they believe in trouble but it's not counted to them for righteousness because different kind of faith the kind of faith that saves Paul said in Galatians 5 6 is a faith that works through love.

That's how he defines saving faith of faith that works through love. Galatians 5 6. So when you talk about justification by faith, well, that is a true doctrine. But some people just think well, then I have to just believe something and then you'll go to heaven.

That's not so faith is life changing. And if it's not life changing, there's no reason to believe that it's the kind of faith that that saves now in chapter 5 verses 1 through 11. We have Paul rejoicing in the in the justification by faith.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God and he says we glory in the hope of the we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And we also glory in our sufferings and we rejoice in God. And he says because when we were without strength for six and two time Christ died for us.

Listen, he said if you know if he did this for his enemies, how much more will he not with him freely give us all things. That's how he winds up chapter 5 chapter 5 up until verse 11 verses then chapter 5 verses 12 through 21. I'm going to skip for now and come back to it in our second session.

This is the session where it talks in one man. This happened in another man. This happened to Adam and Christ and what the impact was of Adam's action and of Christ on humanity.

And the reason I want to take that separate is because it's theologically involved. I want to hold off on that so we can keep moving on through. But basically what he says and at the end of chapter 5 is the reason we have righteousness without the law is because we are in Christ.

Just like when we were in Adam, we were condemned in that sinful identity in Adam, but we now have our identity in Christ and Christ is righteous. So we are kind of righteous in him that that idea will talk more about when we come back to chapter 5 verses 12

through 21. Now at the end of chapter 5, he says in verse 20 moreover the law entered that the offense might have done.

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. So that is sin reigned in death. Even so, grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Now that statement where sin abounded, grace about it much more. Paul anticipates questions being raised. In fact, as he answers one question, he anticipates another question like a domino hitting it.

And when he answers that question, he anticipates a third question. He actually takes up chapters 6 and 7. It's parenthetical. Answering objections that he thinks people will raise.

In fact, we didn't dwell on it, but he did the same thing in chapter 3 verses 1 through 8. Basically, he anticipates several objections. What shall we say? Is it this and this? God forbid. How about this? No, God forbid.

Paul is the kind of teacher I like. He doesn't just bulldoze you with his ideas and if you don't understand it, that's your problem. He anticipates how this statement is going to be possibly misunderstood.

How it could hang you up and how it might lead you off to a train of thought he's not thinking of. So he says, so are we saying this? Is this what we should say to that? No, here's what I'm saying. And he recognizes that people can and often do take his statements in a direction he has no intention of them going.

And after he has said where sin abounds, grace much more abounds in chapter 5 verses 20. He expects someone to say in chapter 6, what shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Well, if sin abounding makes grace abound, then maybe we should sin more because then grace will abound more. Right? The idea being that where there's a lot of sin and God forgives it, that makes his grace shine.

I mean, it takes a little bit of grace to forgive a small infraction, but to forgive a big thing, that takes a lot of grace. And so where there's a lot more sin, then grace is seen to shine the more brightly. The gem of grace shows up much more brilliantly against the black setting of, you know, felt that the ring is against the contrast makes the ring look so much better.

So if we sin more and God forgives us, that makes his grace look more brilliant. His grace abounds. It brings glory to God.

Now, that's what someone wants to say. And Paul says that doesn't follow. I'm not saying that.

He's saying, actually, you can't think that's OK, because when you're baptized, you're baptized into Christ's death and he died to sin. And in raising with Christ and baptism, you're raised into a new life of righteousness, which sin isn't really a part of. I mean, he's basically saying that we were slaves of sin at one point and sinning was pretty much our job description as sinners.

But now we've been we've died to that. And our baptism, he says, shows that we've risen to a new life, which is not owned by sin. We're not owned by God.

And obeying God is now the only proper thing to do. And he goes. I can't go into detail here as I'd like to.

We do in my Romans lectures online. But at the end of this, he says in verse 14, chapter six, verse 14, for sin shall not have dominion over you for you're not under law, but under grace. Now, that phrase anticipates misunderstanding to not under law and under grace.

What then shall we say? Shall we sin because we're not under law, but under grace? You said we're not under law. We're under grace. So we can sin, right? Because if we're not under law, we can get away with it.

No penalties. And Paul then argues this way. You don't know what you're talking about, because if you're under grace, that means grace reigns in your life.

He has just said that in verse 21 of chapter five. So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign. Through righteousness, if you're under grace, that means you're under grace's dominion.

You were under the law's dominion before, but you've died to that. But now you're under another dominion. You're not just set loose to run wild.

You don't stop being the slave of one thing without being bought into slavery to something else. And he says, if we're 16, do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey? You are that one slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death or obedience to righteous. But God be thanked you were slaves of sin.

But he says, but now you've obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. He's saying, listen, you say we're not under the law so we can sin. Well, but if you're under grace, you can't sin.

Why doesn't grace just give you carte blanche to do what you want without penalty? Not at all. Remember Titus 2, 14, where Paul says or to 11, excuse me, to 11. It is where he says that the grace of God that brings salvation has been revealed to all men.

Teaching us grace teaches us. That abstaining from ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. He says that grace teaches us.

If you do not have an inward teacher telling you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly, then you don't have grace. That is Titus 2, verses 11 and 12. If you're under the reign of grace, grace is going to reign.

He's going to make the call. Sin is not and the law is not. But grace is and grace teaches you to live a godly life.

If you don't have that teacher going on inside of you, you don't have grace yet because that's what grace does. It changes you. It reorients you.

It doesn't just give you a pass. It transforms your orientation about sin. It spoils you for sin.

Believers sometimes do sin, but they don't enjoy it like they used to. At least not afterwards and probably not at the time. I can't speak for every sinner, but my guess is that if you're really born again, you never sin without afterward regretting it and wishing you'd go back and replay that tape and not do that.

But not only that, I suspect that everyone who's really a Christian who sins doesn't even enjoy it while they're doing it. It's not like before. It's not like you're the same person you were when you did that for fun.

You're doing that because you've been deceived and tempted by the devil and you go into it even with some reluctance and then doing it, your conscience is bothering you and then it really bothers you. I mean, this is what being under grace does. It spoils you for sinning.

You can't say, well, we can then sin because we're under grace, not under luck. Oh, yeah, just try it. The truth is that if you're living in sin, you're not under grace.

If you're living in sin, you're under sin still. Whoever you yield yourselves, your members to obey, that's your master, he said. You say, well, I'm I'm under grace, but I still sin.

No. You're sinning because you're under sin. The one you yield yourself to is the one you're after.

You don't belong to grace yet. If you still live in sin. You are under grace if something inside you, the voice of grace of God is saying, deny unworldly, ungodly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world.

That's what grace teaches. So that's how he deals with that question. And he continues into chapter seven, talking about marriage analogy.

And this is his continued say, we're not under the law, but under grace. He's still explaining that because he said that in verse 15. We're not under the law, but under grace.

So, first of all, shall we sin since we're not under the law? No, here's another illustration. I gave you a slavery illustration. Here's a marriage illustration.

He says, do you not know, brethren? Chapter seven, verse one. For I speak to those who know the law, that the law has dominion over man as long as he lives. He means only as long as he lives.

If he's dead, that changes things. For the woman who has a husband is bound to the by the law to her husband as long as he lives. And it's clear from the very next line.

He means only as long as he lives, not longer than that. After he dies, she's released from that law of her husband. So if while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress.

If her husband dies, she's free from that law. So that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Now look, this is the law thing.

Marriage to the law. We're not under the law. A wife who's married to her husband is under the authority of her husband.

She's under the law of her husband. But if her husband dies, she's not under his law anymore. Like us, we're not under the law anymore because we've died with Christ.

There's been a death that ended that marriage. But he says, though she marries another. And he says in verse 4, Therefore, my brethren, you also become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we may should bear fruit for God.

Now, he's saying, yeah, we're not under the law, but we're under a new husband. We're under Christ. One who rose from the dead.

We're married. We're not an unmarried woman just running around without any rules. We were under the law as a husband.

That marriage is ended by death because we died to Christ. But we married again. We married Jesus.

And if you're married to Jesus, you're under his rule. You're under his law. You can't just do, you can't sin.

So he's made very clear that not being under the law, meaning the Mosaic law, does not in any way translate into libertine misbehavior. Now, I'm going to skip over most of the

rest of chapter 7 because we're going to come back to chapter 7 in the next session. So we'll come to chapter 8. Now, I've suggested that Romans 6 and 7, these various questions are part of a parenthesis.

And when you come to chapter 8, verse 1, you're picking up where chapter 5 left off. It's been a long parenthesis there. Paul has a lot of parenthesis in his letters, actually.

But you can see, he says at the end of chapter 5, he says in verse 20, So as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Chapter 8, verse 1. Now, the latter part of that verse in the King James and the New King James are not in the older manuscripts, the line, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. But even though the older manuscripts do not have those clauses in verse 1, those clauses are found in all the manuscripts at the end of verse 4, where he says that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Now, he says we do keep the righteous requirements of the law, not because we're under the law, we're not. And we're not keeping this ritual requirements of the law, the righteous requirements of the law, the moral requirements. We live a moral life, more moral than those who are under the law, in fact, because we follow Christ and his spirit gives us the power to follow him, which those who are under the law don't have that, which is why he says in verse 2 of Romans 8, for the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death.

So it's the law of the spirit, the spirit, not the law. The spirit makes us obedient, gives us the power to be obedient. Grace teaches us to be and the spirit enables us to be.

And we are obeying Jesus, our husband, and therefore we live righteous lives. We do actually fulfill the righteous requirements of the law as we do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. I'll say more about this at another point.

Then he goes on and talks more about the contrast between living in the flesh and living in the spirit. He's basically in this chapter introduced the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's been mentioned briefly in a few other chapters before this, but not much, I think maybe three times in the book, where in this chapter, the Holy Spirit is mentioned a great number of times.

I don't remember the exact number of times, but it's certainly the main subject. He's basically saying the problem here then is that we don't need the law. We need to keep us righteous.

We need the spirit. The law can't make us be righteous anyway, and he's argued that at the end of chapter 7, which we'll come back to at another point. But anyway, he then,

having said all this, says, okay, so the real end of this whole discussion is that we do need to live righteously, but the law doesn't help us do that, but the spirit does.

And if we walk in the spirit, we do fulfill the righteousness of God's law. He also says that the law does other things for us. It helps us in our intercession, he says in verse 27, and helps us to pray when we don't know what to pray for as we ought to, verse 26 and 27, actually.

And then at the end of chapter 8, we have this golden chain of redemption, as the Calvinists call it, in verse 29, for whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called. Whom he called, these he also justified.

And whom he justified, these he also glorified. Which is simply, I believe he's speaking collectively, not of individual election, but I believe he's saying he knew before he created the world that he's going to have this body of Christ. There's going to be these people who worship his son, who follow Christ.

And of that group that he foreknew. And he's not saying whether or not God knew what the constituency of that group would be. I believe God did know.

But he's not discussing that aspect. He's not discussing the individual constituents of the group. He's talking collectively.

Those whom he foreknew, the whole group, he justified. He called, he glorified, and so forth. And this is basically giving the great outcome that he's got for the people who are rescued through Christ.

And then at the end of that, he says, what should we say then to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It's God who justifies, who is he who condemns. It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen.

Who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Verse 37, yet in all these things we're more than conquerors. Verse 38, I'm persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, these verses are very, you know, favorite verses for people, especially to make the point of eternal security. You know, nothing, once you become a Christian, nothing can stop that, nothing can break you up from Jesus. Nothing can separate you from the love

of God.

But I think that we have to take it in the context of Paul's concerns and of his general teaching throughout the Scripture. He does not mention whether or not we can choose wrongly. He does not mention whether our own choices can alienate us from God.

That is made very clear in many of Paul's writings, including where he tells Timothy, many shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Yeah, you can do that. He describes outward circumstances, tribulations, demons, persecutors.

Can these people overcome your connection with Jesus? Can they make you defect? Can they cause God to give up his love for you? No, nothing like that can separate you from the love of Christ. If you are determined to follow Jesus, nothing can come between you and him. Of course, if you stop being determined to follow him, you know, all bets are off.

Paul's assuming the best. The assumption is that Christians have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back. No turning back.

Though none go with me, still I'll follow. The world behind me, the cross before me, I'm going to follow Jesus, no turning back. That's what a Christian's commitment is.

And he's given the benefit of the doubt that that's where they're going to continue to stand. And that being so, they don't have to worry that something else can make them turn back. Nothing can.

Nothing but their own unfaithfulness can. Now, chapters 9 through 11, we're going to skip over because, as I said, we're going to cover that separately. That's the discussion on Israel.

Then when you come to chapters 12 and following, we're pretty much at the end of the book. This is the practical section. Chapter 12 largely deals with relationships, relationships in the body of Christ, relationships with your enemies, relationships even with the state.

When you get to that chapter 13, how to how to relate to the secular state. And when you get to chapter 14 and into chapter 15, he's now talking about problems within the church. People have different convictions from each other.

He speaks about some who are weak in the faith. He obviously makes that out to be the ones who still have a conscience to keep the law. Their faith is weak.

Well, those that you should receive them. You should not think badly of them. It's not their fault.

They're weak, perhaps. But you should just receive one another as Christ receives us. And he says, if some people want to keep a holy day and others don't, well, let them do what they feel convicted to do.

There's no command of God about this. And the fall. The fact that Paul says, let everyone be fully persuaded his own mind rather than saying, hey, wait a minute.

You should all be keeping a holy day. It's very clear and false as you can do what you want about this, that he considers there's no obligations in the matter. If he thought there were obligations of the matter, he would say, hey, you guys, how come you're keeping every day alike when you should be keeping a day holy? It is not something that way.

Something. Paul certainly knew what he thought, but he didn't tell him. He just said, do what your conscience tells you to do.

Now, he wouldn't be saying that if, for example, he said, some of you think it's OK for a man to live with his father's wife sexually. Others think not. Well, let everyone be fully persuaded of mine.

No. When he dealt with that very situation in Corinth, he said, don't tolerate that for a moment. Kick that man out of the church.

Deliver over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Why? Because that's a moral issue. That's a that's a violation of God's commands through Christ.

Where he makes us, you know, we're supposed to keep the moral standards that Jesus taught. But eating food, that's not a moral issue. Keeping ritual days, that's not moral.

At least Paul didn't think it was. And therefore, he said, you know, do it. You don't want to know.

And don't judge others. Any kind of goes through through that. He ends up summarizing in chapter 13, verse 14 on about loving your neighbor.

Just the main thing is to love every command that God gave comes down to this. That you love your neighbors, you love yourself. Love does no harm to his neighbor.

Actually, that's in chapter 13. And as a chapter for 13, 14, 15, he's talking about these different convictions. And then in the rest of chapter 15 and 16, he's just winding down.

We actually looked at chapter 15 in our introduction because that's where we get some of the setting for the book. And we drew upon it. Paul was on his way.

He wrote this. He was in Corinth. He was on his way to Jerusalem.

He didn't plan to stay there long. He was delivering a gift that had been collected among the Gentile churches. He planned to drop it off in Jerusalem and head to Spain and drop in and see the church in Rome on the way to Spain.

That's what Paul thought was going to happen. What actually did happen, and we know this from Acts, is that he got to Rome, I see Jerusalem. And he dropped off the gift.

And then he got in trouble with the Jews. And they made false accusations against me. He got arrested.

He got him put in prison for two years in Caesarea, which is in Israel. And then he appealed to Caesar, and then he was shipped to Rome. He was in Rome for two years under arrest.

And so he did come to Rome as he planned but not as he planned. He was planning to come to Rome, and he tells himself, but he thought when he wrote this, it'd be real soon. He's just going to do this little thing in Jerusalem and then head toward Spain and drop in Rome.

But it actually was about four years later that he showed up in Rome. And he was on foot because he had suffered shipwreck in the meantime. And so he greets all his friends in chapter 16, and that brings us to the end of the book.

Now, we're going to take a break. And as I said, we're going to look at these three difficult passages separately.