

Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Romans

Paul followed up his second letter to the Corinthians¹ with a personal visit to Corinth where he stayed for some months (Acts 20:2). It was towards the end of this period that Paul appears to have written this letter to the Christians at Rome. Although he had never visited the church, Paul seems to have known many of the members whom he greets by name in chapter 16. Many of these Christians knew and had worked with Paul: the whole church was probably familiar with his ministry.

Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome because he hoped that he might soon be able to visit them in passing on his way to Spain. He hopes that they may be able to help him on his way and support him in this new area of ministry (Rom 15:23-29).

The origin and character of the church at Rome

We have no clear information concerning the origins of the church at Rome. Clearly it was not founded by Paul, neither would it seem likely that it had been founded by another apostle or person of apostolic standing – Paul is sensitive about building on another person's labours and yet seems keen to forge closer links with the church at Rome.

It is possible that the church at Rome could have its origins in Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2 tells us that there were, gathered at Jerusalem, Jews and converts to Judaism from every part of the Mediterranean world, including some from Rome (Acts 2:10). It is possible that some of those three thousand who believed and were baptised on that day were 'visitors from Rome' who then took back with them the message of the gospel. The movement of trade between Rome and the rest of the Roman world may also have brought Christians to Rome.

Whatever the precise origin of the church, it would initially have consisted mainly of Jews and would probably not have dissociated itself from the life of the synagogue. But the character of the church appears to have changed *twice* between the time of its origin and when Paul wrote this letter.

In 49 AD the Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from Rome. Suetonius tells us that Claudius did this because "the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus." Barrett comments, "This is a not uncommon name, but it is possible that the disturbances were caused by Jewish-Christian controversy" (*The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* p.15). It is possible, therefore, that Jews and proselytes who had embraced Christianity were the cause of arguments within the Jewish community in Rome, just as similar controversy affected the Jewish communities with which Paul had been involved. As a result, Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, including the Jewish Christians. Among those expelled from Rome were Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2).

In the wake of such banishment, the church in Rome must have become almost entirely Gentile, and probably remained so for some years. During this period it would have developed Gentile leadership and a character, perspective and practices which would have reflected its Gentile membership – perhaps even extending to a particular understanding of the relationship between 'church' and 'state.'

Claudius died in 54 AD and his decree banishing Jews from Rome lapsed. Jews, including Christian Jews, began to return to the city. The reference to Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16:3, along perhaps with reference to several others whom Paul had previously worked with is probably a reflection of such migrations.

It is not difficult to imagine the tensions that must have developed between Jewish and Gentile Christians at Rome. The returning Jews must have felt that the church was theirs:

- they had been the founding members;
- the gospel message concerned the Christ, the Jewish Messiah, the one who had come to fulfill all the promises of the Old Testament;
- they were concerned to emphasise the continuity of Judaism and Christianity.

On the other hand, the Gentile Christians had functioned effectively as a church without the Jews. They must have felt that the church at Rome was now their church, a church with a distinctively Gentile outlook:

¹ I.e. the letter we know as 2 Corinthians

- they probably emphasised the distinction between Judaism and Christianity – they may even have thought that God somehow endorsed, at the theological level, what Caesar had done at the political level and had written Jews out of the covenant;
- since Claudius had expelled the troublesome Jews they would have wanted to distance themselves from Jews and perhaps emphasised that the Christian message was no threat to Roman government;
- they may well have laid little emphasis on the Old Testament, perhaps suggesting that it was no longer relevant in the light of Jesus and his teaching. In particular they would not have followed Levitical law regarding food and days.

Much of this picture is necessarily conjectural but it is given credibility by much of what Paul has to say in his letter to the Romans, as we shall see below.

Why did Paul write his letter to the Romans?

Paul wrote the letter to prepare the way for a visit he planned to make to them (Rom 1:11-13). He considers that his ministry in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia is now complete: there are significant churches planted in each of these regions and the continuing task of propagating the gospel in these areas can be left to them. Paul must now move on to new areas where the gospel has not yet been preached (Rom 15:17-22). Paul has decided that this new region will be Spain and he plans to go there via Rome (Rom 15:23-29). He hopes that the church in Rome may take a real interest in this work and, just as the church at Philippi supported Paul in his ministry in Achaia, so he hopes that the church in Rome may offer practical support for his ministry in Spain (see particularly 15:24).

But Paul's plan to visit the Christians at Rome is not merely a means to an end: Paul wants to visit *them* and to enjoy fellowship with them, encourage them and be encouraged by them (Rom 1:11-12). Paul clearly knew a number of the members of the church (see Romans 16) and had often wanted to come and visit them (Rom 1:13).

Since Paul knows something of the church at Rome, his letter seeks also to address some of the hot issues within the church. In particular he is anxious to heal the division between Jewish and Gentile believers within the church:

- From the opening verses of the letter he is keen to stress both the continuity and discontinuity between Judaism and Christianity: Jesus has come in fulfilment of the Old Testament Scriptures and is the promised son of David, the Messiah (Rom 1:3); but he is one who also has brought in a new age through his resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:4). The gospel message which characterises this new age calls Gentiles (and Jews) to submit to the Christ of God (Rom 1:5).
- Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles are by nature rebels against God and are the subjects of God's wrath (1:18-2:16).
- Though Jews have the privilege of having been entrusted with God's revelation, this is of no benefit apart from faith. And for Paul, faith is, by definition, faith *in Jesus Christ*. In particular, Paul focusses on the Jews possession of the law: there is no virtue in possessing and knowing the law if you do not live by it. Yet the Old Testament itself bears witness to the fact that, far from commending them to God, the law condemns those who live under it (2:17-3:20).
- The people of God are those who have been redeemed through the atoning sacrifice of God's Son. They are defined then not by parentage or ethnicity but simply by faith in Christ. God is God both of Jews and Gentiles (3:21-31).
- Paul shows that God accepted Abraham, the patriarch of the people of God, through faith, a faith analogous to the faith of the Christian who believes in one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. Thus Abraham is the father of both Jewish and Gentile *believers* (Rom 4).
- In the latter half of Romans 5 Paul draws an analogy between Adam and Christ. Just as Adam's sin affected the whole human race, so also the work of Christ is of universal significance. He is the second Adam, the head of a new humanity. His work is as relevant to the Gentile as it is to the Jew. Paul forces Jewish believers to read the Old Testament against the opening chapters of Genesis: from the beginning the Old Testament was concerned with the plight of the *world* and the salvation of the *world*. Abraham and the Jews were chosen for the sake of the world.
- Romans 7 is a notoriously difficult chapter but, reading it against the context of tension between law-keeping Jewish believers and Gentile believers at Rome, it may be seen as Paul's comment on a life lived by the principle of law-keeping. In contrast, Romans 8 describes the Christian life as

God intended it to be lived – life in the Spirit. It is clear that, despite his Jewish origins, Paul's sympathies do not lie with Jewish believers who seek to live by the law.

- In Romans 9-11 Paul provides us with a panoramic view of the purposes of God. At the moment the Jews (by and large) have rejected the Messiah. Though this is immensely painful to Paul he understands that this is all part of the great purpose of God. Their rejection of the Messiah was necessary since Christ had to die as an atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. Their continuing rejection of Christ has forced the gospel to be taken to and preached to the Gentiles. But Paul believes that the day will come when the Jews will be so moved to envy over God's blessing upon the Gentiles that they too will turn to Christ. Then God's saving plan will be complete as the full number of Jews and Gentiles will be included together among his people. The Gentile believers are not to look down on the Jews but are to remember that the gospel message has its roots in Judaism and will have its consummation in Jews turning to Christ.
- In the first part of Romans 13, Paul addresses the issue of how the Christian should view and behave towards civil authority. Here again, he may be addressing issues which formed part of the tension or disagreement between Gentile and Jewish believers. Jewish believers may have had an over negative view of the Roman authorities. Paul's instruction here is rooted in Old Testament passages such as Daniel, Isaiah and even Esther.
- In chapter 14 Paul addresses conflicts between the 'weak' and the 'strong.' In context, the 'weak' would appear to be Jewish believers who continued to observe the Levitical laws and who were sensitive about food and the observance of certain days. Paul's sympathies again lie with those who feel no need to observe the Levitical law, but he calls on both sides to respect and accept one another just as Christ has accepted them all (15:7).

Paul's letter to the Romans is therefore not an abstract treatise concerning the gospel. It is a letter written to a particular group of people, a letter which seeks to address specific issues of debate among these people. In this sense it is an 'occasional' document. However, since it also addresses issues which have been at the heart of Paul's own ministry and personal history it is not wholly incorrect to suggest that Romans is also Paul's gospel manifesto: it expounds his understanding of the gospel, its relationship to the Old Testament and the nature of the New Covenant inaugurated by Christ; it is a declaration and exposition of the 'righteousness of God', God's faithfulness to his covenant and fulfilment of its promises in Jesus the Christ. In making the nature of his ministry and preaching clear, Paul is seeking not only to minister to the Christians in Rome and heal some of the divisions among them, but is also seeking their support in taking this same gospel to those in Spain who have not yet heard of Jesus Christ. Paul has a mission fired by a vision of empire which rivals and dwarfs that of Rome; it is not Caesar but Jesus who is Lord, and it is his kingdom or empire, characterised by righteousness and peace, which is destined to dominate the world.

An Outline of the Message of Romans

The following helpful outline of the message of Romans is taken directly from the introduction to Tom Wright's commentary in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, (pp. 405-406).

"Chapters 1-4: God's gospel unveils the fact that in the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, the God of Israel has been true to the covenant established with Abraham and has thereby brought saving order to the whole world. In the face of a world in rebellion and a chosen people unfaithful to their commission, God has, through the surrogate faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah, created a worldwide – that is, a Jewish and Gentile – family for Abraham, marked out by the covenant sign of faith.

"Chapters 5-8: God has thereby done what the covenant was set up to do: to address and solve the problem expressed in biblical terms as the sin of Adam. In the Messiah, Jesus, God has done for this new people what was done for Israel of old in fulfilment of the promise to Abraham: Redeemed from the Egypt of enslavement to sin, they are led through the wilderness of the present life by the Spirit (not by the Torah), and they look forward to the inheritance, which will consist of the entire redeemed creation. This is how the creator will finally put the whole world to rights. All this is the result of God's astonishing, unchanging, self-giving covenant love expressed completely and finally in the death of Jesus.

"Chapters 9-11: This section highlights the peculiar tragedy of the gospel's revelation of God's righteousness – namely, the ironic failure of Israel to believe in the Messiah. This, too, however, turns out to be held within the strange purposes of God, whereby Israel's fall, acting out on a grand scale the death of Jesus, is the means by which salvation can extend to the whole world. This cannot mean that

Jews themselves are thereby forever debarred from participating in the covenant blessing; Paul himself is a counter-example, and God desires that even now, by recognising that it is indeed their promised blessings that the Gentiles are enjoying, more of Paul's fellow Jews will come to share in new covenant membership. Gentile Christians, therefore, are warned severely against anti-Jewish arrogance. The section ends with a paean of praise for the strange but glorious purposes of God.

"*Chapters 12-16*: The community that is created by this gospel must live as the true renewed humanity, in its internal and external life. In particular, it must reflect God's intention that Jew and Gentile come together as one worshiping body in Christ. Paul's own plans are bent to this end, and his greetings to different groups in the Roman church may indicate his desire to bring together disparate groups in common worship and mission."

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans

- Barrett, CK *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1957.
 Dunn, JDG *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary Vols 38A, 38B, Dallas, Word, 1988.
 Moo, Douglas, J *Romans: The NIV Application Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000.
 Murray, John *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 Vols, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959 & 1965.
 Wright, NT *The Letter to The Romans*, The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 10, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2002.

Romans 1:1-7

The opening address is longer in this epistle than in any other of Paul's letters. "Perhaps because he was writing to a church he had never visited before, Paul spends six verses identifying himself before he mentions the recipients (v.7a) and extends them a greeting (v.7b)." Moo.

Wright comments, "The opening seven verses of the letter move swiftly from Paul to the gospel, back to Paul and his ministry, and out into the world, which introduces the Roman Christians. As usual, he introduces, within the formal structure of a letter opening, the themes that will occupy him in what is to come."

Romans 1:1

Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφορισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ

δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ "While clearly revealing Paul's sense of subservience to his Lord (the word 'servant' ... can also be translated 'slave'), this title also suggests his status. For the Old Testament 'servant of the Lord' was applied especially to outstanding figures in Israel's history, such as Moses (e.g., Josh 14:7) and David (e.g., Ps. 18:1)." Moo. Wright reminds us that Χριστός is not a proper name but the title, Messiah, and that it has kingly overtones. Paul is a servant of king Jesus.

κλητος, η, ον called, invited

κλητὸς ἀπόστολος "One of those whom Jesus himself had appointed to represent him and to provide the foundation for his church (see Eph. 2:20)." Moo. Cf. also 1 Cor 9:1 where Paul defines an apostle in terms of one who has seen the risen Jesus.

ἀφορισμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m n s
ἀφορίζω separate, set apart, appoint

The term *Pharisee* means 'set apart'. Through his encounter with Christ, Saul the Pharisee had become the apostle Paul, set apart to the work of the Gospel.

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel

"God had appointed Paul to the special task of proclaiming and explaining the good news of God's intervention in Jesus Christ." Moo. Wright comments on the term εὐαγγέλιον, "In Paul's Jewish world, the word looked back to Isa 40:9 and 52:7, where a messenger was sent to bring to Jerusalem the good news of Babylon's defeat, the end of Israel's exile, and the personal return of YHWH to Zion. In the pagan world Paul addressed, the same Greek word referred to an announcement of the accession or the birthday of a ruler or emperor. Here already we find Paul at the interface of his two worlds. His message about Jesus was both the fulfilment of prophecy, as v.2 indicates, and the announcement of one whose rule posed a challenge to all other rulers."

Romans 1:2

ὁ προεπηγγεῖλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν
γραφαῖς ἁγίαις

προεπαγγελῶμαι promise from the
beginning, promise long ago
προφητείας, ου m prophet

All who wrote of Christ in the OT, not just those whom we commonly call prophets, cf. Lk 24:27; Acts 2:30.

γραφῆ, ης f Scripture, passage of
Scripture, OT Scriptures

The relationship between the OT and the New is a major theme of this epistle. The Gospel has its roots in the OT.

Romans 1:3-4

The parallelism in verses 3 & 4 suggests that Paul may have been quoting an ancient creedal formula or hymn. "Moreover, the verses contain some language, such as 'Spirit of holiness,' that Paul uses nowhere else, and some ideas, such as the Davidic descent of Jesus, that do not feature prominently in his teaching. When we add to these considerations a natural desire on Paul's part to establish common ground with the Roman Christians, whom he has never met, the conclusion he is quoting from another source in these verses seems well established... Just as the preacher quotes the stanza of a popular hymn to bring a point home, so Paul may well want to cite lines from a well-known early Christian hymn to communicate the truth of Christ to the Roman Christians." Moo.

Wright responds, "Whether or not Paul wrote vv. 3-4 from scratch (and we must guard against assuming that a writer such as Paul was incapable of dictating an apparently formulaic statement off the top of his head, especially as he had countless occasions to sum up his message orally before a wide variety of audiences), the passage as it stands offers a striking statement of that messianic view of Jesus that we shall discover at the heart of the letter."

The NIV (following Calvin, Bengel, Hodge etc.) suggests here that Paul is speaking of Christ's human and divine nature. However, Murray follows Vos (see *The Pauline Eschatology*, p.155f.) in seeing verses 3 & 4 as reference not to the two distinct natures of Christ, but to two successive aspects of his redemptive work. By his incarnation he identified himself with the objects of promise (verse 3 should perhaps be read against the background of Israel being referred to as God's son). By his resurrection and exaltation he secures for them, the heirs of the promise, the full rights of sons.

Wright states that it is a two-part statement about Jesus' Messiahship. He was born of David's line and his resurrection declares to the world that he really was the Messiah and had been all along. But he also echoes the point made by Murray when he writes, "This relationship between 1:3-4 and the rest of Romans indicates what Paul means by adding 'according to the flesh' and 'according to the spirit.' Jesus the Messiah is the one in whom God's people find their identity and salvation; he has come where they are in order to rescue them (more fully stated in 8:3-4; cf. Gal 4:4-5). His human, 'fleshly' (in Paul's sense) identity is the place where he does for Adamic humanity that which Adamic humanity could not do for itself. Verse 3 thus looks ahead to 5:12-21 and all the elements of chaps. 6-8 that follow from it. It is also evoked by 9:5, which, as we shall see, restates a very similar two-part christology, making it the ground plan of the argument of chaps. 9-11: Jesus is Israel's Messiah according to the flesh and is also now explicitly) 'God over all, blessed for ever.'" On these verses, see particularly, Richard B. Gaffin, *The Centrality of the Resurrection*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1978, pp.98-114.

Romans 1:3

περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα,

τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ "In the OT, 'son of God' can refer to angels (Gen 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan 3:25; cf. Dan 3:28; Song of Three 26). But it's better known referents are Israel, adopted as God's child explicitly at the time of the exodus and looking back to that moment in order to plead for subsequent deliverance (Exod 4:22; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1: 13:13; Mal 1:6); and the king, adopted as YHWH's firstborn son – the seed of David who is also the son of God (1 Sam 7:14 ... 1 Chr 17:13; Pss 2:7; 89:26-27). These two senses belong together, since in some Jewish thought the Davidic king represents Israel, so that what is true of him is true of the people." Wright.

σπερμα, τοσ η seed, offspring

Cf. Gal 4:4.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Romans 1:4

τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,

ὀρισθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m gen s ὀρίζω appoint, designate

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

"The apostle is dealing with some particular event in the history of the Son of God incarnate by which he was *instated* in a position of sovereignty and invested with power, an event which in respect of investiture with power surpassed everything that could previously be ascribed to him in his incarnate state." Murray.

Wright, however, lays the emphasis on the demonstration and declaration of Jesus' Messiahship. "A crucified Messiah was a failed Messiah... This is why it took something utterly extraordinary to make anyone suppose that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. Paul is clear: it was the resurrection that marked our Jesus as 'son of God' (v. 4)."

On ἐν δυνάμει Wright comments, "This phrase seems to refer both to the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead (see 1 Cor 6:14; 15:24, 43; 2 Cor 13:4; Eph 1:19-20; Phil 3:10) and that thereby declared his identity as Messiah, and to the powerful nature of his sonship, through which he confronts all the powers of the world, up to and including death itself, with the news of a different and more effective type of power altogether. Paul, of course, sees this same power at work now, by the Spirit, through the proclamation of the gospel and in the lives of those who are 'in the Messiah' (see, e.g., 1:16; 11:23; 15:13; 1 Cor 1:24; 2:4-5)."

αγιωσυνη, ης f holiness

πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης is a Semitism meaning Holy Spirit. On the Spirit as breathing life into the dead, cf. Ezek 37:5, 9-10, 14; Joel 3:1-5.

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up νεκρος, α, ον dead

Note the plural νεκρῶν. Jesus has been raised from among the dead: it is the hoped for resurrection of the dead arrived in the middle of time in the Lord Jesus. "Paul saw the event of Easter as the start and foretaste of the long-promised new age, 'the age to come' that he and many other Jews had been expecting. The resurrection told Paul not only who Jesus was (the Messiah), but also what time it was (the start of the 'age to come')." Wright.

"By his resurrection and ascension the Son of God incarnate entered upon a new phase of sovereignty and was endowed with new power correspondent with and unto the exercise of the mediatorial lordship which he exercises as head over all things to his body, the church. It is in this same resurrection context and with allusion to Christ's resurrection endowment that the apostle says, 'The last Adam was made life-giving Spirit' (1 Cor 15:45). And it is to this that he refers elsewhere when he says, 'The Lord is the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:17). 'Lord' in this instance, as frequently in Paul, is the Lord Christ. The only conclusion is that Christ is now by reason of the resurrection so endowed with and in control of the Holy Spirit that, without any confusion of the distinct persons, Christ is identified with the Spirit and is called 'the Lord of the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18). Thus, when we come back to the expression 'according to the Spirit of holiness', our inference is that it refers to that stage of pneumatic endowment upon which Jesus entered through his resurrection." Murray.

So also Moo who writes, "Jesus' resurrection, concluding and validating the messianic work of redemption, gave him new power to dispense salvation to all who would believe in him (see esp. v.16)."

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν "Paul's initial summary of the gospel is rounded off with Jesus' full Pauline title: 'Jesus, Messiah, our Lord.' 'Jesus' for Paul regularly refers to the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, now risen and exalted but still the same human Jesus. When Paul writes 'Christ,' he still means 'Messiah,' the one in whom Israel's destiny is summed up and brought to proper fulfilment; the word is on its way to being a name (denoting Jesus but no longer connoting Messiahship), but it has not reached that point in Paul. 'Lord' expresses both the exalted humanity of Jesus, including his superior position to all other 'lords' in the world, and the sometimes explicit ascription of divinity. This is seen most clearly when Paul, speaking of Jesus, quotes passages from the LXX where 'Lord' (κύριος *kyrios*) stands, as he well knew, for 'YHWH,' the divine name (e.g., Rom 10:13). The possessive pronoun 'our' is not a way of limiting the sphere of Jesus' lordship, but of giving explicit allegiance to the one who is, for Paul, lord of the whole world, supreme over all others... Note that for Paul, 'the gospel' is not a system of salvation, a message first and foremost about how human beings get saved. It is an announcement about Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord." Wright.

Romans 1:5

δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ,

ἐλάβομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl λαμβανῶ

The plural refers either to apostleship, 'we apostles' or perhaps to Paul and his missionary band.

ἀποστολή, ης f apostleship, mission

Moo thinks χάριτι and ἀποστολήν are closely linked, '...grace of being an apostle' cf. Acts 26:12-18. So also Wright.

ὑπακοή, ης f obedience
πιστις, εως f faith, trust

Not 'the obedience that comes from faith' (NIV) but 'the obedience which consists in faith.' Faith is seen as an act of submission and therefore obedience and as the source of all true obedience to God (cf. 10:16; 16:26; 1 Thess 1:3; Acts 6:7). "Paul uses this unusual formulation as a deliberate counter to the Jewish 'works of the law.' What marks God's people is no longer deeds done in obedience to the law, but an obedience that stems from, accompanies, and displays faith." Moo. Wright comments, "Obedience' is a more prominent theme in Romans than elsewhere in the NT (elsewhere in Paul only in 2 Cor 7:15; 10:5-6; Phlm 21). It serves as a shorthand both for the total work of Jesus the Messiah, over against that of Adam (5:19), and as the sphere or realm into which, or under the rule of which, Christians come through baptism (6:12-17). Paul can again use it as a summary of that which he seeks to bring about among the nations (15:18; cf. 16:19)... To bring the nations into 'obedience' would therefore mean to bring them into the family of this one God." Paul's ministry involves summoning all people to allegiance to Jesus as Christ and Lord. "This faith is actually the human faithfulness that answers to God's faithfulness." Wright.

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ος n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles
ὄνομα, τος n name, person

Romans 1:6

ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κλητος, η, ον see v.1

κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Not called by Jesus Christ, for in Paul's theology it is the Father who calls. Christians are rather the property of Christ – they belong to him. "They stand in this relationship not because they have chosen it but because they have been called to it by God himself just as Paul, against his own inclination and will, was called to be an apostle." Barrett.

Romans 1:7

πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἀγίοις: χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

οὖσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἶμι

ἐν Ῥώμῃ is omitted by a few MSS. Metzger suggests an accident in transcription.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

The love of God that moves him to redeem a people for himself is another central theme of Romans (cf. 5:5, 8; 8:37-39).

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, set apart to or by God

"Nothing is implied about moral behaviour, though their separation from the world and for Christ is bound to have moral consequences. They are singled out as the people of God because of the love God has for them. This is the root out of which Christian ... actions grow." Barrett.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ The single preposition governs the two nouns that follow and serves to couple closely God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as the single source of covenant blessing.

Romans 1:8

Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ.

It is Paul's usual pattern to follow the salutation with thanksgiving. The notable exception is Galatians.

πρῶτον is not followed by a 'second' or 'third.' "Paul may simply have forgotten to go on with his enumeration, or the word 'first' may indicate priority rather than sequence, 'first of all.'" Moo.

εὐχαριστέω thank, give thanks

διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Jesus has created access to God and is therefore the one *through whom* prayer is made to the Father.

πίστις, εως f faith, trust, the Christian faith

The faith of these Roman Christians was well known (cf. 1 Thess 1:8). Comparison with Acts 28:21f would seem to indicate that their faith was well known among *other Christians*.

καταγγέλλω proclaim, make known
ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

Romans 1:9

μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνησθῆναι ὑμῶν ποιῶμαι

On Paul's use of an 'oath', cf. 2 Cor 1:23; 11:31; Gal 1:20; 1 Thess 2:5.

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος m witness
λατρεύω serve, worship

ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου Fee says that the reference is to the Spirit of God resident in Paul. Moo concurs saying, "Paul's own spirit has been caught up in God's Spirit, and he now serves the gospel 'in' and 'by means of' that transformed spirit."

ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ The sense may be "either ... that his announcing of the gospel constitutes in itself an act of worship or in the sense that he worships the God he sees revealed in 'the gospel of his son' (i.e., as in v.3, the gospel concerning the son of God)." Wright.

ἀδιαλείπτως ceaselessly, without ceasing
μνησθῆναι, ας f remembrance, mention

Romans 1:10

πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, δεόμενος εἴ πως ἤδη ποτε εὐδοθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

παντοτε always

Most understand the opening phrase of this verse to belong with what precedes it, though Murray prefers to link the words with what follows.

δεομαι ask, beg, pray
πως enclitic particle somehow, in some way
ἤδη adv now; ἤδη ποτε now at last
εὐδοομαι have things go well (for oneself)
θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire
ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

It was unusual for Paul to visit a church which he had not founded (see 15:20). The reason for him wishing to visit Rome is given in 15:24; he wanted to use Rome as a base from which to take his missionary activity to Spain.

Romans 1:11

ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικὸν εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς,

ἐπιποθεω long for, desire
ἰδεῖν Verb, aor act infin ὁραω see
μεταδῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s μεταδιδωμι
share, give, impart
χάρισμα, τος n gift (from God)
πνευματικος, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

The precise nature of the 'spiritual gift' which Paul wished to bestow is unclear.

στηριχθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin στηριζω
strengthen, establish, set firm

Cf. 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Thess 2:17; 3:3.

Romans 1:12

τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.

συμπαρακληθῆναι Verb, aor pass dep infin
συμπαρακαλεομαι be encouraged together

ἀλλήλων, οισ, ους one another
τε enclitic particle and, and so

Barrett sees verse 12 as an addition or correction to verse 11 which reflects Paul's awareness that the Roman Christians might not recognise his authority. Moo speaks of Paul's "hesitancy to claim too much authority over a community he has not himself founded. It is not, Paul hastily adds (v.12), that the spiritual benefit will flow all one direction, from Paul to the Romans. Rather, he anticipates a time of mutual edification with them, as the faith God has given each individual stimulates and encourages spiritual growth in the others." Cf. 15:14-29.

Romans 1:13

οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προθέμην ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθη ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.

θέλω wish, will

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

πολλάκις often, repeatedly, frequently

προτιθεμαι plan, purpose

ἐκωλύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s κωλυω hinder, prevent

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις) until

δευρο adv. come, come here; ἄχρι του δευρο thus far

καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest

σχῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἔχω

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining,

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

"Since there were at this time probably not more than a few dozen, or at most a couple of hundred, Christians in a city of roughly a million, this would not indicate a lack of confidence in the Roman church's own evangelistic performance or prospects." Wright.

Romans 1:14

Ἑλλήσιν τε καὶ βαρβάροις, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις ὀφειλέτης εἰμί·

Ἕλληνας, ηνος m a Greek, non-Jew

τε καὶ see v.12

βαρβαρος, ον non-Greek, uncivilized, foreigner

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

ἀνοητος, ον foolish, ignorant

ὀφειλετης, ου m debtor, one indebted

Either a debt of gratitude he owes to all because of their response to his ministry (so Godet), or the obligation placed on him which he has to all. Murray cites 1 Cor 9:16,17 as evidence supporting the latter and Moo says, "Paul has been given a commission from the Lord to be 'apostle to the Gentiles,' and it is this divine mandate, not any personal benefit or emotional satisfaction or marketing strategy, that impels Paul to travel even further afield." So also Wright who comments, "God has entrusted him with a message for them; until he has discharged this commission he is still, in that sense, in their debt, retaining in his possession something that properly belongs to them."

Romans 1:15

οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελίσασθαι.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγὼ

προθυμος, ον willing; το π. eagerness

οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον As far as I am concerned.

τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ is again omitted by a few MSS – cf. 1:7.

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

Romans 1:16-17

Moo speaks of these verses as transitional: they are linked (by γαρ) with the preceding verses, explaining *why* Paul is eager to preach the gospel in Rome, and they also introduce themes central to the main body of the letter. Murray emphasises the OT background to the four pivotal ideas mentioned here – the power of God, salvation, revelation and the righteousness of God. Citing particularly Ps 98:1-2; Is 46:13; 51:5-8; 56:1; 62:1 as examples he says, "It is apparent that the making known of salvation and the showing forth of righteousness are parallel expressions and convey substantially the same thought."

Romans 1:16

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι·

ἐπαισχυνομαι be ashamed

Perhaps litotes, meaning that Paul is proud of, or makes his boast in, the gospel. Paul is perhaps thinking of those who slander him because of the gospel he preaches, cf. 3:8. Cf. also Jesus' words about people being ashamed of him (Mk 8:38 and par.).

The Gospel is not only the declaration of God's saving acts and saving power, it is also the instrument through which God acts in power to save. In short, it is God's power. "Paul has discovered in practice, in city after city, that announcing the good news – that there is one God who now claims the world as his own through the crucified and risen Christ – is in itself powerful and that the power is all God's (cf. 1 Cor 2:4-5; 1 Thess 1:5)." Wright. Wright continues, "Paul, as so often, has expressed this point in such a way as to evoke a biblical tradition. 'In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,' says the psalmist; 'let me never be ashamed, deliver me in thy righteousness' (Ps 71:1-2; cf. Pss 31:1-3; 141:1; Psalm 71 continues to emphasise the same theme in vv. 15-16, 19, 24, by which time it is the psalmist's opponents who are 'ashamed,' while he continues to speak of God's righteousness). 'Shame' in such a context is what God's people feel when their enemies are triumphing; it is what Israel (and many other peoples) felt in Paul's day, suffering at the hands of Rome. The gospel, and the power it carries, enables Paul to share the position of the psalmist, celebrating God's righteousness and so remaining unashamed in the face of enemies and gainsayers."

σωτηρια, ας f salvation

In Paul's use the term includes the "final deliverance from sin and evil that will come to the believer at death or the Parousia (see esp. 5:9-10; 13:11)." Moo.

Paul uses the verb:

- i) In the past tense, Rom 8:24;
- ii) In the present tense, 1 Cor 1:18
- iii) In the perfect tense, Eph 2:5
- iv) In the future tense, Rom 5:9.

In the Old Testament, 'salvation' has to do with the rescue of Israel from pagan oppression. Wright comments, "As in Phil 3:20-21, Jesus turns out to be the reality of which Caesar is the parody. Just as there is only one 'lord of the world,' so also in the last analysis there is only one 'saviour.'"

πιστευω believe (in), have faith (in)
πρωτον adverb first, in the first place

The omission of πρωτον from a few MSS is perhaps due to the influence of Marcion.

To the Jew first is not an 'accident of history' but a key aspect of the redemptive plan of God (cf. chs 9-11). Paul's words emphasise both "the temporal primacy of the Jew within the purposes of God ... and the absolute equality of status now granted to the non-Jew." Wright.

Ἕλληνα, ἡνος m a Greek, non-Jew

Romans 1:17

δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right

It is a frequent theme in the OT that in saving or delivering his people, God manifests his righteousness (see Is 45:21; 51:5; Ps 24:5; 31:1; 98:2; 143:11).

The NIV translates 'righteousness from God,' reflecting the view championed by the Reformation that Paul is speaking of a righteousness which God gives to his people. A growing number of modern scholars argue that the sense is of God manifesting righteousness in 'putting to right' what has gone wrong in creation. Several commentators also stress the link between the righteousness of God and his covenant faithfulness (e.g. Ps 31:1).

Moo suggests that the verb 'reveal' favours the latter interpretation while the fact that righteousness is based on faith reflects the former. He suggests "Perhaps the most important consideration, however, is the use of the language 'righteousness of God' in the Old Testament. Here we find that key prophetic texts use this phrase to denote God's eschatological saving activity." Having cited particularly Is 46:13 and 51:5-8 Moo concludes, "'Righteousness' here denotes God's saving activity, in which he upholds what is 'right' by vindicating his people and delivering them from their distress... The prophecy of Isaiah, particularly chapters 40-66, exerted an enormous influence on Paul and the New Testament. Thus, Paul's readers would naturally have 'heard' in Paul's announcement in 1:17 the claim that the eschatological intervention of God to save his people has occurred."

Wright similarly comments, "In the gospel, God's righteousness is unveiled. This revelation happens, not just in the events referred to in the gospel, true though that is, but in the very announcement of the gospel. The death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah form the initial disclosure of God's righteousness, the major apocalyptic event that burst upon an unsuspecting world and an uncomprehending Israel; now the apocalypse happens again, every time the message about Jesus is announced, as God's righteousness is unveiled before another audience."

"The gospel message about Jesus, in other words, opens people's eyes to see for the first time that *this was what God had been up to all along*. It enables Jews to see how the promises they had cherished had been fulfilled, quite otherwise than they expected. It enables Gentiles to see that there is one true God, the God of Israel, the creator; that this God has purposed to set the world to rights at last; and that this God has now in principle accomplished that purpose. And when we say 'enabled to see,' we should not think merely of propositions commanding mental assent. Paul believed that the announcement of the gospel wielded a power that overcame the unseen forces, inside people and around them, that prevented them from responding in obedient belief and allegiance (see 2 Cor 4:1-6)."

ἀποκαλύπτω reveal, disclose

Note the present tense

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

'by faith from first to last' NIV and also Barrett. Barth argued that the phrase means from God's faithfulness to our believing in him. So also Wright who comments, "In the light of 3:21-22 and other passages, its most natural meaning is 'from God's faithfulness to human faithfulness.' When God's action in fulfilment of the covenant is unveiled, it is because God has been faithful to what has been promised; when it is received, it is received by that human faith that answers to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, that human faith that is also *faithfulness* to the call of God in Jesus the Messiah."

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ζήσεται Verb, fut mid indic, 3s ζω live

This phrase is ambiguous and may mean either, 'he who is justified by faith shall live', or 'the just man shall live by faith'. Lightfoot and Murray argue for the latter, which is more in line with Hab. 2:4, though Moo thinks the former is more in line with Paul's argument in Romans.

Wright comments, "The original passage in Habakkuk belongs within a book full of woe and puzzlement. The Chaldeans are marching against Israel; all seems lost. What is Israel's God up to in allowing it? This is, once more, the question of the righteousness, or justice, of God... By way of answer, the prophet is given a vision for the future, to be revealed at a later date (Hab 2:3). At the moment God's true people, the righteous within a sinful nation, 'will live by faith.' 'Faith' here, whether the human faith, as in the Hebrew text, or God's faithfulness, as in the LXX, is the key feature of the interim period.

"What does this mean in practice for the prophet? It means believing that God will eventually punish the idolatrous and violent nation (2:5-20), that God will remember mercy in the midst of wrath and bring salvation to Israel (3:2-19). This thematic parallel with Rom 1:18-3:20 and 3:21-4:25 is striking and continues to suggest that Paul does, indeed, have the larger context from Habakkuk in mind. Faced with pagan idolatry and arrogance, the devout first-century Jew longed for God's righteousness to break forth, bringing wrath on the nations and salvation for Israel. Paul, however, has seen God's purpose unveiled in the gospel and believes, like the prophet, that this vision is the key to understanding all that will now take place. This solution to the problem of first-century Israel produces a second-order problem: Much of ethnic Israel is failing to believe the gospel, while Gentiles are coming in in droves. Paul will deal with this in due course. For the moment he contents himself with the cryptic, but evocative quotation. He is not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power to salvation for all believers; because, faced with a world in idolatry and ruin, God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel, a matter of divine faithfulness reaching down and calling out the response of human faithfulness. In this setting, 'the righteous shall live by faithfulness'; whether divine or human or both, Paul does not need to say. The sentence remains cryptic until we reach 3:21-4:25."

Romans 1:18f.

Verse 18 marks a sudden transition to the theme of sin and judgment – a theme that continues to 3:20 (though see Wright's comments on previous verses). Only with 3:21 does Paul pick up again the theme of the gospel outlined in vv. 16-17. Paul is outlining the predicament which makes the gospel necessary. "His argument moves in several clearly marked stages. Heading the entire section is the announcement of God's wrath against sin (1:18-20). But almost as important in this announcement is the insistence that God's wrath is *earned*: Human beings have suppressed God's truth. Paul goes on to show how all people, Gentiles (1:21-32) and Jews (2:1-29) alike, have rejected God's truth and brought justly on themselves God's wrath. In 3:1-8 Paul moves away from the main story line to qualify what he says in chapter 2 about the privileges of the Jews. Then in 3:9-20, he brings the discussion to a close with a final indictment of humanity." Moo.

Wright comments, "Romans 1:18-3:20 ... is all about God's righteousness, both in the sense that God is the judge in the cosmic lawcourt and in the sense that God is in covenant with Israel, the covenant that causes peculiar problems when Israel, too, is found guilty in God's sight... God created humans to bear the divine image within the creation and called Israel to shine the divine light into a darkened world. Faced with human rebellion and Jewish faithlessness, will God abandon these projects? This section repeatedly emphasises that God will remain faithful, though it does not explain how – except that God's wrath means precisely the determination not to give evil the last word, to root out from the good creation all that defaces and destroys it. Already therefore, we find ourselves looking ahead both to the end of chap. 8, with the renewal of humans and of creation, and to the end of chap 11, when 'all Israel shall be saved.' It is because the creator God remains implacably opposed to all the forces of evil that there is hope. The revelation of wrath is itself, however paradoxically, part of the good news."

Romans 1:18

Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσεβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,

The parallel with verse 17 (present tense of ἀποκαλύπτω) may suggest that it is the gospel and its proclamation which is also the revealer of God's wrath. Moo thinks this unlikely since it does not fit with Paul's consistently positive use of the word 'gospel.' He says, "Probably, then, the 'for' that begins this verse introduces all of the section that follows: It is necessary for God to reveal his righteousness in the gospel *because* God has also found it necessary to reveal his wrath against sin." – but see Wright above.

"As with all of Paul's 'apocalyptic' theology, the 'end' expected by Second Temple Jews has split into two; the end had in one sense happened, but in another sense was yet to happen fully (see esp. 1 Cor 15:12-28). Thus, although the wrath is still to be revealed in the future (2:5), the last day has in some sense been brought forward into the present... The fact of Jesus has drawn back the veil on the wrath to come." Wright. Cf. 2:16.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

"It has been noted that in only one other place does Paul add to the word 'wrath' the genitive 'of God' (Col 3:6, cf. Eph 5:6), and that he never uses the verb 'to be wrathful' with God as subject; and deduced that Paul thought of the divine wrath in impersonal terms, as an almost automatic force which resists evil. It is doubtful whether this view can stand. When Paul speaks of wrath, it is in general quite clear from the context that the wrath is God's; so, for example 3:5; 9:32. Wrath is God's personal (though never malicious or, in a bad sense, emotional) reaction against sin." Barrett.

Note also Moo's helpful discussion concerning the wrath of God on pp. 64,65 where he considers Dodd's views on this issue. Moo concludes "believers seeking to understand Paul's presentation of the gospel in Romans need to adjust their own perspective to match the biblical worldview. Reading and rereading Scripture is the only practicable way to soak up that biblical worldview."

Wright emphasises that "wrath" is an aspect of God's passionate concern for all that he has made, he will "tolerate nothing less than the best for them."

ἀσεβεια, ας f godlessness, wickedness

Religious corruption – particularly illustrated by idolatry, cf. Eph 2:12; Col 1:21.

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

We must not lose sight here of the common root: the thought here is of human injustice in stark contrast to the justice or righteousness of God revealed in the gospel.

A wrong relationship with God leads to moral corruption. One cannot hope to 'reform manners' or transform society apart from the power of the gospel.

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality; ἐν ἄ. truly
κατεχω hold fast, keep, restrain

Here κατεχω is used to mean 'hold down' or 'hold imprisoned' – i.e. the truth is deliberately stifled, as Paul goes on to show in the verses that follow. "The truth is dangerous – so rebellious humans suppress it, hide it away, try to prevent it leaking out. Not only in war is truth an early casualty." Wright.

Romans 1:19

διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνερωσεν.

διοτι because, for, therefore

γνωστος, η, ον known, what can be known
φανερως, α, ον evident, plain, visible
φανερωω make known, reveal, make evident

Romans 1:20

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους,

ἀορατος, ον unseen, invisible

God's invisible attributes.

κτισις, εως f creation, act of creation
ποιημα, τος n what is created or made

Dative of instrument.

νοεω perceive, discern
καθοραω perceive clearly

Cf. for instance, Ps 19.

τε enclitic particle and, τε ... και both ... and also

αἰδιος, ον eternal, everlasting
θειοτης, ητος f deity, divine nature

These qualities illustrate rather than exhaust what is revealed of God through creation and history.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

εἰς τὸ εἶναι expresses purpose as well as result.

ἀναπολογητος, ον without excuse

Moo makes the following points regarding natural revelation:

- i) There is such a thing as natural revelation (contra Barth);
- ii) What God reveals of himself through nature is limited;
- iii) The results of natural revelation are limited.

God's revelation of himself through the created world cannot, of itself, bring people to a true knowledge of God but does *leave them 'without excuse.'* Such revelation can, however, lead to a desire to learn more of God – to know God.

Romans 1:21-31

These verses are dominated by a threefold repetition, 'they exchanged ... therefore God gave them over,' vv. 22-24, 25-26, 27-28. "In each case, human beings put their own 'god' or sin in place of the truth God has revealed to them. God reacts by 'handing them over' to the consequences of the choice they have made." Moo.

Romans 1:21

διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ηὐχαρίστησαν, ἀλλὰ ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἄσυνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά:

γνόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl γινωσκω
δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
ἢ or

εὐχαριστεω thank, give thanks

ἐματαιώθησαν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 pl
ματαιοομαι be given to futile
speculation

διαλογισμος, ου m thought, reasoning

σκοτιζομαι be or become darkened

ἄσυνετος, ον without understanding, dull, senseless, foolish

The problem of fallen mankind is not primarily their ignorance but their rebellion.

Romans 1:22

φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν,

Wright comments on vv. 22-23, "here Paul is deliberately, though covertly, retelling the story of Genesis 3, on the one hand, and of Israel in the wilderness, on the other."

φασκω claim, assert

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

μωρανω make foolish

Cf. 1 Cor 1:18-25.

Romans 1:23

καὶ ἠλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν.

Paul's language reflects Ps 106:20 and Israel's fall into idolatry when the people made a golden calf to worship (Ex 32, see also Jer 2:11).

ἄλλασσω change, alter, exchange

δοξα, ης f glory

ἀφθαρτος, ον imperishable, immortal

ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness

εικων, ονος f image, appearance, statue

φθαρτος, η, ον subject to corruption

πετεινον, ου n bird

τετραπουν, ποδος n four-footed animal, animal

ἐρπετον, ου n reptile

The literal idolatry of some illustrates the heart idolatry of the many, even those who would not be so foolish as to bow down to a physical idol.

Romans 1:24

Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς,

διο therefore, for this reason

παραδιδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

"God gave them up.' This repeated phrase carries scriptural echoes from Ps 81:12."

Wright. The psalm retells Israel's idolatry after the exodus.

ἐπιθυμία, ας f longing, lust, passion

Matthew Henry speaks of this as God taking off the bridle of restraining grace.

ἀκαθαρσία, ας f impurity, immorality, uncleanness

ἀτιμάζεσθαι Verb, pres midd/pass infin

ἀτιμάζω treat shamefully, dishonour
σῶμα, τος n body

Romans 1:25

οἵτινες μετέλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἦτις, ὁ τι who, they

μετέλλαξαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl μεταλλάσσω exchange

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

ψευδος, ους n lie, that which is false

σεβάζομαι worship, reverence

λατρεῶ serve, worship

κτίσις, εως f creation, what is created

παρὰ preposition with acc rather than, contrary to

κτίσαντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s κτιζῶ create, make

εὐλογητος, η, ον blessed, praised

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰών, αἰῶνος m age, eternity

Murray comments that the dishonour done by men to God does not detract from the intrinsic and unchangeable blessedness of God which (in contrast with those described above), receives the 'Amen' from believers.

Romans 1:26

Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας· αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετέλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,

πάθη Noun, nom/acc pl παθος, ους n lust, passion

ἀτιμία, ας f disgrace, shame, dishonour

τε γαρ... τε και (v.27) for both ... and also

θηλυς, εια, υ female, woman

φυσικος, η, ον natural, in accord with nature

χρησις, εως f function

φυσις, εως f nature, natural condition

Paul's use of 'natural' and 'nature' have to be understood in the context of the emphasis on creation and Creator in the previous verse. In one sense sin is 'natural' in a fallen world. Paul's use of the term here is quite different, it means that which conforms to its created purpose. "These 'natural' relations are the ones God established for human beings in his creation." Moo.

Wright comments, "The underlying logic seems to be as follows. Those who worship the true God are, as Paul says elsewhere, renewed according to the divine image (Col 3:10). When this worship is exchanged for the worship of other gods, the result will be that this humanness, this image-bearing quality, is correspondingly distorted."

Romans 1:27

ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

ἄρσην, εν gen ενος male, man

ἀφιημι leave, forsake, let go

ἐξεκαύθησαν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 pl

ἐκκαίομαι be inflamed (of lust)

ὀρεξις, εως f lustful passion

ἀλλήλων, οις, ους one another

ἀσχημοσύνη, ης f shameless act(s)

κατεργάζομαι do, accomplish

ἀντιμισθία, ας f response, return, punishment

ἔδει Verb, imperf indic, 3 s (impers) δεῖ

impersonal verb it is necessary, must, ought

πλανη, ης f error, deceit, deception

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

ἀπολαμβάνω receive back, get back

'receiving in themselves the due penalty of their perversion'. It is not clear what particular consequence Paul had in mind here, and perhaps it has been left deliberately undefined. The principle is this: abandoning God's pattern for his creation will bring inevitable penalties. We may think of physical, emotional and social consequences of such lifestyle and acts.

Romans 1:28

Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,

δοκιμάζω test, approve

δοκιμάζω has the sense of to prove by testing or approve, it is used here in the sense of 'see fit', 'consider it worthwhile.'

ἐπιγνωσις, εως f knowledge

παραδίδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

ἀδοκιμος, ον failing to meet the test, disqualified, worthless

Note the word play. The word means not approved, hence 'rejected,' 'worthless.' It is not our proof/approval of God but his of us which is of lasting significance.

νοϋς, νοος, νοι, νοϋν m mind, thought,
reason, understanding

Sin affects the mind – our thinking. "Turning away from true knowledge of God means cutting ourselves off from any ultimately accurate understanding of this world and our place within it." Moo.

καθηκει impersonal verb it is fitting

Romans 1:29-31

Moo suggests that the following list falls into 3 sections, accurately reflected in a three sentence structure in the NIV – v29a to κακια, v29b and vv 30-31. He comments, "The syntactical structure reflects a certain logical order as well. The first sentence contains a list of general terms for sin; the second focuses on basic sins affecting human relationships; and the third list is more a potpourri of sinful conduct. Similar lists of sins – usually called 'vice lists' – appear elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt 15:19; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3) and imitate a widespread secular form."

Romans 1:29

πεπληρωμένους πάση ἀδικία πονηρία
πλεονεξία κακία, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου
ἐριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστάς,

Note how the character of the mind or disposition of the heart (νοϋς) is reflected in patterns of behaviour.

πεπληρωμένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc pl
πληρωω fill, make full

Emphasises the extent of depravity. "Such people are full, Paul says twice, of all kinds of evil; like jugs filled to overflowing with noxious liquids, they are brim-full of wickedness, ready to spill over at any moment." Wright.

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin
πονηρια, ας f evil, wickedness

There are several variations in MSS regarding the order of elements in this list. Many MSS, followed by the TR include πορνεία before πονηρια. Metzger thinks this more likely to be "an intrusion into the text either accidentally or deliberately" than πορνεία having dropped out of the original.

πλεονεξια, ας f greed, covetousness
κακια, ας evil, wickedness
μεστος, η, ον full
φθονος, ου m envy, jealousy, spite
φονος, ου m murder, killing
ἐρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry
δολος, ου m deceit, treachery
κακοηθεια, ας f meanness, evil done for
the sake of evil

ψιθυριστης, ου m one who bears harmful
gossip against another, tale-bearer

Romans 1:30

καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὕβριστάς,
ὑπερηφάνους, ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν,
γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,

καταλαλος, ου m slanderer, one who
speaks evil of another
θεοστυγης, ες hating God, hateful to God

An ambiguous term, probably having the first of the above meanings in this list of sinful attributes.

ὕβριστης, ου m insolent person
ὑπερηφανος, ον arrogant, proud
ἀλαζων, ονος m arrogant boaster
ἐφευρετης, ου m one who schemes or
plans
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
γονευσ, εως m parent
ἀπειθεῖς Adjective, m & f, nom/acc pl
ἀπειθης, ες disobedient, rebellious

This might seem lightweight among the vices listed earlier but this is not the Biblical perception. This is transgression of one of the Ten Commandments and is evidence of a rebellious heart or mind (cf. Ex 20:12; Lev 19:3; Prov 20:20; Matt 15:4; 19:19; Eph 6:2).

Romans 1:31

ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους,
ἀνελεήμονας·

ἀσυνετος, ον without understanding,
senseless, foolish
ἀσυνθετος, ον faithless, disloyal
ἀστοργος, ον lacking normal human
affection, inhuman

"It was not at all unusual for pagans to drown, or in some other way to destroy unwanted offspring. In this connection think of present-day *abortion*, for which all kinds of excuses are invented." Hendriksen.

ἀνελεημων, ον unmerciful

Romans 1:32

οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες, ὅτι οἱ
τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ
μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν
τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἦτις, ὁ τι
who, whoever
δικαιωμα, τος n regulation, requirement

Cf. 8:4.

ἐπιγνωσκω understand, recognise
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and
adjective such, of such kind
πρασσω practice, do

ἀξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving
θανατος, ου m death

Reflecting Genesis 3.

μονον adv only, alone

συνευδοκω approve of, agree to

It is shameful enough when people engage in evil acts which they know are wrong and which they condemn in others, but it is greater depravity still when evil is called good and approved of both in oneself and others. "Once light and darkness have been renamed, the process of dehumanisation is complete and may well prove irreversible." Wright.

Romans 2:1-11

Paul shifts from using third person plural verbs to second person singular. "In fact, Paul here begins to use a popular ancient literary form, in which a speaker or writer instructs his audience by letting them listen in on a discussion between himself and the representative of another viewpoint." (Moo). Some (e.g. Calvin), think Paul has in mind educated pagans who thought themselves superior to others, but most think Paul is now beginning to address Jews (so Murray and Moo). Moo writes, "By the time Paul writes Romans, he has been preaching the gospel for at least twenty-two years. He knows exactly how people will respond to the various points he makes. How often must Paul have condemned the Gentiles for their sin only to note Jews in the audience joining in with his criticism and priding themselves on being far superior to them. Thus, we can almost see Paul at the beginning of chapter 2 fixing his gaze on these self-satisfied Jews and blasting them in the same way he has condemned the Gentiles..." "To be sure, Paul does not directly address his 'opponent' as a Jew until 2:17. But the language he uses in verses 1-5 points unmistakably to a Jewish situation. Paul has shown in 1:21-32 that Gentiles have suppressed the truth that God revealed to them in nature and that they therefore have 'no excuse' before God. He now begins to show that Jews also suppress the truth God has given them and that they, too, are 'without excuse.'" Moo suggests that there are strong parallels between Romans 1:21-32 and Wisdom of Solomon 12:23-14:31. In reading the latter part of the first chapter the Gentile Christians among the church at Rome may have been "upset that Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, repeats the standard Jewish diatribe about Gentiles" while the Jewish Christians may have been "tempted to gloat... But the reaction of both groups takes a dramatic turn when they begin reading Romans 2."

Romans 2:1

Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρῖνων· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρῖνων·
διο therefore, for this reason

διο can be taken with what precedes or with what follows. If the latter, it means in effect, 'for this reason (which I will now give you)...' Moo suggests it points *back* particularly to the universal indictment of 1:18-20, "Jews are without excuse because they are, along with all people, guilty of suppressing the truth."

ἀναπολόγητος, ον without excuse

ὦ O!

κρινω judge, condemn

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement on

πρασσω see 1:32

The basic charge here, which is applied chiefly to the Jews, is that of hypocrisy: failure to recognise in themselves the sins they condemn in others. Not that idolatry or homosexuality were common among Jews in the first century, but they did commit many of the sins Paul lists in 1:29-31.

Romans 2:2

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

Some MSS read οἶδαμεν γαρ rather than οἶδαμεν δε. Metzger argues that δε is both better supported and better fits the context – δε implies a new point whereas γαρ would imply continuation of the previous point.

κριμα, τος n judgement, verdict

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

God's judgment corresponds with the reality of the situation. "There is no hiding place at the last assize." Wright.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind, similar

Romans 2:3

λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρῖνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

λογιζομαι reckon, calculate,

ὦ O!

ἐκφεύξῃ Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 s

ἐκφευγω escape, flee, run away

The impossibility of escape rests on the fact of God's righteous judgement (v.2).

Romans 2:4

ἡ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;

ἡ οἱ

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness,
mercy

ἀνοχη, ης f forbearance, tolerance

Only here and 3:25.

μακροθυμια, ας f longsuffering, patience

God is not quick to judge (see Neh 9:17) but that does not mean he will not judge.

καταφρονεω despise, treat with contempt
ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

χρηστος, η, ον kind, loving, good; το χ. kindness

μετανοια, ας f repentance, change of heart, change of way

See 2 Peter 3:9. Paul here opposes a view current among any Jews that their election delivered them from God's wrath. "God's kindness, Paul says, was intended to lead 'you toward repentance.' Instead, apparently, the Jews were regarding it as a *carte blanche* to sin with impunity. As a result, concludes the apostle, the Jews are 'storing up wrath' against themselves, a wrath that will be inflicted on the day of God's coming righteous judgment (v.5)." Moo.

Romans 2:5

κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ,

σκληροτης, ητος f hardness

ἀμετανοητος, ον unrepentant, obstinate

God's longsuffering should melt the heart into repentance, but here it is spoken of as having the opposite effect of hardening the unrepentant heart.

θησαυριζω store up, save, put aside

σεαυτου, ης see v.1

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

The passage of time does not make the prospect of judgement less likely but rather heaps up the weight of judgement to come.

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

δικαιοκρισια, ας f righteous judgement

Romans 2:6-11

Paul makes the point that God assesses Jews and Gentiles on the same basis. The structure is chiasmic – A B C C' B' A'. The main point is in the opening and closing statements (A=v.6, A'=v.11)

Romans 2:6

ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·

ἀποδιδωμι give, give back, repay

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

Paul is quoting from the OT, cf. Prov 24:12 also Ps 62:12; Eccles 1:14; Hos 12:2.

Moo considers the various views on whether, in this and the following verses, Paul is affirming salvation by works. He hesitantly endorses the view of Murray to the effect that, "Paul may not be referring to anyone in particular. His purpose here is to enunciate the basis on which, outside of Christ, God judges people. Whether anyone actually persists in good works adequately enough to earn salvation Paul simply does not say. His subsequent argument reveals that, in fact, no one can do so (see 3:9, 20)."

Wright comments, "This deep-rooted Jewish tradition is not denied by Paul, but rather celebrated. If one of the purposes of the letter is to show that God's justice upstages that of Caesar and Rome, we could expect nothing less. We must reserve for a later point the important question of how this final judgment according to works, described as 'justification' in v. 13, relates to the 'justification by faith' spoken of in chap. 3 and elsewhere."

Romans 2:7

τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον·

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

'To those that by patience in good work seek glory and ...'

δοξα, ης f glory

Cf. 5:2; 8:18,21,30.

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

ἀφθαρσια, ας f imperishability, immortality

ζητεω seek, search for, look for

ζωη, ης f life

"Works without redemptive aspiration are dead works. Aspiration without good works is presumption." Murray.

Romans 2:8

τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός,

ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition

There is some debate over the meaning of this word. Murray argues that its meaning is 'contention' and that the thought is that of rebellion against God. Most, however, understand it to mean concern for personal gain (self-seeking):

ἐριθος a hireling
ἐριθευειν act as a hireling
ἐριθεια the mind of a hireling

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

πειθω pass obey, be a follower of

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ὀργη see v.5.

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

Emphasises the intensity of God's wrath.

Romans 2:9

θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία, ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχήν
ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνος·

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

στενοχωρια, ας f distress, trouble

ψυχη, ης f 'soul', living being, person

κατεργαζομαι do, accomplish

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

πρωτον adv. first, first of all

Ἕλλην, ηνος m a Greek, non-Jew

Cf. 1:16. The priority of the Jew applies to judgment and condemnation as well as to salvation.

Romans 2:10

δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ
ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ
Ἕλληνι·

δοξα δε και τιμη cf. v.7

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

The Semitic concept of peace, Shalom, here replaces the Greek ἀφθαρσια of verse 7.

ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

Romans 2:11

οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

προσωπολημψια, ας f favouritism, treating
one person better than another

Romans 2:12

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ
ἀπολοῦνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ
νόμου κριθήσονται·

Paul now turns to the topic of the law.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as; pl. as many as,
all

ἀνόμως adv without the (Jewish) law

I.e. Gentiles.

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

ἀπολλυμι destroy; midd perish, die

There is no support for the notion that ignorance of the law may excuse sin.

κρινω judge, pass judgement on,
condemn

"The law is no talisman calculated to preserve those who possess it, it is an instrument of judgment." Barrett. The reason is provided in v.13.

Romans 2:13

οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ
θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται.

ἀκροατης, ου m hearer

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ποιητης, ου m one who does or carries
out, doer

δικαιοω justify, acquit, declare & treat as
righteous

"Whether or not there are such perfect ποιηται του νομου the apostle does not say in this passage, but only opposes the true standard to the false standard of the Jews that ἀκροαται του νομου are just before God. The entire reasoning of the Roman epistle tends to this conclusion, that no man is by nature such a ποιητης του νομου, or can be." Philippi. Cf. the note from Moo at v.6.

Wright comments, "It will take him [Paul] eight or ten more chapters to explain finally what he means by 'doing' Torah, and we must follow the argument through to understand him at that point (see on 8:1-4; 10:5-11). For the moment, he is content to assert the point: Israel's ethnic privilege, backed up by possession of Torah, will be of no avail at the final judgment if Israel has not kept Torah. Justification, at the last, will be on the basis of performance, not possession."

Romans 2:14-15

It is perhaps best to link vv 14-15 to v.12 (so Calvin, Hodge, Murray, Moo) and regard it as providing the answer to the question arising from v.12, namely: If the Gentiles are without the law how can they be regarded as having sinned? For "Where there is no law there is no transgression" (4:15; 5:13).

Wright considers the various interpretations of vv.14-15. On the one hand are those who suggest that Paul is putting up a purely hypothetical case which in has no genuine exemplars. On the other hand there are those who suggest that Paul did not really believe in the universality of human sin. Wright thinks both these options untenable and adds, "The third way though is that, just as in chapter 1 Paul was hinting at Jews sharing in the judgment that would fall on pagans, a theme waiting to be explored more fully in due course, so here he is hinting at a theme he will explore later in the letter, namely that the people in question are *Christian* Gentiles (vv. 14-15) – indeed, Christian Jews and Gentiles alike (vv. 7,10). There are problems with this reading, too, but they are not so insuperable as sometimes supposed."

"... Paul's view, to anticipate the later argument, is that those who are in Christ, who are indwelt by the Spirit, do in fact 'do the law,' even though, in the case of Gentiles, they have never heard of it. The law, in Paul's view, pointed to that fullness of life and obedience to God which comes about in the Messiah; those who attain that fullness of life and obedience are therefore 'doing the Torah' in the senses that, to Paul, really matter. He is well aware that this is really paradoxical, but well aware also that to say anything else would be to imply, which he never does, either that the Torah was a bad thing, now happily left behind, or that Gentile Christians are second-class citizens in the kingdom of the Messiah. He will have it both ways; they are not under the Torah, but at the same time they are essentially doing what Torah really wanted."

Romans 2:14

ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος·

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, οὐς n nation, people; τα ἑ. Gentiles

φύσει Noun, dat s φύσις, εὼς f nature, natural condition

Wright links φύσει to the words preceding it rather than following it. Paul is speaking about Gentiles who, in the nature of the case, do not have the Torah.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"Their moral nature, with its voice of conscience commanding and forbidding, supplies to their own Ego the place of the revealed law possessed by the Jews." Meyer. "For the Greeks, the 'natural law' or 'unwritten law' was an important idea, establishing the basis for universal moral norms and for the 'positive' law enacted in the city-states. The Stoics, a school of philosophers influential in Paul's day, rooted this law in nature. Jews familiar with this tradition then used *physis* in a similar way to demonstrate the universal applicability of the moral standards found in the law of Moses. Paul clearly reflects this tradition in 2:14, and first-century readers would immediately have understood that he was endorsing this widespread tradition about the unwritten universal moral law." Moo. These are an example of 'doers of the law' who are not 'hearers' of it.

Romans 2:15

οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl οἷσις, ἦτις, ὁ τι who, which

Here, bears the sense of "These ..."

ἐνδεικνυμαι show, give indication of, do
γραπτος, η, ον written, inscribed

Murray points out that it is not the law which is written on their hearts (a phrase used of the believer) but the *works* of the law. John Owen suggests that this is the remnant or remaining spark of 'inbred law' which was present in unfallen man and is renewed in the Christian. Wright, however, reads this as the fulfilment of the new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:33 etc., adding, "Paul clearly believed, and elaborated this at various points, that the covenant had been renewed, according to this promise, through Jesus, and that this renewal was being implemented by the Spirit in those who were 'in Christ.' This phrase is a further indication that he has Christian Gentiles in mind."

συμμαρτυρω show to be true, give evidence in support of

συνειδησις, εὼς f conscience, awareness
μεταξυ prep with gen between, among
ἀλλήλων, οἱς, οὐς one another

λογισμος, ου m thought, reasoning

μεταξυ ἀλληλων των λογισμων 'among their various/conflicting thoughts' either within one person or between one Gentile and another. The reference to conscience suggests the former (so Barrett).

κατηγορεω accuse, bring charges against
ἢ οἱ
ἀπολογεομαι defend oneself, excuse

Romans 2:16

ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

This verse seems not to follow on simply from verse 15, but to look back to verses 13 or 12 (so NIV which treats vv. 14 and 15 as a parenthesis) and to the main argument of this whole section, cf. v.5. However, Moo suggests "It is better to take verse 16 with the final verbs in verse 15. The constant self-criticism of the Gentiles finds its ultimate meaning in the judgment of God at the end of history. That judgment, Paul affirms, takes place 'through Jesus Christ,' whom God has appointed as the arbiter (see, e.g., 'the judgment seat of Christ' in 2 Cor 5:10). This Christologically oriented judgment is fully in accord with the gospel Paul preaches." (So also Barrett.)

Wright comments, "God's justice will be revealed, fulfilling scriptural promises and putting all other justice (Caesar's included) to shame. Why so? Not least precisely because this revelation will expose and assess the secrets of all human hearts. Just as Jews cannot hide from the judgment by pleading their Jewishness, so no human can hide from the judgment by relying on outward appearances and covering up the secrets of the heart."

ὅτε conj when, at which time
κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret, private

These inner conflicts (v.15) and judgments are now made public and are ratified by the judge of all the earth.

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

The proclamation of God's judgement is also an aspect of the Gospel, cf. 1:18.

Romans 2:17-29

The remainder of this chapter focusses on the two distinctives of Judaism: possession of the law, vv. 17-24; and circumcision, vv. 25-29. "In discussing their value in these verses, then, Paul is discussing the ultimate value of being Jewish." Moo.

Wright comments, "We now arrive at the point to which the whole section has been building up. Israel, resting on God's special vocation, has not fulfilled that vocation, and must face the challenge from those who, though not ethically Jewish, are now inheriting Israel's role in God's purposes..."

"The passage, then, is not simply part of a long demonstration that all humans are sinful. That is indeed one of the major thrusts of the section 1:18-3:20, but within that overarching purpose these verses introduce a quite different idea. Faced with a general denunciation of the pagan world, many educated Jews – including, presumably, Paul himself in his pre-Christian life – would say that this is of course true of pagans, but that God has chosen Israel as the light to the nations and has given Israel the Torah so that it can fulfil this role. Israel is the solution to the world's plight (see, among countless possible examples, 2 Bar 48:20-24). The problem he is outlining at this point in the argument, and to which he will offer a solution in the section beginning at 3:21, is not simply that all are sinful and in need of salvation, but that the bearers of the solution have become part of the problem. Israel, called to be the light of the world, has become part of the darkness. How then can God's covenant plan be fulfilled? The problem of Israel is thus also a problem for God. It is, in fact, a further dimension of God's righteousness. Only if we appreciate this will the transition from chapter 2 to chapter 3 make sense."

Romans 2:17

Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ

The TR, following most minuscules, reads Ἴδε σὺ rather than Εἰ δε σὺ; the latter text is strongly supported.

ἐπονομάζομαι call oneself

Ἰουδαῖος "The term *Jew* originally referred to a person from the region occupied by the descendants of Judah, but it was applied generally to Israelite people after the exile. By Paul's day, the term was widely used in this more general sense. The name signified that one belonged to that people, distinct from all others, whom God had chosen to be his own. All other benefits flow from this fundamental one." Moo. Paul returns to this theme in vv 28-29 when he defines what really constitutes a Jew – i.e. what really makes someone a member of the people of God.

ἐπαναπαυομαι rest upon, rely on

"It is a matter of finding security and comfort, not a matter of using the Torah as a ladder of good works, up which to climb to a position of moral superiority or a self-earned salvation. The attitude Paul describes would say: 'God gave Israel the Torah; our possession of it is the rock on which we stand; it is what makes us Jews God's special people.'" Wright.

καυχᾶσαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep indic, irreg 2 s καυχομαι boast, boast about, celebrate

Cf. Mic 3:11.

Romans 2:18

καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου,

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

το θέλημα here meaning the revealed will of God – i.e. they knew the Scriptures.

δοκιμάζω test, examine, approve, discern
διαφέρω be worth more than, be superior to

'approve what is superior'

κατηχεω inform, instruct

I.e. and so be in a position to instruct the nations.

Romans 2:19

πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,

πέποιθάς Verb, perf act indic, 2 s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

ὁδηγος, ου m guide, leader

τυφλος, η, ον blind

φως, φωτος n light

σκότει Noun, dat s σκοτος, ους n darkness

It has been suggested that this verse reflects the Servant Songs of Isaiah (cf. Is. 42:6-7; 49:19). Paul seems to be saying that Israel, who considered herself the Servant of the Lord, did not live up to the description given in the Servant Songs.

Romans 2:20

παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μὴ μορφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ –

παιδευτης, ου m teacher, one who disciplines or corrects

ἀφρόνων Adjective, gen pl ἀφρων, ον gen ονος foolish, ignorant

διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

μορφωσις, εως f outward form, embodiment

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

"Paul is acknowledging, and endorsing, a remarkably high, almost incarnational, view of Torah, which should be kept in mind during subsequent discussions." Wright.

"Paul breaks off his conditional sentence at the end of 2:20... He does this so that he can get the maximum rhetorical effect from the charge that he now levels against the Jews. By repeating in summary form some of the privileges he listed in verses 17-20, Paul highlights effectively the contrast between claim and reality." Moo.

Romans 2:21

ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκει; ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;

διδασκω teach

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

σεαυτου, ης see v.19

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

κλεπτω steal

There are two possible ways of interpreting this and the following verse:

- i) Literal – Paul knows of immorality among the Jews and is making the general point that they are no more moral than the Gentiles;
- ii) Metaphorical – they commit heart sins which correspond to the outward sins they condemn in others.

Barrett comments, "When theft, adultery and sacrilege are strictly and radically understood, there is no man who is not guilty of these."

Wright comments, "Remembering that the 'you' in question is not 'every Jewish individual,' but 'Israel as a whole,' the answer must be: Israel has squandered its inheritance. Like the biblical prophets, one of whom he will presently quote, Paul charges Israel with infidelity (see also Ps 50:16-20 and the other passages quoted in 3:10-18)."

Romans 2:22

ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;

μοιχευω commit adultery

βδελυσσομαι detest

εἰδωλον, ου n idol

ἱεροσυλεω commit sacrilege, rob temples

If taken metaphorically, adultery could refer to unfaithfulness to God (cf. Hos 1-3; Jer 3:8 etc.), 'robbing temples' could refer to self-assertion, making oneself God, the ultimate idolatry.

Wright, however, comments, "One is unlikely to demonstrate to the watching pagan world that there is a better way of being human by stealing from pagan temples. This practice, though probably not widespread, was not unknown. Some Jews had evidently used the scriptural polemic against idols to argue that, since idols have no real existence, things given to them are nobody's property, and hence may be taken with impunity. Paul's point is that the practice exists and brings discredit on Israel precisely among the people to whom 'the Jew' is supposed to be acting as a light to the world."

Romans 2:23

ὅς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις;

καυχᾶσαι see v.17

παραβασις, εως f transgression,
disobedience, sin

ἀτιμάζω treat shamefully, dishonour

This verse is punctuated as a question though many prefer to read it as a statement (punctuation is secondary).

Romans 2:24

τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.

Wright comments, "This opens up the substance of the charge. The real problem is Israel's failure to bring God worldwide honour. That was the purpose for which the Torah had been given. What Israel has done with Torah has instead brought dishonour: the pagan nations scorn the true God on the basis of the behaviour of the covenant people."

ὄνομα, τος n name, person, reputation
βλασφημεω speak against, slander, insult
ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation; τα
ἔ. Gentiles

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

See Is 52:5 "Although blaspheming God's name in Isaiah comes about because of pagan oppression of Israel, Paul creates an ironic twist by attributing this blasphemy to Israel's sinfulness in the midst of pagans. But he is still fair to the larger context from which he draws the quotation, for Israel's oppression by pagan nations is itself a result of her sin." Moo. In Wright's words, "Israel's 'exile' is still continuing, not in a geographical, but in a theological, spiritual, and moral sense." See furthermore Ezek 36:20.

Romans 2:25

Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης· ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖ, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision

Circumcision was considered such a vital distinctive of the Jew, marking them off as the people of God, that the term itself was used of Judaism, cf. Eph 2:11.

ὠφελεω gain, profit, achieve, benefit

ἐὰν if, if it should be

πρασσω practice, do

Moo thinks that v.25a makes a negative point. "Circumcision has no value to rescue Jews from God's wrath because their obedience to the law never reaches the level required for salvation. The second part of verse 25 simply states the negative corollary of this point: Failing to obey the law can annul the value of circumcision."

It is probably better to view Paul as simply making the point that circumcision is a mark not merely of privilege but also of obligation, and that those who pride themselves in the sign have failed to live up to their obligation or calling. Cf. 1 Cor 7:19.

παραβατης, ου m one who breaks God's
law, transgressor

ᾖ Verb, pres subj, 2 s ειμι

ἀκροβυστια, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews
γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

Romans 2:26

ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται;

δικαιωμα, τος n regulation, requirement

That which the law requires if a person is to be righteous before God.

φυλασσω keep

λογισθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s

λογιζομαι reckon, count

Godet, followed by Murray, thinks that Paul here refers to Gentile Christians who, though uncircumcised, live in obedience to the demands of God, cf. 8:4 where Paul again uses the phrase το δικαίωμα του νομου. Moo, however, favours the (unfulfilled) hypothetical: "The apostle makes clear elsewhere that there is, in fact, no person who can do the law and be saved (3:20). Thus, he must again here be speaking hypothetically, theorising about the existence of a law-observant Gentile and what the consequences would be." The argument for the former view is strengthened by v.29 and is strongly argued by Wright who believes that "Paul's description of this parallel 'Jewishness,' this new sort of 'circumcision,' is replete with overtones of 'new covenant' passages both in scripture and elsewhere in his writings." He argues that Paul's words are an abbreviated version of Ezek 36:27, and that his thoughts here are developed further in 10:5-11.

Romans 2:27

καὶ κρινεῖ ἢ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.

κρινεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s κρινω
φύσις, εως f nature, natural condition
τελεω fulfill, carry out
γράμμα, τος n letter (of alphabet), letter

διὰ γράμματος 'possessing the written law' διὰ of 'attendant circumstances'

Romans 2:28

οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν, οὐδὲ ἢ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομῆς·

φανερως, α, ον evident, plain, visible
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

Romans 2:29

ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομῆς καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

"In referring to the secret/heart/spirit people, Paul clearly means to designate those in whom the gospel of the Messiah has done its work. The promises of God through Deuteronomy 30, Ezekiel 36, and elsewhere have come true. God has done, in Jesus and the Spirit, what he had promised; the result is the creation of the people of the new covenant. Paul's clearest statement of this point may be found in 2 Cor 3:1-6, where the letter/spirit contrast is again prominent. There are several other passages in which a similar theological understanding may be discerned, not least Romans 8 and 10." Wright.

κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret, private

Perhaps the 'inner man' cf. Eph 3:16.

περιτομῆς καρδίας cf. Deut 10:16, also Jer 4:4 and Phil 3:3.

πνευματι a reference to the Spirit (not man's spirit). Paul contrasts the life-giving power of the Spirit of God with the powerlessness of the mere letter of the law, cf. 8:4-17.

ἔπαινος, ου m praise, approval

The name 'Judah' (and hence the title 'Jew') means 'praise', cf. Gen 29:35; 49:8. Hence these are the people who receive the name 'Judah' from God.

"What he does, then, at the end of this chapter, is to anticipate the direction of his argument. He will show that only those who, through faith in Christ, have received the Spirit of God make up God's true people. Implicit here is a radical redefinition of 'Jew' that will require a lot more explanation as Paul moves forward in this letter." Moo.

Romans 3:1

Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου, ἢ τίς ἢ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;

Paul anticipates the questions that may be in his readers' minds.

περισσος, η, ον more, τὸ περισσὸν advantage

ὠφέλεια, ας f advantage, benefit
περιτομη, ης see 2:25

Verse 2

πολὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.

πολως, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much

τροπος, ου m way; κατα παντα τ. in every way

"The Jew has an advantage which he can never lose, since it rests not on his merit but upon God's faithfulness to his declared word." Barrett.

πρωτον first, in the first place, first of all

Moo thinks Paul intended to give a list but got side-tracked.

πιστευω have faith (in), entrust
λογια, ων n oracles, words

In accordance with the covenant promise made to Abraham (Gen 12:3) and repeated to Jacob/Israel (Gen 28:14), "The Jews were 'entrusted' with messages for the world; not simply with Torah itself, but, through their living under Torah, with words of instruction, of life and light, for the Gentile world. They were to be God's messengers." Wright.

Romans 3:3

τί γάρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μή ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει;

ἀπιστεω fail or refuse to believe
ἀπιστια, ας f unbelief, unfaithfulness

The meaning here is 'unfaithfulness' to the covenant – contrasted then with God's covenant faithfulness.

πιστις, εως f faith
καταργεω render ineffective, cancel

Paul may have been echoing a Jewish objection against his teaching to the effect that, 'Supposing we admit that the Jews have at times been unfaithful, surely this does not annul the covenant as you seem to suggest (2:25). Surely their unfaithfulness does not undermine the faithfulness of God.' Paul's ultimate answer is that the covenant faithfulness of God has been displayed supremely in Jesus the Christ.

Romans 3:4

μή γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσεις ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.

γένειτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι

μή γένοιτο 'may it never be,' 'not at all' cf., 3:6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11.

γινέσθω Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 3 s

γινομαι
ἀληθης, ες true, truthful, genuine
ψευστης, ου m liar

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

The following quotation is from Ps 51:4.

"Jews in Paul's day tended to think of God's faithfulness as oriented positively toward themselves: God would do good things for his people. But, as Paul reminds them, God is also faithful when he punishes the sin of his people – as David himself acknowledges." Moo.

ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that
δικαιωθῆς Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s δικαιοω
justify, declare & treat as righteous
νικήσεις Verb, aor act subj, 2 s νικαω
conquer, overcome, win the verdict
κρίνεσθαί Verb, pres pass infin κρίνω
σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Romans 3:5

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; μή ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω.

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice
συνίστησιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s
συνιστημι and συνιστανω commend, demonstrate

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω
ἀδικος, ον unjust
ἐπιφερω bring upon, inflict, pronounce
ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

Moo thinks that the objection here is from the Jews "wondering how God can be 'righteous' when he judges the sins of the Jews... Paul seems to be grappling here with the common Jewish belief that God's 'righteousness,' his 'covenant faithfulness,' gave the Jews virtual immunity from judgment." – I.e. God must side with his people.

Romans 3:6

μή γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;

γένειτο see v.4

ἐπει since, because, for

πως how(?)

κρίνει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

Paul expects no-one to doubt that God will indeed judge the world. The logic of the argument here may be understood in a number of ways:

- i) If God is unrighteous how is he to judge ...
- ii) If God is not to use his wrath, how is he to judge ...
- iii) If God does not punish Jews as well as Gentiles, how is he to judge *the world*?

Romans 3:7

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι,

Most MSS read εἰ γὰρ rather than εἰ δε, though the quality of support for δε is fairly good. Metzger writes, "A majority of the Committee, feeling that Paul's argument requires a parallel between verses 5 and 7, preferred the reading εἰ δε and regarded εἰ γὰρ as a rather inept scribal substitution, perhaps of Western origin."

ἀληθεια, ας f truth

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

Paul here identifies himself with Israel.

ψευσμα, τος η untruthfulness, deceitfulness

περισσευω abound, increase

δοξα, ης f glory

ἐτι still, yet

κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω

ἁμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner

ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς here perhaps with the force 'just like a *Gentile* sinner.'

"But the Jewish objector is still not satisfied, arguing it is unfair to God to condemn Jews for acts that enhance his glory (v.7). Paul responds with a counter question intended to show the absurdity of such an objection (v.8): should we then take it that any act is justified so long as it brings good in the end?" Moo.

Romans 3:8

καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημοῦμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι Ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακὰ ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ; ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν.

βλασφημεω speak against, slander

φασίν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s φημι say

"As is slanderously reported of us and as some affirm that we say"

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

κριμα, τος η judgement, condemnation, punishment

ἐνδικος, ον just, deserved

This objection is not answered (except by way of condemning his accusers) until chapter 6.

Moo understands v.8 as a counter question by Paul designed to show the absurdity of the objection in v.7. "If the objector is right, and if God should not condemn Jews when they sin because their sin enhances God's glory, then the general inference would be that sin is justified as long as it eventually brings good. 'Let us do evil that good may result' is the logical conclusion from this way of looking at sin. In an ironic twist, Paul adds a parenthesis, noting that some people (probably Jews) have accused Paul of teaching this very thing! Therefore, Paul concludes, the 'condemnation' of people who argue that way 'is deserved.' Jews cannot excuse their sin just because God uses it for good in his salvation-historical scheme."

The questions raised by Paul in these verses are dealt with more fully in chapters 9 and 10 of this letter.

Wright concludes his comments on 3:1-8 by writing, "If God is to be true to character, if the promises are to be fulfilled, what is needed is a faithful Israelite who will act on behalf of, and in the place of, faithless Israel. Paul will argue in 3:21-26 that God has provided exactly that."

Romans 3:9

Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως,

προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,

προερχομαι go ahead, go before

προερχομαι is ambiguous and could be:

- i) Middle voice meaning 'offer an excuse';
- ii) Middle voice with active meaning, 'are we better off';
- iii) Passive voice, 'are we bettered', i.e. 'are we worse off'.

The words that follow give no clue since they emphasise the fact that Jew and Greek are on the same footing. This ambiguity led some copyists to replace προεχομεθα with the unambiguous προκατεχομεν. Most commentators and translators prefer meaning ii above.

παντως by all means; οὐ π. not at all, by no means

Some argue that this is a weaker negative than Paul's commonly used μη γενοίτο. The sense could be, 'not entirely' since Paul has granted that the Jews do have *some* privileges (so Cranfield). Moo, however, thinks that such a distinction is not intended and that the sense is 'not at all.' Wright agrees.

προητιασάμεθα Verb, aor midd dep indic, 1 pl προαιτιασμαι accuse beforehand

τε enclitic particle and, and so; τε και and also

Ἕλληνα, ἡνοσ m a Greek, non-Jew
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

More than just 'commit sin.' May imply 'under sin's power/dominion,' cf. Gal 3:22. "For Paul, then, the human plight is not that people commit sins or even that they are in the habit of committing sins. The problem is that people are helpless prisoners of sin." Moo.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

This forms Paul's conclusion to his extended argument concerning human sin and God's wrath in 1:18-3:8.

Romans 3:10

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

There follows a series of quotations from the Old Testament which demonstrate the universal sinfulness of mankind – "the longest such series in the New Testament." Moo. In their original contexts, most of these quotations focus upon wicked or unrighteous people distinguished from the writer and other righteous in Israel (the possible exception being the quotation from Isaiah in vv 15-17). Moo writes, "Some scholars think this proves that Paul is referring in these quotations only to unrighteous Jews. But a more likely explanation is that Paul deliberately chose to take his words from these contexts in order to make a subtle, but important point: in the light of Christ, all Jews must now be considered to be in the category of the 'wicked.' The original readers of Romans would be well aware that the words of Paul apply only to the wicked, and they may well have wondered at first about how Paul can apply them to all Jews. But then they would realise the rhetorical point that Paul is making: All Jews (along with all Gentiles) are 'unrighteous.'" Wright thinks that Paul's key point is summed up in v. 19. "The biblical quotations come from Israel's Scriptures and are themselves indictments, not of pagans, but of Jews. Scripture itself, in other words, bears witness against those to whom it was entrusted, leaving the whole world accountable to God (cf. 10:19-21)."

The language of vv.10b-12 is taken from Ps. 14:1-3, cf. also Ps 53:1-3.

δίκαιος, α, ον righteous, just, conforming to the standard

Paul uses the word δικαιοσ here rather than following the OT text, 'there is no one who does good.' "A few commentators think that the change is because Paul is also alluding to Ecclesiastes 7:20: 'There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.' But the importance of 'righteous' language in this part of Romans makes it more likely that Paul himself has introduced this change to tailor the quotation more closely to its context." Moo.

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, a, an, single

Romans 3:11

οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν·

συνίων Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s συνημι understand, comprehend
ἐκζητεω seek or search diligently

Romans 3:12

πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
ἐξέκλιναν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐκκλινω turn away, turn aside
ἅμα at the same time, together
ἠχρεώθησαν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3 pl ἀχρειομαι be worthless, debased

A word used to describe food which has gone off.

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness, mercy

The second οὐκ ἔστιν is absent from several witnesses.

It is worth noting the wider context from which Paul quotes these words. Pss 14/53 end in a prayerful longing that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion and that God would restore the fortunes of his people, making Israel glad. This, as Paul goes on to explain, is what God has done in Jesus.

Romans 3:13

τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν, ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν, ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν,

Verses 13-14 focus on sins of speech and take their origin from Pss 5:9; 140:3b and 10:7. These latter two psalms also plead with the Lord to act to judge the wicked and establish his kingdom.

ταφος, ου m grave, tomb
ἀνεωγμένος Verb, per pass ptc, m nom s ἀνοιω open

λαρυγξ, γγος m throat
 γλωσσα, ης f tongue, language, utterance
 ἐδολιούσαν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 pl
 δολιω deceive, be treacherous
 ἰος, ου m poison, venom, rust
 ἄσπις, ἰδος f snake
 χεῖλος, ους n lip

Romans 3:14

ὄν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει·

στομα, τος n mouth, utterance
 ἀρα, ας f cursing, curse(s)
 πικρια, ας f bitterness, spite
 γεμω be full, be covered with

Romans 3:15

ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,

Verses 15-17 concentrate on sins of violence using quotations from Is 59:7-8a with a possible allusion to Prov 1:16. Wright comments concerning Isaiah 59, "Of all the chapters in the Hebrew Scriptures, this is the one that most strikingly depicts YHWH discovering that there is no righteousness to be had in the world, and so putting on the clothes of righteousness and salvation to rescue the covenant people and judge their adversaries (59:16-18). The chapter ends with YHWH coming to Zion as redeemer – a passage Paul will quote in 11:26 – and establishing the divine covenant with Israel, putting the divine spirit within them."

ὄξυς, εια, υ sharp, swift
 πους, ποδος m foot
 ἐκχέαι Verb aor act infin ἐκχεω and
 ἐκχυννω pour out, shed (blood)
 αἷμα, ατος f blood

Romans 3:16

σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,

συντριμμα, τος n ruin, destruction
 ταλαιπωρια, ας f misery, trouble
 ὁδος, ου f way, path

Romans 3:17

καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace
 ἔγνωσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl γινωσκω

Cf. Lk 19:42.

Romans 3:18

οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

A concluding indictment of all humankind quoting Ps 36:1b.

φοβος, ου m fear

ἀπέναντι prep with gen opposite, before

It is this last sin which is the root of all that precedes it. Again, Wright argues that the entire psalm is significant. It "moves on to a paean of praise of God's mercy and faithfulness (36:5), God's righteousness and judgments (v. 6) and ends with a prayer for God's mercy and righteousness to abide with Israel and for the wicked to be judged at last (36:10-12)." He continues, commenting on Paul's string of quotations above, "What looked at first like a repetitious list of biblical quotations, apparently labouring the point that all are deeply wicked, turns out to be a subtle sequence of thought, linking in at virtually every point with the themes from Paul's surrounding argument. The surface meaning of the text is clear, that all who are 'under the law' are condemned as sinners; but the subtext is saying all the time, 'Yes; and in precisely this situation God will act, to rescue the helpless, to establish the covenant.'"

Romans 3:19

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ·

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, whatever

τοῖς ἐν τῷ νομῷ To whom does this refer?

There are two basic views:

- i) Jews (Ridderbos). The Jews to whom Paul refers thought that they alone were free from the judgement of the law. Paul proves that the Jew is condemned by the law and hence it follows that all the world is under its condemnation.
- ii) The whole world (Murray). The curious phrase ἐν τῷ νομῷ may be understood by way of contrast with the phrase ἐν Χριστῷ. The whole world, and each person in it, is characterised by being either ἐν νομῷ and thereby under the law's condemnation, or ἐν Χριστῷ and thereby being justified in him.

Moo favours the former interpretation saying, "Paul knows full well that the most difficult case he has to prove is that Jews, who are recipients of God's revelation and covenant blessing, are sinners accountable to God. By proving from the Old Testament, then, that Jews are condemned, Paul feels it legitimate to extend that verdict to all people." See also the argument of Wright, above.

στομα, τος n mouth
 φραγῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s φρασσω
 silence, muzzle, stop
 ὑπόδικος, ον answerable to, exposed to
 the judgement of
 γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

Romans 3:20

διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

Moo discusses the various views regarding the role of lawkeeping in Jewish first century thought and the consequent meaning of the term 'justify.' He takes a 'middle view' saying, "We conclude, then, that Paul in verse 20 is combating what we might call a 'syncretistic' view of salvation that seems to have been widespread in first century Judaism. God, in his covenant, had provided the basis for salvation. But the individual Jew could be saved only by faithfully doing the law in response to God's covenant election. In Romans 2 Paul shows that Jews cannot depend on their covenant for salvation, so that they cannot be put right with God by doing the law. Their 'works' are now in the same category as that of the Gentiles – unable to secure salvation because of the pervasive power of sin."

διότι because, for, therefore

Should probably be translated 'because' – it gives the reason for v.19 not a conclusion drawn from it.

δικαιοθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3pl
δικαιοω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

σὰρξ, σαρκοῦ f flesh, human nature

Wright argues that the term 'flesh' is a loaded one in Paul's thought: "It designates ... humankind as physically corruptible and morally rebellious, heading for death in both senses."

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

Cf. Ps. 143:2b.

ἐπίγνωσις, εως f knowledge, recognition, consciousness

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

Summing Up

Here I quote from Wright's summing up of these verses: "What, then, does Paul mean, 'by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before God'? How does this relate to 2:13, where 'the doers of the law' shall be justified? ..."

"When Paul uses this language he has three interlocking spheres of reference in mind. The language most naturally belongs in the lawcourt; the overarching concept in Paul's mind is God's covenant with Israel, the covenant through which (as though in a cosmic lawcourt) the world will be put to rights. And the critical turn in the argument is eschatological: Paul's affirmation that the final lawcourt scene has been brought forward into the present, that the divine 'righteousness' has been disclosed already in Jesus the Messiah. Put simply, then, Paul's point is that the verdict of the court, i.e., of God, cannot be that those who have 'works of Torah' on their record will receive the verdict 'righteous.' We remind ourselves again that he is not speaking of Gentiles here, but of Jews; we already know, from 1:18-2:16, that Gentiles will not be justified as they stand. 'The Jew' of 2:17 will come into court, metaphorically speaking, and 'rest in the Torah,' producing 'works of the Torah'; these, it will be claimed, demonstrate that he or she is indeed a member of Israel, part of God's covenant people. No, says Paul. To cite one's possession of Torah as support will not do. Torah will simply remind you that you are a sinner like the Gentiles. That was the point of the hints in 1:18-2:16 and of the direct charge in 2:17-29 – not, as is sometimes said, that Jews are 'legalists,' but that they have broken the law they were given. And transgression of Torah shows that Jews, like Gentiles, are 'under the power of sin' (3:9). To appeal to Torah is like calling a defence witness who endorses what the prosecution has been saying all along. (This is the point that Paul will develop, via such apparently throwaway lines as 5:20, in 7:7-25; cf. too 1 Cor 15:56.)..."

"One of the great gains of the last quarter of a century in Pauline scholarship has been to recognise that Paul's contemporaries – and Paul himself prior to his conversion – were not 'legalists,' if by that we mean that they were attempting to earn favour with God, to earn grace as it were, by the performance of law-prescribed works. Paul's fellow Jews were not proto-Pelagians, attempting to pull themselves up by their moral shoelaces. They were, rather, responding out of gratitude to the God who had chosen and called Israel to be covenant people and who had given Israel the law both as the sign of that covenant membership and the means of making it real. Paul's critique is not that the Torah was a bad thing that the Jews should not have followed, nor that their Torah-observance was done in order to stake a claim on God that God had not already granted in the covenant. His point, rather, was that all who attempted to legitimate their covenant status by appealing to possession of Torah would find that the Torah itself accused them of sin. If 'the Jew' appealed to Torah to say 'This shows that I am different from the Gentiles,' Torah itself, according to Paul, would say 'No it doesn't; it shows that you are the same as the Gentiles.'

"The 'works' that were regarded in Paul's day as particularly demonstrating covenant membership were, of course, those that marked out the Jews from their pagan neighbours, not least in the diaspora: the sabbath, the food laws and circumcision. A strong case can therefore be made for seeing 'works of the law,' in Romans and Galatians, as highlighting these elements in particular."

Romans 3:21-26

"Rarely does the Bible bring together in so few verses so many important theological ideas: the righteousness of God, justification, the shift in salvation history, faith, sin, redemption, grace, propitiation, forgiveness, and the justice of God. Here, more than anywhere else in Romans, Paul explains why Christ's coming means 'good news' for needy sinful people." Moo.

Romans 3:21

Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ
πεφανέρωται, μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου
καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,

Paul now resumes the theme of 1:17. What God has done for us in Christ is now described with the aid of images from the world of the law courts (justify), commerce (redeem) and religious ceremony (calling on the sacrificial rites of the Old Testament).

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)
NOW

Moo cites a number of instances of similar significant use of νυνὶ δὲ from the pages of the NT (see pp. 133,134). The contrast is between OT and NT and the 'now' which changes the whole picture is the advent of the redemptive work of God in Christ and the corresponding revelation in him, cf. 1 Cor 15:20; Eph 2:13; Col 1:22. "Christ's coming announces a decisive shift in salvation history." Moo. The focus of the 'but now' is upon an objective act of God rather than a change in the believer's experience.

Wright similarly comments, "'But now' – commentators and preachers love to roll this vintage Pauline phrase around the palate. Expressing both logical and temporal transition, it carries all the flavour of Paul's inexhaustible excitement at what God had done in Jesus the Messiah. It was, after all, news: not a new religion, nor a new ethic, but an event through which the world, Paul himself, and the situation described in 3:19-20 had been changed forever. It was the new wine that had burst the old bottles once and for all."

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from

"Some people think that Paul is saying that God has made known a new kind of righteousness – one that is 'apart from law,' that is, a righteousness not based on the law (The NIV translation suggests this interpretation). But it fits Paul's focus on salvation history better to take the phrase with the verb 'make known'; note the NAB rendering, that 'the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law.' 'Law,' then, as usually in Paul, refers to the Mosaic law." Moo.

The law had erected a barrier against the Gentiles. This new work of God breaks that barrier down.

δικαιοσύνη, ἧς f righteousness, what is right, what God requires

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται is more than a righteousness 'from God'; it is God's demonstration of his own righteousness. "In other words, that for which the prophets (particularly Isaiah) and the psalmists longed had come to pass. God had unveiled the covenant plan, had drawn back the curtain on the grand design; and this had been done, not in the sense merely of communicating information, but in action, as had always been promised. 'Revelation' here means more than just the passing on of knowledge, important though that is as well; it means the unveiling of God through a historical event. Though it would not be strictly accurate, it would not be a very great hyperbole to say that, for Paul, 'the righteousness of God' was one of the titles of Jesus the Messiah himself. God's saving justice walked around Galilee, announced the kingdom, died on a cross, and rose again. God's plan of salvation had always required a faithful Israelite to fulfil it. Now, at last, God had provided one." Wright.

φανερῶ make known, reveal
μαρτυρῶ bear witness, testify

This new work of God is that to which all Scripture bears witness and in which it finds its fulfilment.

Romans 3:22

δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν διαστολή.

πίστις, εὼς f faith, trust, belief

πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Many scholars prefer to understand this as a subjective genitive, 'through the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ.' Moo thinks this is an attractive option but thinks the objective sense more likely. Wright, on the other hand, argues that "Though the phrase could mean 'through faith in Jesus the Messiah,' the entire argument of the section strongly suggests that it is Jesus' own πίστις (*pistis*) that is spoken of and that the word here means 'faithfulness,' not 'faith.' ... The point here is that Jesus has offered to God, at last, the faithfulness Israel had denied (3:2-3)... "A further reason why πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ... here is likely to refer to Jesus' own faithfulness is that, if taken instead to refer to the faith Christians have 'in' Jesus the next phrase ('for all who believe') becomes almost entirely redundant." Cf. 1:17; Gal 3:22.

Some MSS read ἐπι παντας rather than εἰς παντας and this gave rise in turn to the conflate reading εἰς παντας και ἐπι παντας in the TR.

πιστεῦω believe (in), have faith (in)
διαστολή, ης f distinction, difference

I.e. between Jew and Gentile. Just as there is no difference regarding their plight, so there is no difference regarding its remedy.

Romans 3:23

πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἁμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

Some suggest that the aorist here points back to a particular event, i.e. Adam's sin. So Wright, who argues that this is supported by the following verb: "Here the tense is present, the continuing result of a past event. In Jewish literature of the period, losing God's glory is closely associated with the fall of Adam, just as the sense of regaining Adam's glory is one of the key features of the expected salvation."

ὑστεροῦνται Verb, pres midd/pass indic, 3 pl
ὑστερεῶ lack, fall short of
δοξα, ης f glory

The term δόξης του θεου is variously interpreted. It is probably best to see it as a reference to that glory which should have marked humankind made in the image of God, a glory which is fully revealed only in the man Christ Jesus but which, through him, shall yet be ours, cf. Rom 8:18.

Romans 3:24

δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

δικαιοῶ justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

The participle here is rather abrupt. It may be best to view vv 22b-23 as parenthetical (so Moo and also Wright). Cf. 8:30 where justification and glory are again linked. "This 'justification' takes place in the present, rather than in the future as in 2:1-11. This particular 'justification' is the surprising anticipation of the final verdict spoken of in that passage, and carries both the lawcourt meaning that we would expect from the sustained metaphor of 3:9, 19-20, and the covenantal meaning that we would expect from 2:17-3:8... It is God's declaration that those who believe are in the right; their sins have been dealt with; they are God's true covenant people, God's renewed humanity." Wright.

Paul then provides a threefold explanation of how this has happened, given that God is a righteous judge: this justification happens –
i) 'freely'
ii) 'by God's grace'
iii) 'through the redemption that is in the Messiah, Jesus.'

The last of these is then explained more fully.

δωρεαν adv without cost, freely

It is neither deserved or paid for.

χάριτι Noun, dat s χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι a double emphasis on the unmerited character of God's justifying act. "Grace" is one of Paul's most potent shorthand terms, carrying in its beautiful simplicity the entire story of God's love, active in Christ and the Spirit to do for humans what they could not do for themselves... God does not, so to speak, have to be persuaded that Jesus' death makes a good enough case for sinners to be justified. It was God who initiated the movement in the first place" Wright.

ἀπολυτρώσις, εως f redemption, deliverance, setting free

For ἀπολυτρώσεως and the related λυτρον cf. Mk 10:45; Lk 24:21; Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7,14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18. "In Paul's day the words referred to the way in which people could pay money to buy the freedom of slaves or prisoners of war. Some interpreters doubt that Paul intends this original meaning of the word, but he probably does. The connotation of liberating a slave through payment of a price fits perfectly his earlier use of slavery imagery to depict the human predicament ('under sin' in 3:9)." Moo. Wright points out that "Israel could scarcely hear the word without thinking of the Egypt, of Passover, of the Red Sea, the wilderness wanderings and the promised land. Paul has already hinted that the whole human race languishes in the Egypt of sin (3:9 – a point he will develop more explicitly in chapter 6); what such people need is a new exodus, the cosmic equivalent of what God did for Israel long ago." This new redemption takes place 'in the Messiah, Jesus.'

The ground of justification is not our faith but the atoning work of Christ.

Romans 3:25

ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων

προέθετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

προτιθεμαι plan, purpose, intend; show openly, present

This verb has a root meaning of 'set before' and in the middle voice bears the sense of 'set before oneself', 'consider or plan', or 'set out on public view'. Wright points out that many of the LXX uses are to do with the shewbread in the Temple (cf. Exod 29:23; 40:4, 23; Lev 24:8; 2 Macc 1:8).

ἱλαστήριον, ον n atoning sacrifice, means by which sins are forgiven, place where sins are forgiven

This term has been the subject of much debate. The cognate verb means to propitiate, but Dodd, Barrett *et al.* argue that God cannot be the subject of propitiation since he must be its object. For further information on the arguments that surround this term, see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, in which two chapters are devoted to the subject.

The NIV translates the term 'atoning sacrifice' which is linked with its use in the LXX for the 'mercy seat' or cover of the ark. This is a useful translation in that it reflects the flow of Paul's argument which is precisely that Christ has atoned for our sins through the shedding of his own blood (hence the reference to διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι). The meaning of the term must then be filled out from an understanding of the role of blood sacrifice in the OT and its fulfilment in Christ.

Wright thinks that Paul had in mind the ritual for the Day of Atonement. In Second Temple Jewish perception, "if Israel is in trouble because of sin, the Day of Atonement will put things to rights. To that extent, what Paul has done is simply to declare that God has done the same thing on a once-for-all, grand scale; he is, in that sense, alluding to Jesus as the place where the holy God and sinful Israel meet, in such a way that Israel, rather than being judged, receives atonement." He argues also that Second Temple Judaism believed the suffering of a righteous Jew might in some way atone, as a sacrifice did, for Israel (see 2 Macc 6:12-16) and that this reflects OT ideas found in Daniel 11:35; 12 1-10 and Isaiah 40-55 – particularly 52:13-53:12. Wright continues, "All this may be of help when it comes to the precise meaning of *hilasterion*. By itself, as we saw, it meant 'mercy-seat,' the focal point of the ritual on the Day of Atonement; and thence, the place and/or the means of dealing both with wrath (or punishment) and with sin. Dealing with wrath or punishment is propitiation; with sin, expiation. You propitiate a person who is angry; you expiate a sin, crime, or stain on your character. Vehement rejection of the former idea in many quarters has led some to insist that only 'expiation' is in view here. But the fact remains that in 1:18-3:20 Paul has declared that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and wickedness and that despite God's forbearance this will finally be meted out; that in 5:8, and in the whole promise of 8:1-30, those who are Christ's are rescued from wrath; and that the passage in which the reason for the change is stated is 3:25-26, where we find that God, though in forbearance allowing sins to go unpunished, has now revealed that righteousness, that saving justice, that causes people to be declared 'righteous' even though they are sinners.

"The lexical history of the word *hilasterion* is sufficiently flexible to admit of particular nuances in different contexts. Paul's context here demands that the word not only retain its sacrificial overtones (the place and means of atonement), but that it carry the note of propitiation of divine wrath – with, of course, the corollary that sins are expiated."

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith

The MSS evidence is finely divided between δια πιστεως and δια της πιστεως. "On the one hand, the article may have been added by copyists who wished to point back to δια πιστεως 'Ιησου Χριστου in v.22. On the other hand, later in the chapter when Paul uses πιστις absolutely (i.e. without a modifier), δια is followed by the article (cf. verses 30 and 31)." Metzger.

αίμα, ατος f blood

'In his blood' can be taken with 'atoning sacrifice' rather than 'through faith.' This is favoured by Wright.

ένδειξις, εως f evidence, demonstration
παρεσις, εως f passing by, overlooking
προγεγονότων Verb, perf act ptc, gen pl
προγινομαι happen previously
άμαρτημα, τος n sin, sinful deed

Cf. Acts 14:6; 17:30. The delay in God's judgment was not due to indifference, nor did it imply they were forgotten: God had set a time when he would deal with sin once and for all.

Romans 3:26

έν τη άνοχη του θεου, προς την ένδειξιν της δικαιοσύνης αυτου έν τω νυν καιρω, εις το είναι αυτον δίκαιον και δικαιούντα τον έκ πιστεως 'Ιησου.

άνοχη, ης f forbearance, tolerance
καιρος, ου m time (viewed as occasion rather than an extent)

Paul's gospel is rooted in the historical act of God in Christ.

είναι Verb, pres infin ειμι
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
δικαιοω see v.24

God has reconciled what seemed irreconcilable: not only sinful mankind to himself, but also his justice and our justification. Wright again reads πιστεως 'Ιησου as a reference to the 'faithfulness of Jesus.' "God justifies the one whose status rests on the faithful death of Jesus. Even there, of course, the notion of the believer's own faith is not absent, since it is this faith that precipitates God's announcement of the verdict in the present time. But the basis of this faith is precisely the faithfulness of Jesus seen as the manifestation of the covenant faithfulness of God."

Postscript on Romans 3:25-26

"There can be no gospel unless there is such a thing as a righteousness of God for the ungodly. But just as little can there be any gospel unless the integrity of God's character is maintained. The problem of the sinful world, the problem of all religion, the problem of God in dealing with a sinful race, is how to unite these two things. The Christian answer to the problem is given by Paul in the words: 'Jesus Christ whom God set forth a propitiation (or, in propitiatory power) in his blood.'" Denney.

Wright comments, "I suggest, therefore, that Paul has here condensed, in typical manner, three trains of thought into a single statement, to which he will then refer back, explaining himself more fully as he does so. First, the righteousness of God is revealed in God's giving of Jesus as the faithful Israelite, through whom the covenant plan to save the world from sin will be put into operation at last, despite universal failure. Second, Jesus' faithfulness was precisely faithfulness unto death, a death understood in such sacrificial terms as would evoke not only the Day of Atonement but also the self-giving of the martyrs and, behind and greater than that, the sacrificial suffering of the Servant. Third, Jesus' self-giving faithfulness to death, seen as the act of God, not of humans operating towards God, had the effect of turning away the divine wrath that otherwise hung over not only Israel but also the whole world. Thus is God's righteousness revealed in the gospel events of Jesus' death and resurrection: God has been true to the covenant, has dealt properly with sin, has come to the rescue of the helpless and has done so with due impartiality between Jew and Gentile."

Romans 3:27-31

Moo argues that vv.27-31 act as an introduction to Ch 4 and highlights the parallels between:

3:27 and 4:1-2

3:28 and 4:3-8

3:29-30 and 4:9-17.

"What Paul does in 3:27-31, then, is quickly touch on the basic points he wants to make about faith before developing them at greater length with respect to Abraham."

Romans 3:27

Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη. διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως.

που where?

οὖν indicates Paul is now drawing an inference from what he has just written (in verses 21-26).

καύχησις, εως f boasting, ground for boasting

The question may be addressed to Jews – they can no longer brag about their superiority to the Gentiles. Cf. on 2:17.

ἐκκλειω exclude, shut out

That door is slammed shut. "The revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus' death shuts out once for all any suggestion that there might be a special status, a 'favoured nation clause,' for ethnic Israel. God's righteousness, in other words, has not been revealed, as might have been expected, in some great victory whereby Israel overcame her enemies and obtained national liberation. It came through the Messiah's dying at the hands of the pagans, as the great act of atonement needed not only by Israel but also by the whole world." Wright. Cf., by way of contrast, Paul's 'boasting' in Gal. 6:14.

ποιος, α, ον what, of what kind

The NIV translates δια ποίου νομου 'on what principle'; Hendriksen, 'on what basis'.

οὐχί (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no
πίστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith

Wright helpfully comments, "Israel's status depended on the gift and performance of Torah; how is this new arrangement undergirded? What sort of Torah sustains it? The Torah characterised by 'works'? No; the Torah characterised by 'faith.' ... Paul is thus distinguishing, not for the last time in the letter, between the Torah seen in two different ways. On the one hand, there is 'the Torah of works' – this is Torah seen as that which defines Israel over against the nations, witnessed by the performance of the works that Torah prescribes – not only sabbath, food-laws and circumcision, though these are the obvious things that, sociologically speaking, give substance to the theologically based separation. On the other hand, there is the new category Paul is forging here: 'the Torah of faith,' in a sense yet to be explained (like many things in chap. 3), gives the indication of where the true, renewed people of God are to be found. He is unwilling, it seems, to give up belief that the God-given Torah defines the people of God. What he has done is to deny that performing 'the works of the Torah,' the things that define Israel ethnically, is the appropriate mode of use for Torah. Rather, the Torah is to be fulfilled through faith; in other words, where someone believes the gospel, there Torah is in fact being fulfilled, even though in a surprising way."

Romans 3:28

λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστεϊ ἄνθρωπον
χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.

λογιζομαι reckon, count

The textual evidence for γὰρ is "slightly superior" (Metzger) to that for οὖν.

δικαιοῦσθαι justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

"The word 'justify' and its cognates do not refer to the event of 'conversion' or the process of Christian living... They refer to God's declaration that certain persons are members of the covenant people, that their sins have been dealt with." Wright.

πίστεϊ Noun, dat s πιστις

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from

Romans 3:29

ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἔθνων; ναὶ καὶ ἔθνων,

ἢ οἱ

Ἰουδαίος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

μόνον adv only, alone

ἔθνος, ος n nation, people; τα ἔθνη. Gentiles

ναὶ yes, yes indeed, certainly

"If, as Jews proudly confess, there is only one God, then this God must be equally God of Gentiles as well as Jews." Moo. And that means that 'justification' cannot be on the basis of Jewish Torah. "God's faithfulness to the covenant with the Jewish patriarch, Abraham, and his descendants, can only be fulfilled through the creation of a worldwide, Jew-plus-Gentile, family." Wright.

Romans 3:30

εἴπερ εἶς ὁ θεός, ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ
πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.

εἴπερ since, if it is true that

εἷς, μια, ἐν γεν ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

περιτομή, ης f circumcision, those

circumcised, Jews

ἀκροβυστία, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews

"By faith' and 'through faith' are not to be distinguished. The change in preposition is only a rhetorical device (cf. 4:11; 5:10; 1 Cor 12:8; 2 Cor 3:11)." Barrett. Faith is the true obedience which God has sought (1:5; 16:26). It is foundational to Paul's argument that there is but one path to justification, whether for circumcised or uncircumcised, the way of faith.

Romans 3:31

νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ
γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ νόμον ἱστανόμεν.

καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with

'Law' here means the Old Testament or Old Covenant – i.e. the question is whether everything that God has done before is made of no effect. This leads to a consideration of Abraham in chapter 4. "In other words, the Mosaic law may not play a role in justification, but Paul does not want his readers to conclude that it plays no role at all in God's plan of salvation." Moo.

γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι

ἱστημι and ἱστανω set, establish

The whole of the covenant, the Old Testament, is established, fulfilled, brought to its designed end, in and through Jesus Christ. It is not cast aside but is receives its ultimate affirmation in him.

Romans 4

Cf. note on 3:27-31. Moo writes, "Throughout the chapter Paul grounds his exposition in the key verse, cited in 4:3, of Genesis 15:5: 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' The focus is especially on the nature and meaning of Abraham's believing. Another way to look at the chapter, then, is in terms of a series of antitheses by which Paul unfolds the significance of Abraham's faith – and of ours:

1. Faith is something completely different from 'works' (vv. 3-8).
2. Faith does not depend on any religious ceremony (e.g., circumcision) (vv. 9-12).
3. Faith is not related to the law (vv. 13-17).
4. Faith often rests in a promise that flies in the face of what is natural and normal (vv. 18-22)."

Wright, however, argues that the focus is upon the covenant: "The chapter is, in fact, a full-dress exposition of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 15, showing at every point that God always intended that the covenant family of Abraham would include Gentiles as well as Jews. Irrespective of what we might say about a systematic presentation of Paul's ideas, in his present argument this is the main topic, to which 'justification by faith' makes a vital contribution, rather than the other way round... Paul is arguing ... that Abraham's faith is the sole badge of membership in God's people, and that therefore those who share it are 'justified.'"

Romans 4:1

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα;

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λέγω
εὐρηκέναι Verb, perf act infin εὐρισκω

"Abraham is a key figure in God's plan of salvation as revealed in the Old Testament. One of Paul's purposes in Romans is to demonstrate that the gospel is in continuity with the Old Testament (see, e.g., 1:2; 3:21)." Moo.

προπατωρ, ορος m forefather

προπατορα is ἀπαξ λεγομενον in the New Testament and is replaced in some MSS by the common πατερα.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

There are textual variations in this verse which affect its sense. Some mss have εὐρηκεναι after ἡμῶν and before κατὰ σάρκα (including the Byzantine texts and therefore the 'Received' Text and AV). With the infinitive in this position it is difficult to separate it logically from κατὰ σάρκα, which would require a translation such as 'what was it that Abraham ... found according to the flesh?' What this might mean is not entirely clear. However, this reading is not so well attested as that with εὐρηκεναι before Ἀβραμ. It is therefore best to understand κατὰ σάρκα to belong with τὸν προπατορα ἡμῶν. The implication (to be made explicit later, cf. vv.11, 16-17), is that, in a spiritual sense, Abraham is also the father of Gentile believers.

Wright, following Richard Hays, translates this verse "What then shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather according to the flesh?" – a question which then receives its answer in vv. 16-17 where Abraham is shown to be the father of many nations. Paul is writing about the scope of Abraham's family. Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν is then read as a phrase complete in itself, as in 6:1; 7:7 (cf. τί οὖν in 3:9). Wright continues, "At this point, however, I diverge from the meaning Hays gives to his own proposed reading. He suggests that Paul wants to say 'Have we *Jews* normally considered Abraham to be our forefather only according to the flesh?' I suggest, rather, that the whole of Romans 4 hinges on the question, whether 3:21-31 means that we *Christians*, Jews and Gentiles alike, now find that we are to be members of the fleshly family of Abraham."

Romans 4:2

εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη, ἔχει καύχημα· ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν,

ἐδικαιώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δικαιοω
justify, declare & treat as righteous
καύχημα, τος n ground for boasting

On 'boasting' cf. 2:17-20.

ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν The opening γαρ of the following verse might suggest that these words belong with what follows: "But in fact before God there is none for ..." Moo prefers to take the phrase with what precedes, understanding the sense to be something like, 'From God's perspective, Abraham has no right at all to boast because he was not, and could not be, justified by works.'

Romans 4:3

τί γὰρ ἡ γραφή λέγει; Ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

Paul now says what *is* true before God.

γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture

"Genesis 15:6 is a foundational Old Testament verse for Paul's characteristic emphasis on justification by faith (see also Gal 3:6). This verse describes Abraham's response to God's promise that he would have descendants as innumerable as the stars in the sky. But this promise, in turn, stands in a sequence of similar divine promises to Abraham about his role as the founder of a nation and mediator of world-wide blessing (see esp. Gen 12:1-3). So Paul probably reads Genesis 15:6 as a summary of Abraham's response to God's promise to him generally." Moo.

ἐλογίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s λογίζομαι reckon, count, credit

The Jews interpreted this as meaning that Abraham's faith was a righteous act, a work which merited God's favour. Paul contrasts grace and works rather than faith and works. It is the nature of grace (salvation by God's free and unmerited gift) that defines the nature of faith. Faith is not a human work but the abandonment of all human effort to trust and rest simply in the promise of God and the work of Christ. Hence the argument presented by Paul in the following verses.

Paul therefore lays great emphasis on the fact that Abraham was '*reckoned*' righteous (see the use of λογίζομαι here and through to verse 8). The implication is that God accounted or reckoned to him "a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him." O Palmer Robertson.

Wright, however, comments, "We should be careful not to assume, as normal English usage of 'righteousness' might lead us to do, that (a) 'righteousness' means 'moral goodness,' and that (b) 'faith' is then either a form of, or a substitute for, such moral goodness. When Abraham's faith is 'counted for righteousness,' it means that this faith is the sure sign that his acquittal or vindication has already taken place... Abraham's faith was the sure sign that he was in partnership with God; and God sealed this with the covenant ceremony and detailed promises about Abraham's seed and their inheritance."

Romans 4:4

τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα·

ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform

μισθος, ου m pay, wages, reward

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour
ὀφειλημα, τος n debt

Romans 4:5

τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ, πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ, λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην,

I.e., by contrast, "God's declaration of justification is a matter of grace (v.4), and it has to do with justifying the *ungodly* (v. 5)." Wright.

ἀσεβης, ες godless, impious

Wright comments, "Paul is presumably thinking of Abraham's whole history, from his background in pagan Ur through to YHWH's call and the establishing of the covenant. Jewish tradition knew of Abraham's background in idolatry and tended to regard him as the first one to protest against this and to worship the one true God instead. Paul does not entirely dissent from this tradition. As he will show in the rest of the chapter, Abraham is thus the forefather quite specifically of Gentiles who come to faith, not merely of Jews. This is, in fact, the beginning of a daring theme: that Abraham is actually *more like* believing Gentiles than he is like believing Jews."

This can only be on the basis of Jesus death; cf. Ex 23:7; Prov 17:15 and above on Rom 3:21-26. Cf. also Rom 1:18.

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

The contrast is not to be taken to mean that faith is a substitute work for which one gets paid – otherwise grace would not be grace. The contrast is between working and not working.

Romans 4:6

καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὃ ὁ θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων·

καθαπερ as, just as

μακαρισμος, ου m happiness, blessing
χωρις prep with gen without, apart from

Romans 4:7

Μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαὶ καὶ ὧν ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι,

The quotation is from Psalm 32:1,2. "The key point in what David says in Psalm 32 for Paul is that the people who are blessed are not those who have earned something from God; they are the ones who have received something from him." Moo.

μακαριος, α, ου blessed, fortunate, happy
ἀφέθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl ἀφημι cancel, forgive

ἀνομία, ας f lawlessness, sin
 ἐπεκαλύφθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
 ἐπικαλυπτω cover
 ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

Romans 4:8

μακάριος ἄνθρωπος οὗ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται κύριος ἁμαρτίαν.

ἄνθρωπος, ἄνδρος m man
 λογίσηται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 s

"These verses therefore confirm what Paul has argued in Romans 4:4-5: God 'justifies the wicked.' That is, he 'declares innocent' people who are really not, in themselves, innocent. He grants them a status they have not earned and do not deserve." Moo.

Romans 4:9-12

Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. Hence the blessings David spoke of (v.9) belong to the uncircumcised as well as to the circumcised. Acceptance with God is dependent on faith, not on circumcision.

Romans 4:9

Ὁ μακαρισμὸς οὗτος ἐπὶ τὴν περιτομὴν ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροβυστίαν; λέγομεν γάρ· Ἐλογίσθη τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

μακαρισμος see v.6
 περιτομη see 3:30
 ἀκροβυστια see 3:30
 ἐλογίσθη see v.3

Romans 4:10

πῶς οὖν ἐλογίσθη; ἐν περιτομῇ ὄντι ἢ ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ; οὐκ ἐν περιτομῇ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ·

πῶς how? i.e. in what circumstances

"So far from it being necessary, in other words (still answering v. 1), for Gentile believers to 'discover' Abraham as their physical father – that is, for them to get circumcised – it is necessary for Jewish people to 'discover' Abraham to be their uncircumcised father – that is, to share his faith." Wright.

Romans 4:11

καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν περιτομῆς, σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας, εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὴν δικαιοσύνην.

σημειον, ου n sign
 ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω
 σφραγίς, ιδος f seal, mark, proof

Circumcision is a sign and seal of faith and its consequent righteousness. If circumcision was to act as a *sign* of faith then the faith it signified must have been present before the sign was given. The point is even stronger when circumcision is considered as a *seal*. A seal, or mark of authentication, presupposes the existence of what is sealed – otherwise it is inauthentic.

Circumcision was a sign of covenant membership which here Paul terms 'the righteousness of faith.' Righteousness and covenant membership are one and the same thing.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι
 λογισθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin λογίζομαι

The textual evidence for or against the inclusion of καὶ is finely balanced. Either its existence is due to a scribal attempt to sharpen the argument or its absence an accidental omission due to the similarity between the ending of λογισθῆναι and the following καὶ.

Romans 4:12

καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἰχνεσιν τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ.

μονον adv only, alone
 στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself
 ἶχνος, ους n footprint, step, example

A person may not claim to have Abraham as their father simply by physical descent and circumcision (cf. John 8:31ff). Those are children of Abraham, and share the promise and blessings of Abraham, who have faith like that of Abraham (cf. John 8:56; Gal 3:26-29). The sign or seal is empty without the presence of what is signified or sealed.

It is hard to underestimate the transition here in thinking between Saul the Pharisee (along with his fellow Jews) and Paul the apostle. It amounts to a new understanding of what defines the people of God. The people of God are no longer defined by descent from Abraham and by circumcision but by faith in Christ. By this, Paul not only includes Gentile believers, he also *excludes* those Jews who do not believe. All of this he asserts in the face of the pressure being placed on Gentile believers by some Jewish Christians insisting that they should be circumcised.

Moo rightly warns against the attempt to apply what Paul is saying in these verses to the subject of Christian baptism. Rather, the point is that the church is to be "a genuinely 'countercultural' institution, in which the usual barriers to association – race, national background, economic status, etc. – have no relevance at all."

Romans 4:13-22

Verses 13-22 focus on the theme of promise.

Moo suggests the following breakdown:

- i) The promise is based on faith not the law (vv.13-15).
- ii) The promise, because it is based on faith, unites Jews and Gentiles together into one people of God (vv.16-17).
- iii) The faith with which Abraham responded to God's promise was firm and unwavering (vv.18-22).

Romans 4:13

Οὐ γὰρ διὰ νόμου ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἢ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ, τὸ κληρονόμον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμος, ἀλλὰ διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως·

Οὐ γὰρ διὰ νόμου cf. Gal 3:17

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised
σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring

vv.17,18 use this term of Christian believers.

The definite article το belongs with the infinitive εἶναι

κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
what is promised (by God)

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

κληρονομος κοσμου The promise to Abraham was that he, or rather his seed, would possess the *land*. Paul makes use of the ambiguity of the Hebrew term which, in itself, may mean either a specific piece of land or the earth (as in Genesis 1:1). In referencing the promise to Abraham Paul here uses the Greek term κοσμος which cannot be restricted to a piece of land.

However, Paul's argument is not mere word-play but reflects a Biblical Theology rooted in the Old Testament promise itself. Paul views the promise of the land to Abraham as typical of the promise of the earth to the people of God. This promise, which finds typical fulfilment in David's rule over the land promised to Abraham, finds ultimate fulfilment in Christ, David's greater son who is Lord of all creation. The promise of the land to Abraham's seed and promise of the κοσμος to Christ are one and the same.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires, justice

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the Christian faith

Romans 4:14

εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι, κεκένωται ἡ πίστις καὶ κατήρηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία·

κεκένωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s κενωω

deprive of power, make of no effect

κατήρηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s

καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with

"Bringing law into the matter eviscerates the very meaning of 'faith' and 'promise.'" Moo.

Romans 4:15

ὁ γὰρ νόμος ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται, οὗ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος, οὐδὲ παράβασις.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

A few interpret this of human anger, but it is the wrath of God that Paul surely has in mind, cf. 3:20; 5:20; 7:5.

κατεργάζομαι accomplish, bring about
οὗ adv where

παραβασις, εως f transgression,
disobedience, sin

"Transgression ... is a sin. But not all sin is transgression. Anytime we fall short of conformity of God's image, we sin; but only when we directly violate a commandment God has given us do we commit a transgression. For this reason, then, transgression is also a more serious form of sin, meriting a greater judgment." Moo.

Romans 4:16

Διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ (ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν,

δια τουτο for this reason

Looks back to v.14. For the reason given in v.14, God's plan was made to rest on faith that it might be a matter of grace. Wright argues that it points back to v. 1 – Paul now concludes the answer to the question he raised there.

χαρις, ιτος f grace

βεβαιος, α, ον reliable, firm, well founded
σπερμα see v.13

ἐκ του νομου here used not in the sense of means of obtaining the promise but simply as a designation for Jews.

μονον adv only, alone

ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν cf. vv.11-12.

Wright objects to the bracketing of 16b-17a. He argues, "Faith, grace and promise, then, are vital to this chapter, but they are not its main subjects. The main subjects are Abraham, his family and his God. This is what we would expect if the overall subject of the larger section is indeed the revelation of God's covenant faithfulness and the creation of a Jew-plus-Gentile family. The present verses have often been read exactly the other way round, resulting in the bracketing, by the NRSV, of the key statement in vv 16b-17a... Romans 4 is not a 'proof from Scripture' of 'justification by faith,' into which Paul has inserted some remarks about the fatherhood of Abraham and the character of God; it is an exposition of the covenant of God and the way in which the covenant promises to Abraham were fulfilled, with justification and faith playing their part within the overall argument."

Romans 4:17

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε), κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζῴοιοῦντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα·

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

ἐθνος, ους n nation, people

τέθεικά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s τιθημι place, set, appoint

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

κατεναντι before, in the sight of

Murray understands the quotation to be parenthetical, in which case, κατεναντι οὗ refers back to πατηρ παντων ἡμων i.e. Abraham is the father of us all before God. ζῴοιοιω give life, make alive

Abraham understood this aspect of God's character (that he is the Creator God who gives life to the dead and creates something out of nothing) and it was this that enabled him to trust in the promise of descendants despite his own 'deadness' and even in the face of the later command to sacrifice his only son. This is a model of Christian faith which believes in the God who gives life to the dead in that it has its focus in Christ's death and resurrection and its confidence in the life given us in him (cf. v.24). The conversion of the Gentiles is an act of the God who calls the things that are not and brings them into being – making people of God of those who are not a people. Wright adds, "When God brings a Jew to share the faith of Abraham, this is more like a life out of death, a renewal of covenant membership after the threat of being cut off (cf. 2:25-29; 11:11-16, esp 11:15...)"

νεκρος, α, ον dead

Romans 4:18

ὃς παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· Οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου·

παρα with acc contrary to ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

It is when human hope is exhausted that God-given hope comes into effect – a hope that rests simply on the promise, power and faithfulness of God. Faith rests on what God has spoken and deems his word warrant enough.

εἰρημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc s λεγω

οὕτως adv. formed from οὗτος thus

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

Romans 4:19

καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει κατενόησεν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα νεκρωμένον, ἑκατονταετῆς που ὑπάρχων, καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας,

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak

κατανοεω consider, think of, notice

Textual evidence is finely divided between κατενοησεν and οὐ κατενοησεν. Either reading would make sense in context. Most versions prefer to omit οὐ.

In his *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Metzger writes, "οὐ κατενοήσεν, like many other readings of Western origin, appears at first to be preferable, after further reflection it reveals itself to be less appropriate in the context: here Paul does not wish to imply that faith means closing one's eyes to reality, but that Abraham was so strong in faith as to be undaunted by every consideration."

σωμα, τος n body
ἤδη adv now, already

Many MSS omit ἤδη

νεκρωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s νεκρωω put to death (pf pass
ptc as good as dead)

ἑκατονταετης, ες a hundred years old
πού enclitic adv somewhere, almost
ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)
νεκρωσις, εως f death
μητρα, ας f womb

Wright comments, "Paul draws a veil over the various episodes such as Abraham's passing Sarah off as his sister and the whole matter of Hagar and Ishmael... The feature of his faith to which Paul draws attention is its persistence in hoping for new life when Abraham's and Sarah's bodies were, in terms of potential childbearing, as good as dead because of their age."

Romans 4:20

εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ
ἀπιστίᾳ ἀλλὰ ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, δοῦς
δόξαν τῷ θεῷ

Wright comments that Paul "shows that Abraham was exactly unlike the human condition described in 1:18-32."

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise
διακρινω judge; aor pass doubt, hesitate.
ἀπιστια, ας f unbelief
ἐνεδυναμωθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
ἐνδυναμωω strengthen; pass become
strong

Could mean 'strengthened by faith' (dative of instrument), though most read as 'he was strengthened in faith.'

δοῦς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διδομι
δοξα, ης f glory

Romans 4:21

καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπήγγελται δυνατὸς
ἐστὶν καὶ ποιῆσαι.

πληροφορηθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
πληροφορεω convince fully, assure fully
ἐπήγγελται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s
ἐπαγγελλομαι promise
δυνατος, η, ον possible, powerful, able

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

This verse follows on from the closing words of the previous: to give glory to God is to reckon God to be what he is and to rely upon his power and faithfulness.

Romans 4:22

διὸ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

διο therefore, for this reason

ἐλογίσθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s λογιζομαι
reckon, credit

"When, therefore, Paul says that the reason Abraham's faith was 'reckoned as righteousness' was because it was this sort of faith, he does not mean that Abraham earned special favour by having a special sort of faith. He means that precisely this sort of faith, evoked by sheer grace, is evidence of a human life back on track, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, from disbelief to faith and from corruption to fruitfulness. Faith is the sign of life; life is the gift of God. Justification is God's declaration that where this sign of life appears, the person in whom it appears is within the covenant." Wright.

Romans 4:23

Οὐκ ἐγράφη δὲ δι' αὐτὸν μόνον ὅτι ἐλογίσθη
αὐτῷ,

μονον adv only, alone

Cf. 15:4; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:11. Paul does not deny the importance of the original context of the passages he quotes. Rather, Paul views the OT as covenant history, the history of the promises and saving acts of God which find their focus and fulfilment in Christ. All that God said and did under the Old Covenant he said and did for us, for the sake of those who are in Christ.

Romans 4:24

ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς οἷς μέλλει λογίζεσθαι, τοῖς
πιστεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν
κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν,

μελλω be about, intend, be destined
λογίζεσθαι Verb, pres pass infin λογιζομαι
ἐγειρω raise
νεκρος, α, ον dead

Our faith, like that of Abraham, rests in a God who brings life out of death, cf. v.17. "In Abraham's case, God revealed this power in creating life in the dead womb of Sarah. For us, this power of God is manifested in his raising from the dead Jesus our Lord. Paul often describes God as the one who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 8:11; 10:9; 1 Cor 6:14; 15:15; 2 Cor 4:14), but he rarely makes God the object of our belief. He does so here to make Christian faith as similar to Abraham's faith as possible." Moo.

"Christian faith is thus, for Paul, irrevocably resurrection-shaped... Confessing that Jesus is Lord, therefore, and that God raised him from the dead (10:9), means sharing the faith of Abraham; and that faith, as Paul has now argued, is the one and only badge of membership in Abraham's family." Wright.

Romans 4:25

ὅς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν καὶ ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαιοσιν ἡμῶν.

παραδίδωμι hand over, deliver up
 παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing
 ἠγέρθη Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐγειρω
 δικαιοσις, εως f putting into a right
 relationship (with God); setting free,
 acquittal

This verse is viewed by many as a creedal formula which may possibly be pre-Pauline. Note the unusual linking of justification with the resurrection of Christ rather than his death. The first line reflects the language concerning the Suffering Servant in the LXX of Is 53, particularly v.12.

Wright argues that διὰ with the accusative means 'because of' or 'on account of'. This fits well with the first half of the verse, but what does it mean that he 'was raised because of our justification'? Having argued that Paul has in mind here Isaiah 53, Wright comments, "First, the servant of Isaiah 53 is raised to new life after his vicarious death (53:10b-12); his task then, as God's righteous one, is 'to make many righteous' (v. 11, alluded to in Rom 5:18-19). Carrying this meaning into Romans 4, as the allusion invites us to do, would suggest that Jesus' resurrection took place 'because of our justification' in the sense of 'because God intended thereby to justify us.' This is not exactly parallel in meaning to 'because of our trespasses' in the first half of the verse, unless, of course, Paul there means 'he was handed over because God intended thereby to deal with our trespasses.' But it is not necessary to insist on a strict parallelism of content."

Oliver O'Donovan comments, "When St Paul in the Epistle to the Romans describes Christ as 'given up for our sins and raised for our vindication' (4:25), he has, of course, Israel's sin and vindication in mind. Fulfilling the promises that Abraham believed in, Christ represents Israel equally in both moments of the Paschal crisis, and becomes a new focus of identity for those who inherit Abraham's faith." *The Desire of the Nations*, p. 141.

Romans 5-8

"Paul's exposition of the gospel of Jesus Christ takes a decisive turn at 5:1. Up to this point, his focus has been on the power of the gospel to put people who are locked up in sin and under sentence of God's wrath into a right relationship with God. Through the preaching of the good news, God invites all people – Jew and Gentile alike – to believe in Christ and enter into this new relationship. Now Paul turns his attention to what comes after one's justification by faith. Chapters 5-8 focus on two matters in particular: the certainty we can have that our justification will lead to final salvation, and the new power God gives us in our continuing struggle against sin and the law. "The first theme – what theologians call 'assurance' – dominates the first (5:1-11) and last (8:18-39) paragraphs in these chapters. These two sections frame the argument of Romans 5-8, forming what we call an *inclusio*. The famous argument about Adam and Christ (5:12-21) grounds the claim for assurance in 5:1-11. Then, in chapters 6-7, Paul deals with two continuing threats to our assurance: sin and the law. In 8:1-17 he shows how the work of God's Spirit overcomes these threats." Moo.

Wright argues that chapters 5-8 focus on the theme of *glorification*, or future glory: "The whole passage ... emphasises that what God did decisively in Jesus the Messiah is now to be implemented by the Spirit. Paul points to ways in which the Christian's present status and future hope determine life in the present, but the real theme is the secure future. All is guaranteed by the unshakable love of God – which is in turn demonstrated in the death of Jesus (5:6-10; 8:31-39). This is the argument that emerges from the surface of chaps. 5-8. "Beneath the surface, however, and poking out like the tips of a huge iceberg at various key points, there runs a different theme, not often noticed... Paul, I suggest, is telling the story of the people of the Messiah in terms of the new exodus. Jesus' people are the liberated people, on their way home to their promised land."

The themes of slavery and freedom are prominent. Wright argues that Paul may have had Jer 23:5-8 particularly in mind with its themes of the Messiah, the righteousness of God and the new exodus. With Paul, the promise of the land has been refined into the promise of inheriting the whole cosmos (4:13; 8:18-25). "My proposal is that the journey that ends in chap. 8 with the glorious inheritance began in chap. 6 with the new covenant version of the crossing of the Red Sea [baptism], the event through which the slaves are set free." The reason for returning to the theme of law in chapter 7 "is that he is following the storyline. After the Red Sea, and before the journey to the promised inheritance, comes Mt Sinai and the giving of the Torah." Wright adds, "This sequence of thought is opened up initially with four paragraphs of very similar length (5:1-11, 12-21; 6:1-11, 12-23), each rounded off with a christological formula that is not just added on for effect but sums up the paragraph."

Romans 5:1-11

Verses 1-11 focus on the hope of final salvation, see. vv 2b, 5a, 9,10. Justification is a past and present reality and also an eschatological pronouncement. Wright comments, "The first paragraph of the new section states and develops the theme that overarches the next four chapters: those whom God justified, God also glorified. In typical fashion, this is stated densely to start with (5:1-2). It is then developed with two new elements, suffering and the Spirit (5:3-5), explained and grounded (in the death of the Messiah) (5:6-9), and finally further explained and celebrated (5:10-11). As usual, Paul's successive explanations do not add new points to the opening summary, but rather explore what is contained by implication within it. "The theme is that of inaugurated eschatology. God has accomplished the justification of sinners; God will therefore complete the task, saving those already justified from the coming wrath (cf. Phil 1:6: when God begins a work, God will complete it). God's decisive disclosure of covenant faithfulness in the death of the Messiah (3:21-4:25) is now expressed in equally covenantal language, that of God's love (5:8). The argument is simple: if God loved sinners enough for the Son to die for them, God will surely complete what was begun at such cost. Those who have left Egypt will be brought to Canaan, even though suffering awaits them on the journey. Part of Christian assurance is learning to tell the story and to understand its inner logic.

"... All that God said to Abraham, all that God accomplished in the Messiah, was done out of love, and designed to call out an answering love. The intimacy and ecstasy of 5:1-11 are a necessary further dimension of justification by faith."

Romans 5:1

Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

"Justification results in peace with God, in access to God's loving favour, and thereby, unstoppably, to the hope of glory." Wright.

δικαιωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
δικαιοω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

ἔχομεν Textual evidence would seem to be stronger for the subjunctive, ἔχωμεν. However, the subjunctive does not fit well with Paul's argument or his theology. Metzger suggests that this error may have crept in at the earliest possible stage of transmission: "When Paul dictated ἔχομεν, Tertius, his amanuensis (16:22), may have written down ἔχωμεν."

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace

This peace is objective in nature (see Barrett, Murray, Moo): it is not *mere* feeling, it is a state of peace instituted by God himself into which we have entered and from which the *enjoyment* of peace flows. Cf. Is 32:17-18.

Wright comments, "God's justice has led to peace: the echoes of the world Paul was addressing are strong. Augustus Caesar had established the Roman *Pax*, founded on *Iustia*. His successors, enjoying among their titles 'Lord' and 'Saviour,' maintained the powerful imperial myth not least through the imperial cult. Paul is revealing to his Roman audience a different justice, a different peace, in virtue of a different Lord and a different God: the God of Abraham, the world's creator, who has now established peace 'through our Lord Jesus Christ.' This peace, the first characteristic Paul mentions of the present tense of salvation, includes the deeply personal reconciliation between each believer and the true God, but can hardly stop there; already Paul is sowing the seeds for that communal peace he longs to see come about in the whole Roman church (14:1-15:14; see esp. 14:17, 19), the work, indeed, is of 'the God of peace' (15:33; 16:20). It is this peace, embracing alike each person and the whole community, that reveals to the wider world the existence and nature of the alternative empire, set up through the true Lord, the Messiah. In one short verse Paul manages to articulate the heart of Christian personal experience and the politically subversive nature of Christian loyalty."

Romans 5:2

δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχίκαμεν τῇ πίστει εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ἣ ἐστήκαμεν, καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ·
προσαγωγή, ης f freedom or right to enter
ἐσχίκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl ἔχω

τῇ πίστει the evidence for inclusion is not strong. The sense is not materially altered either way.

χάρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Murray understands τὴν χάριν ταύτην as a reference to justification. The sense is perhaps more general – acceptance with God and all that flows from it. Wright says that "The metaphor envisages grace as a room into which Jesus has ushered all who believe. A room where they now 'stand,' a place characterised by the presence and sustaining love of God. Just as the Temple symbolised and actualised Israel's meeting with the gracious God, so now Jesus has effected such a meeting between his God and all who approach by faith."

ἐστήκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl ἵστημι
pf stand, stand firm

καυχασομαι boast, boast about, take
confidence in, rejoice, celebrate

ἐλπίς, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

δόξα, ης f glory

The ultimate hope is to see and share in God's glory, cf. 8:18, 21, 30; also Col 1:27. "Adam's lost glory (3:23) is regained in the Messiah: not simply dazzling beauty, but the status and task of being God's vicegerent over creation." Wright. Cf. 8:18-27.

Romans 5:3

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν, εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ θλίψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται,

θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering

See 2 Cor 11:23-30; 12:9,10. The peace we have with God does not preclude suffering, cf. Jn 16:33. "This suffering, though, is to be understood as part of a larger story that again ends with hope." Wright.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand

It is not the trials themselves which are the source of joy, but they become an occasion for joy through the logic of faith expounded here. "Just as resistance to a muscle strengthens it." Moo.

ὑπομονή, ης f patience, endurance

This is not a passive quality, as we often think of *patience*; the sense is rather that of *endurance* or *continuance*, cf. 2 Thess 1:4. It is "staying put without dismay." Wright.

κατεργάζομαι accomplish, bring about

Romans 5:4

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμὴν, ἡ δὲ δοκιμὴ ἐλπίδα.

δοκιμή, ης f character

δοκιμή the triedness or state of approval which is consequent upon testing. Hendriksen translates it as 'proven character', cf. 2 Cor 2:9; 8:2; 13:3; Phil 2:22.

Romans 5:5

ἡ δὲ ἐλπίς οὐ καταισχύνει· ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν.

καταισχύνω put to shame, disappoint, let
down

ἀγάπη του θεου is God's love for us. The objective ground for our hope is God's love for us demonstrated in Christ and communicated to us by the Holy Spirit. However, Wright says that the ambiguity may be deliberate and that the Spirit's work of prompting in us a responsive love for God (cf. 8:28) should not be excluded. Cf. the *Shema* of Deut 6:4-5. He adds, "To realise that this love fulfils the central command of Torah is to discover oneself to be a member of the renewed people of God."

ἐκκέχεται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐκχεω
and ἐκχυννω pour out

Signifies an abundant measure. "This verb is used to describe the 'pouring out' of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18). Paul therefore cleverly alludes to the Spirit here." Moo.

δοθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n gen s
διδωμι

The gift of the Holy Spirit now is the pledge and proof of the completed salvation for which we hope (cf. Rom 8:23).

Romans 5:6

Ἔτι γὰρ Χριστὸς ὄντων ἡμῶν ἀσθενῶν ἔτι κατὰ καιρὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανεν.

ἔτι still, yet, moreover
ἀσθενεω see 4:19

Many MSS omit the second ἔτι. The initial ἔτι γὰρ also suffers a number of variants with various combinations of εἰ instead of ἔτι and δε instead of γὰρ. Many of these readings would seem to be attempts to improve the text by avoiding the awkward repetition.

κατὰ καιρὸν 'at the appointed time', i.e. here, at the time of human helplessness and need. Cf. Gal 4:4.

ἀσεβης, ες godless, impious

Cf. 4:5. "Sending his Son to die for people who refused to worship him (the basic connotation of 'ungodly') reveals the magnitude of God's love for us" Moo.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνήσκω
die

Romans 5:7

μόλις γὰρ ὑπὲρ δικαίου τις ἀποθανεῖται· ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τάχα τις καὶ τολμᾷ ἀποθανεῖν·

μόλις adv hardly, scarcely
ἀποθάνεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀποθνήσκω

ἀγαθος, η, ον good

τάχα adv perhaps, possibly

τολμᾷ Verb, pres act indic, 3 s τολμᾶω
dare, be brave

"Though the issue is disputed, a difference between a 'good man' and 'a righteous man' seems to be the key to the interpretation. A 'righteous' person is one we might respect, but a 'good' person is one we might love. Rarely will a person give his or her life for someone they merely respect; but occasionally a person dies for the sake of someone they love – a soldier for his buddies, a parent for her children. The awesome quality of God's love for us is seen in that Christ died for us while we were 'still sinners' – hating God, in rebellion against him (v.8)." Moo. Wright suggests that "The conventional, and perhaps safest, approach is to suggest that 'the good man' refers to someone's benefactor."

Romans 5:8

συνίστησιν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἀγάπην εἰς ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀπέθανεν.

συνίστησιν Verb, pres act indic, 3 s
συνιστημι commend, demonstrate
ἔτι see v.6

ἀμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner

ἀπέθανεν see v.6

Romans 5:9-10

The parallelism in vv 9-10 between 'justified' (v.9) and 'reconciled' (v.10) indicates not that the two are the same, but that they are different aspects of the one act of God.

"The love of God seen in action in the death of the Messiah is then the basis for a standard type of argument, the 'how much more': if God had done the difficult thing, how much more will the easy thing now be done. God has already done the unthinkable; how much more will God do something relatively obvious! Paul opens up this thought in two stages, first (v.9) offering a conclusion in terms of justification and salvation, and then (v. 10) explaining it in terms of God's reconciling love. This too, like so much in the present paragraph, is picked up at the end of the section (8:32)." Wright.

Romans 5:9

πολλῷ ὄν μᾶλλον δικαιωθέντες νῦν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ σωθησόμεθα δι' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς.

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much
μᾶλλον adv more; more than that
δικαιωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
δικαιοω justify, acquit

Murray believes that the phrase here echoes Is 53:11.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

Cf 3:25.

σωθησόμεθα Verb, fut pass indic, 1 pl σωζω
save

The reference here is to final salvation – final destiny, cf. 13:11; 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; Phil 2:12.

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

God's wrath in the day of judgement. There is no wrath left for the justified (cf. 8:1).

Judgment day has become history for those in Christ, for it occurred at the cross.

Romans 5:10

εἰ γὰρ ἐχθροὶ ὄντες καταλλάγημεν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, πολλῶ μᾶλλον καταλλαγέντες σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ· ἐχθρός, α, ον enemy, one hated

Refers not to our active enmity against God but to God's hostility towards and alienation from us. "God's settled and sorrowful opposition to all that is evil included enmity against sinners. The fact that God's rescuing love has found a way of deliverance and reconciliation is part of the wonder of the gospel." Wright.

κατηλλάγημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl
καταλλάσσω reconcile
θανάτος, ου m death

It is God who brings about reconciliation by dealing with that which alienates a holy God from sinful man; he provided an atonement for sin through the death of his Son. This reconciliation provided by God is the basis of gospel preaching which includes the exhortation, 'be reconciled to God' (cf. 2 Cor 5:18-20).

καταλλαγέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
καταλλάσσω
σωθησόμεθα see v.9
ζωη, ης f life

Christ's resurrection life and presence now in glory on our behalf is the guarantee that we also shall have a place with him (cf. 8:34f).

Romans 5:11

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ νῦν τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν.

καυχασθαι boast, boast about, celebrate

Cf. 3:27-30. The participle here does not obviously belong with a particular main verb.

Wright comments, "Those who believe in Jesus the Messiah are the true people of the creator God, the God of Abraham. That is what it means to 'boast in God,' to celebrate the reconciliation between the creator and those who bear the creator's image."

καταλλαγῆ, ης f reconciliation, being put
into fellowship with God

ἐλάβομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl λαμβανω

The focus here shifts from God's objective accomplishing of reconciliation through Christ's death to its personal application to the believer.

Romans 5:12-21

Paul is seeking to show that Jews and Gentiles have access to God in one and the same way – only through Christ. Previously he has shown that the promise of God to Abraham encompasses Gentiles as well as Jews and that it is possessed by faith and not through the law. Now he turns his attention even further back in the Genesis story, all the way back to Adam. Adam is viewed as the head of humankind (his name is more than a play on words). Jew and Gentile share a common headship in Adam and because of him are subject to sin, condemnation and death. Jesus is the head of a new humanity, a people who receive from him justification, righteousness and life. The primary focus of Paul's thought is upon the inescapable effect of the act of the one man upon all who are connected with him. He argues from the obvious – the effect of Adam's sin on all mankind (for this was indeed obvious to the Jew, cf. 1:18-25) to the point he now wishes to assert: Christ's act of redemption is effective for all who have a part in him.

Wright comments concerning 5:11-21, "The Messiah is set in parallel, and also in sharp contrast, with Adam. Adam, of course, was the one to whom, in Scripture, the whole creation was given as his inheritance. His 'glory' consisted not least in his rule over the rest of God's world. The result of the fall was that the inheritance and the glory were lost; this is the picture Paul drew in 1:18-32, and summed up in 3:23. Now, in the Messiah, inheritance and glory are given back to the human race. They are to become truly human at last. Romans 5:12-21 functions as a programmatic statement, awaiting the fuller explanation of 8:12-30... In Christ the human project, begun in Adam but never completed, has been brought to its intended goal... Christ has done what Israel was called to do."

Wright suggests that 5:12-21 has the following structure:

- 5:12 opening statement, awaiting completion:
just as sin entered and brought death
5:13-14: first explanatory 'aside': sin and death between Adam and Moses
5:15-17: second explanatory 'aside': the imbalances between sin and grace
5:18: initial completion of opening statement:
just as the trespass, so the act of righteousness
5:19: explanation and filling out of v. 18: disobedience and obedience
5:20: where the Law belongs on this map: intensifying the problem, but grace deals with this too
5:21: triumphant conclusion: the kingdom of grace triumphs over the kingdom of sin.

Wright adds, "Within this, Paul introduces a theme almost unique in his writings, but very important within early Christianity: the clash of the kingdoms. Five out of the nine occurrences in his writings of βασιλεύω (*basileuo*, 'to rule as a king,' 'to reign') come in these verses; one of the others, picking up this passage, is at 6:12. Paul does not speak here of the kingdom of Satan, but instead personifies 'sin' and 'death,' speaking of each as 'reigning' (5:14, 17a, 21a). He does not speak here, either, of the reign of God, or even of Jesus; rather, as in the admittedly ironic 1 Cor 4:8, he speaks of believers as reigning (5:17b), and then finally of the reign of grace itself (5:21b). The last, clearly, is a personification, a periphrasis for God. This theme of kingly rule, coming so soon after the grand statement of justice, peace, and lordship (5:1), cannot but be seen as a further indication of Paul's overall mission: to announce the kingdom of God in the face of all the principalities and powers of the world, not least those of Rome itself (cf. 8:38-39 and the pregnant conclusion of Acts 28:30-31)."

Romans 5:12

Διὰ τοῦτο ὡσπερ δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον –

διὰ τουτο 'therefore' seems here to be a loose connection rather than a logical connection with what precedes. Paul may be gathering up the arguments of the letter thus far and beginning a new section. But Moo thinks that there is a link with vv 1-11. "This argument functions naturally as the *basis* for what Paul has said in verses 1-11: Our hope of sharing God's glory is certain because we are in Christ, who has guaranteed life for us. This appears to be the best reading of the sequence of thoughts in chapter 5. We can therefore paraphrase the opening words of verse 12: 'in order to accomplish what I have just taught [e.g., the certainty of salvation]..."

ὡσπερ *as, even as, just as*

The ὡσπερ points forward to the later οὕτως – though the thought is not really completed until the comparison is resumed in v.15 and completed in vv 18-19.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἐνος, μιας, ἐνος one
ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
εἰσερχομαι enter, come in

Sin is viewed almost as a *power*.

θανατος, ου m death

A reference to Adam's sin and its consequences, cf. Gen 2:17; 3:19.

οὕτως thus, in this way

Some MSS omit the second ὁ θάνατος but the weight of evidence is for its inclusion.

Wright comments, "In terms of his underlying new-exodus story, sin and death play the role of Pharaoh: Paul imagines them as alien powers, given access to God's world through the action of Adam. Once in, they have come to stay; staying, they seized royal power. Linked together as cause and effect, they now stride through their usurped domain, wreaking misery, decay, and corruption wherever they go. No one is exempt from their commanding authority."

διερχομαι pass through, pass on
ἐφ' ᾧ because, inasmuch as
ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

παντες ἥμαρτον This phrase is the subject of much debate. There are three basic interpretations:

- i) The individual sins of each person are the reason for the death of each. In this case ἥμαρτον is treated as a 'gnomic' aorist – expressing a timeless truth.

- ii) Death has passed to every person as an inheritance along with the corrupt nature that we have inherited from Adam.
 iii) Paul views the sin of Adam (the head of all mankind), as a sin which belongs to all. All mankind is made guilty because of that sin and all are subject to its penalty.

The first of these interpretations fails in the face of the death of the unborn. The second fails to take account of the analogy between Adam and Christ which is the theme of this passage.

"The meaning of this much discussed pronouncement, if one takes into consideration the whole context of Romans 5, in our opinion cannot be in doubt. One man has given sin access into the world; he has, as it were, opened the gate of the world to sin. So sin has entered in, here represented as a personified power (cf. e.g. v.21); through and with sin death has come in as the inseparable follower and companion of sin. The words then follow 'and so [i.e. along with this way opened by the one man] death passed unto all men, for the reason that all sinned.' The final words give a further explanation as to how death, through one man, has passed and could pass to all men. This happened because 'all sinned,' namely, on account of their connection with the one man; therefore Adam's sin was the sin of all, and in that sense it can hold for them that they all sinned. This union of all with him and in the one is the governing idea of this pericope, and it is in that idea that Paul indicates the typical significance of Adam with respect to the 'Coming One'." Ridderbos, *Paul*.

Romans 5:13-14

Murray says that, "Verses 13-14 are meant as a demonstration or exemplification of the truth of v.12 that death came to all men, not by reason of their own natural transgression or individual sins, but because of their solidarity with Adam in his sin." But Moo thinks rather that, "Paul is *reinforcing* his teaching about the universality of death. Many Jews believed that there could be no sin or death apart from the law. They may have thought that Paul's claim in verse 12 that all people had sinned and died does not make sense. Thus, Paul affirms that, indeed, sin existed before the Mosaic law was given, and that people were condemned for their sin. The presence of positive law turns sin into 'transgression' (*παραβασις*, the word Paul uses in v.14 and which NIV translates 'by breaking a command'; see notes on 4:15). Sin may not be charged to one's individual account (v.13b) apart from the law. But sin is still sin and brings God's condemnation and wrath."

Wright adds, "This is important for what it implies as well as what it denies. It denies that the generations between Adam and Moses, being lawless, were also sinless. But it also implies that those who come after Moses, and who do have Torah, do in fact imitate Adam. This will be further stated in 5:20, echoed in 6:14-15, and will become a major theme in chap. 7."

Romans 5:13

ἄχρι γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία ἦν ἐν κόσμῳ, ἁμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται μὴ ὄντος νόμου,

ἄχρι prep with gen until

ἁμαρτία ἦν ἐν κόσμῳ cf. v.12

ἐλλογεω and ἐλλογαω charge to one's account, keep record of

Romans 5:14

ἀλλὰ ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ, ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος.

βασίλευω rule, reign

μεχρι and μεχρις prep with gen until, to ἁμαρτήσαντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl ἁμαρτανω

ὁμοίωμα, τος n likeness

παραβασις, εως f transgression, sin

This is not the statement of an unexplained anomaly (Barrett) but proof supplied by Paul that Adam's sin brings death to all: it is not necessary first for them to sin in the same way that Adam did – i.e. transgression of an explicit commandment of God.

τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type

Cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11. Adam prefigured Christ in certain respects. "Sinning 'according to the likeness of the trespass of Adam' is balanced by God's plan to bring Christians 'to conform to the image of his son' (8:29)." Wright.

μελλω ptc. coming, future

Cf. 1 Cor 15:21f also Matt 11:3; Lk 7:19.

Romans 5:15

Ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα, οὕτως καὶ τὸ χάρισμα· εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῆ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν.

παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing

χαρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

ἐνος see v.12

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl

ἀποθνησκω die

πολλω μᾶλλον how much more

It is not a simple analogy, it is also a contrast; grace not only matches sin, it utterly overbalances it, cf. vv. 20,21. "The two sequences are ... out of all proportion to each other: in the one case, sin bred death because that is what sin does; in the other, the gift of grace is nothing short of a new creation, creation not merely out of nothing but out of anti-creation, out of death itself." Wright.

χαρις, ιτος f grace
 δωρεα, ας f gift
 χάριτι Noun, dat s χαρις
 περισσευω abound, excel

"The main point is that, like Adam, Christ is the progenitor of a race; only the blessings which the members of the new race derive from their Father are far greater than the curse which Adam handed down to his children." Barrett.

Romans 5:16

καὶ οὐχ ὡς δι' ἑνὸς ἀμαρτήσαντος τὸ δῶρημα· τὸ μὲν γὰρ κρίμα ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς κατάκριμα, τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα.

ἀμαρτανω sin, commit sin
 δωρημα, τος n gift
 κριμα, τος n judgement, condemnation
 κατακριμα, τος n condemnation
 χαρισμα see v.15
 παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing
 δικαιομα, τος n righteous deed, acquittal

"That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension." Cranfield.

Romans 5:17

εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἑνός, πολλῶ μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περισσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν διὰ τοῦ ἑνός Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

βασιλευω see v.14
 πολλω μαλλον see v.14
 περισσεια, ας abundance
 δωρεα see v.15
 δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness
 ζωη, ης f life

Those who were reigned over (enslaved) shall themselves reign. The theme of Adam's place in creation is implicit here. Adam and Eve, and therefore humankind, were created to reign over the creation under God. Through the entrance of sin, we have become subject to the vanity that typifies all of fallen creation. The Lord Jesus Christ has regained this kingly reign over all creation for man and he shares this reign with all who belong to him. See particularly Barrett, *From First Adam to Last*. To 'reign in life' is to reign in God's kingdom (cf 1 Cor 4:8). "This refers, we assume, both to the resurrection state in which their final rule will take place and to the 'life' of the age to come, over which they will exercise dominion. Paul seems to have got from apocalyptic tradition the belief that God's final rule would be exercised through God's people. When the Ancient of Days takes the throne, the sovereignty is given to 'the people of the saints of the Most High' (Dan 7:27). Here, as throughout the passage, Paul is thinking in terms of the promised blessings that Israel hoped for in the age to come being achieved by the Messiah and shared with his people. (This, of course, is what makes 9:1-5 so poignant.)" Wright.

Romans 5:18

Ἄρα οὖν ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἄνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα, οὕτως καὶ δι' ἑνὸς δικαίωματος εἰς πάντας ἄνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς·

Paul now takes up the thought started but broken off in v. 12.

ἀρα οὖν so then
 παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing
 κατακριμα, τος n condemnation

I.e. eschatological or final judgment (cf. 2:5-11 and 8:1).

οὕτως adv. thus, in this way
 δικαιομα see v.16

δικαιωματος to what does this refer? Murray thinks justification (as per v.16). But this does not seem to fit the context which, by way of contrast with Adam's transgression, would seem to require δικαιομα here to mean that righteous act by which Christ secured our justification, namely, his death on the cross. Wright comments, "Paul again draws on the thought of 3:21-26 and 5:9-10. Christ's *dikaioma* in the middle of history leads to God's *dikaiosis* on the last day. What was accomplished on the cross will be effective at the final judgment."

δικαιωσις, εως f putting into a right relationship (with God), acquittal

The construction here is elliptical, lacking a main verb. Moo speaks of Paul getting 'tangled up in his syntax' and not finishing his sentences. Wright comments, "There may be good theology behind this odd grammar: Paul is talking about an entire story over which he sets the creator God presiding. His non-use of subjects and verbs may have an air of reverence, as well as a positively Taciturn density."

Romans 5:19

ὡςπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί, οὕτως καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί.

ὡςπερ see v.12

παρακοη, ης f disobedience

ἁμαρτωλος, ον sinful, sinner

κατεστάθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

καθιστημι make (someone to be something)

Suggests appointment to a certain condition, 'constitute', confer a particular status upon.

ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

The NT lays particular emphasis on Jesus' obedience to the Father in his submission to the cross, cf. Jn 6:3,8,39; 10:17,18; 17:4,5; Gal 4:5; Phil 2:7,8; Heb 2:10; 5:8,9.

Wright speaks of the "audible overtones of Is 53:11" in this verse. "The Isaianic servant, to whom reference is being made, was obedient to the saving purposes of YHWH, the plan marked out for Israel from the beginning but that, through Israel's disobedience, only the servant, as an individual, can now accomplish. The 'obedience' of the Messiah in 5:19 therefore corresponds closely to the 'faithfulness' of the Messiah in 3:22. It refers to his obedience to God's commission (as in 3:2), to the plan to bring salvation to the world, rather than his amassing a treasury of merit through Torah obedience."

δίκαιος, α, ον righteous, just, conforming to the standard

κατασταθήσονται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 pl
καθιστημι

"Adam's disobedience meant that men were born into a race which had separated itself from God. Similarly Christ's obedience meant that in Christ, men are related to the Father." Barrett. The emphasis is not on universality but upon efficacy of result: it is all *who are in Adam* who die and all *who are in Christ* who are given life.

Romans 5:20

νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα· οὗ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὑπερπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις,

παρεισερχομαι come in, slip in

Cf. Gal 2:4; 3:19. In the face of Jewish claims, Paul, in a bold and 'offensive' move (Moo, in the sense of launching an attack), claims that God intended the Mosaic law to have a *negative* role in salvation history. Paul anticipates the argument of 7:7-25.

πλεοναζω increase, grow

παραπτωμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing

Cf. 3:19-20. Adam's sin has been writ large in the story of Israel.

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

ὑπερπερισσευω increase much more

Wright comments, "Grace has superabounded where sin abounded – that is, in Israel itself, where the full effects of Torah's magnification of Adam's sin were felt. The superabundance of grace in Israel is presumably a further reference to the messianic work, and particularly the messianic death, in which Jesus offered to Israel's God the faithful obedience that Israel had not. In Christ, God has come to where the Torah has magnified sin, and has dealt with it. This points ahead to 8:3-4."

Romans 5:21

ἵνα ὡςπερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

βασιλευω rule, reign

θανατος, ου m death

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

αιωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Cf. the phrase at the end of v.18. This verse is Paul's conclusion to the whole argument. The kingdom of grace has triumphed over the kingdom of sin. "Grace (the sovereign, loving purpose of God) is ruling through covenant faithfulness (God's accomplishment in Christ of that which had been promised to Abraham), and the result is the ushering in of the age to come, 'eternal life,' or, better, the life of the coming age. And all has happened, of course, 'through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.' The outstretched arms of the crucified one, embodying the love of the creator God, provide the ultimate balance of the paragraph, the place where the kingdom of sin did its worst and the kingdom of grace its triumphant best." Wright.

Romans 6

Wright introduces Romans 6 as follows: "The question Paul now faces is, Where do Christians live on the map of 5:12-21? This is quite not the same question as theologians and commentators have been eager to discover at this point, namely: granted justification by grace through faith, what is the place of ethics, and of moral effort, in the Christian life? This latter question is, in fact, contained within the former, but we must not, in our eagerness for relevance, ignore Paul's actual argument... Verse 1 is primarily about *status*, not behaviour, as is apparent from the argument about status that follows in 6:2-11 (behaviour is included as well, as is highlighted in 6:12-14, but it is not the primary focus)..."

"Paul's question is this: Do Christians find themselves now in the Adam solidarity or in the Christ solidarity? Do they still live under the reign of sin and death, or do they live under the reign of grace and righteousness?"

Wright argues that Paul views Christian salvation in terms of a new exodus – *the* new exodus looked for by first century Judaism and announced by John the Baptist. Christ has rescued his people from enslavement and is bringing them into their promised inheritance. Baptism is *both* a dramatic symbol of the new exodus, a replaying of the dramatic and final escape from the power of Egypt that occurred with the crossing of the 'Red Sea' (cf. 1 Cor 10:2) *and* a sign of Jesus' death (cf. Col 1:13-14 which equally pictures Jesus' work in new exodus terms).

It is against this background that Paul reiterates the Christian's break with the law, a surprising twist on the new exodus theme. Baptism creates a new people of God; one new family, embracing both Jew and Gentile, a family created and defined by Christ, particularly by his death and resurrection.

Romans 6:1

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ;

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λέγω
ἐπιμενω remain, persist in
πλεοναζω increase, grow

Looks back to 5:20-21. Wright (contra NIV), says that this verse is primarily about status rather than behaviour; "The Greek has the definite emphasis of remaining in a place, in a status."

Romans 6:2

μὴ γένοιτο· οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ;

γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι
οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἦτις, ὁ τι
who, whoever
ἀπεθανομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl
ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

The aorist, 'we died to sin' is the subject of debate on two counts:

- i) In what sense have believers died to sin? Haldane argues that it is death to the guilt of sin. Lloyd-Jones and Murray argue that it includes death to the power of sin. The developing argument of Romans 6 would seem to suggest that 'sin' no longer has a *rightful claim* on the Christian. The Christian no longer lives under sin's dominion.
- ii) When did this event happen? Some have argued that it is a continuous process (Sanday & Headlam), but the aorist suggests a single event (so Barrett). Is this event Christ's death or is it the conversion or baptism of the believer? The answer to this latter question is that it is probably both: this 'death to sin' was accomplished by Christ in his death, paying the penalty of sin, and by his resurrection, defeating its power. All of this is appropriated by the believer through faith and baptism (viewed as a single act). The Christian has died to sin with Christ and in Christ: for such a person, continuance in sin, while not a moral impossibility, is a moral incongruity (a phrase used by Donald McLeod).

πῶς how?

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

ζαω live, be alive

Romans 6:3

ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν;

ἀγνοεω not know, fail to understand

ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν 'Baptised *into union with* Christ.' "Some interpreters think that Paul uses the language here in a metaphorical way. *Baptizo*, the Greek verb, means basically 'immerse in' (see e.g., Mark 10:38-39 and parallels, and particularly 1 Cor. 10:2), so Paul may simply be saying, in a vivid way, that believers have been 'immersed' in Christ. Other interpreters think Paul may be referring to 'baptism in the Spirit.' But Paul usually uses the verb *baptizo* to refer to Christian water baptism (1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13 [though debated]; 15:29; Gal 3:27). Moreover, the noun 'baptised' (Gk. *baptisma*) in verse 4 almost always has this meaning.

"With the great majority of commentators, then, we think Paul here refers to water baptism as the point in time at which people become joined with Christ." Moo.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, whoever; pl. as many as, all
θανάτος, ου m death

To be baptised into Christ is to be united with him in his death (to sin).

Romans 6:4

συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν.

συνετάφημεν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 1 pl
συνθαπτομαι be buried together with

"Paul makes use of the picture suggested by the practice of baptism by immersion." Barrett. This view is contested by Murray and Moo but acknowledged by Wright.

ὡσπερ as, even as, just as
ἠγέρθη Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἐγειρω raise
νεκρός, α, ον dead
δοξα, ης f glory

That Christ was raised 'through the glory of the Father' is to be linked with the goal of 'glory' or 'glorification' which God had planned for him and for us (cf. Rom 8:18,30).

οὕτως thus, in this way
καινοτης, ητος f newness; κ. ζωης new life
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"Baptism stands for our whole conversion experience. By it, we have been brought into union with Christ and the powerful events of his redemptive work. The effects of these events are therefore at work in us. That means we now have the ability to 'live a new life.'" Moo.

"The Messiah's resurrection means that those who are 'in the Messiah' now stand, and must walk, on resurrection ground." Wright. We are called to live the life of the age to come because we have already entered into the life of that age.

Romans 6:5

Εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα·

σύμφυτος, ον sharing in, united with, at one with
γεγόναμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl γινομαι
ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness
ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection, raising up

"The underlying thought is again the inseparable conjunction of Christ's death and resurrection, and the inference drawn from this conjunction is that if we are united with Christ in his death we must be also in his resurrection. Disjunction in our case is as impossible as disjunction in his." Murray.

The future here indicates that "While we do indeed now enjoy new life, our 'being raised with Christ' [or at least its fullness] awaits his Parousia." Moo. Cf. Phil 3:20,21. Wright, however, argues that "We must ... take the second half of v. 5 as indicating present status and behaviour, not simply the future resurrection."

Romans 6:6

τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ,

παλαιος, α, ον old, former

Barrett considers the 'old man' is Adam, or rather ourselves in union with Adam, and that the 'new man' is Christ, or rather ourselves in union with Christ (cf. Eph 4:22-25). See also Donald MacLeod, "Paul's Use of the Term Old Man," *Banner of Truth Magazine*. Moo comments, "What I suggest is that 'old self' is a relational and corporate concept. It does not refer to a part of us or to a nature within us. Rather, it is Paul's way of describing our sinful condition as children of Adam. What is crucified, then, is that relationship. Our tie to Adam is dissolved; he and the sin and death he represents no longer dictate terms to us. Moreover, if the 'old self' is Adam as corporate head of the human race, then the 'new self' is Christ, corporate head of the church... Progress in the Christian life will come as we learn to live out the new relationship God has put us in. We belong to a new corporate structure or regime, dominated by Christ and not by Adam. That new relationship provides, in principle, for all the power we need to stop sinning and to live to God's glory." Wright similarly comments, "In baptism the whole person leaves the Adam-world for good, leaves it by death, a final one-way journey."

συσταυροομαι be crucified together (with someone else)

Cf. Gal 2:19.

καταργηθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s καταργεω render ineffective, cancel, do away with
σωμα, τος n body

τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας means not simply 'sinful body' but body sold under sin, characterised by sin.

μηκετι no longer

Wright comments, "We are still within the world of 5:21, the world of the two realms, sin and grace. Paul underlines the location of Christians on that map, emphasising which of the two countries they now live in and (more to the point) which of the two overlords now rightfully claims their allegiance."

Moo writes, "Since sin's power over us has been broken, we should reflect that new freedom in the way we live. Sin should no longer characterise us."

Romans 6:7

ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

ἀποθανῶν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s

ἀποθνήσκω die

δεδικαίωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

δικαίω justify

Christ's death paid the penalty of sin. We who have died in him are therefore justified from sin. Some think that Paul is here quoting a common proverb but Cranfield and Wright consider this unlikely. Wright comments, "We may compare Gal 2:19-20: 'I through the law died to the law.' Why, then, 'justified,' rather than 'freed'? The answer must be that, unlike most of his recent readers, Paul is able to keep the lawcourt metaphor still running in his mind even while expounding baptism and the Christian's solidarity in Christ. The Christian's freedom from sin comes through God's judicial decision. And this judicial decision is embodied in baptism."

Romans 6:8

εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal

συζαω live with, live together

The future tense looks to the Parousia but also encompasses the present life of the Christian which is a life co-lived with the risen Christ.

Romans 6:9

εἰδότες ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκέτι ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα

ἐγειρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

"Jesus' resurrection was not a mere resuscitation, like those of Jairus's daughter, the widow's son at Nain, or Lazarus (Mark 5:21-34 and par.; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44)... What happened at Easter involved the *transformation*, not merely the revival or resuscitation, of Jesus' body, so that it entered upon a new mode of physical existence, which Paul saw as the beginning and sign of the renewal of all creation (see particularly 1 Cor 15:50-57; Phil 3:20-21)." Wright.

θανάτος, ου m see v.3

κυριεύω have power over, rule over

He has conquered death and broken its reign.

Romans 6:10

ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ· ὁ δὲ ζῆ, ζῆ τῷ θεῷ.

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνήσκω

In what sense did Christ die to sin? Many see it as a reference to Christ's atoning work but Moo, drawing the parallelism with v.2, argues that it is a reference to sin's *power*.

ἐφάπαξ adv. once for all time, at one time

Wright says, "Paul's meaning is that the Messiah came under the rule, the sovereignty, of sin and death; not that he himself sinned, but he came, as Paul says in 8:3, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' 'To die to sin' meant, for the Messiah, that he died under its weight, but that in doing so he came out from its domain. And this happened ἐφάπαξ (*ephapax*), once and for all. There is no room here for the idea that the Messiah, or more especially his people, still live with a foot in both camps, or with one foot in the grave and the other by the empty tomb. Jesus, the Messiah, died once and once only, and was thereafter finished with death."

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζαω live

Romans 6:11

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

οὕτως thus, in this way

λογίζομαι reckon, count

Implies the existence of the thing being 'reckoned'; the indicative leads to an imperative. "Only by constantly (the Greek verb is in the present tense) looking at ourselves as people who really have died to sin and been made alive to Christ will we be able to live out the new status God has given us." Moo. Wright comments, "The 'reckoning' in question is to take place in the believing thought-processes of the Christian."

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

Omitted by p⁴⁶ A D G

ζῶντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl ζῶω

What is true of Christ (v.10) is true of the Christian as one 'in him'. Hence any continuing in sin is contrary to the essence of the Christian – it is a 'moral incongruity'.

Some MSS ad τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν after ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Metzger suggests this longer reading is a liturgical expansion, derived perhaps from 2:3.

Romans 6:1-11 Concluding Summary

Wright concludes this section as follows: "The point is this: on the map of 5:21, the Christian belongs in the second half, the kingdom of grace and righteousness, not in the first half, the kingdom of sin and death. Paul is well aware that sin remains powerful and attractive for the most well-trained Christian, and that physical death awaits all except those for whom the Lord's return comes first (see 1 Cor 9:26-7; 15:51-52). He is speaking of a different level of reality. If someone challenged him and said that sin and death were just as powerful to them as they had been before their coming to faith, he would reply that they had not yet considered the seriousness of their baptism; just as if someone claimed that, now they had been baptised, evil had no attraction whatever for them, he would no doubt reply that they had not yet considered the seriousness of sin. From his whole corpus of writings, we know that Paul was a realist, about himself, about his fellow Christians, about suffering, pain, depression, fear and death itself. These were not enemies he took lightly. But his entire argument in this chapter so far, which anticipates that of 8:31-39, is that the Christian, facing these enemies, stands already on resurrection ground. This is ultimately a truth about the Christian's Lord, the Messiah, but because of baptism it becomes a truth about the Christian himself or herself. 'Reckon yourselves,' calculate yourselves, count yourselves, 'dead to sin and alive to God in the Messiah, Jesus.' This is the full answer to the question of v.1."

Romans 6:12-14

These verses form a bridge between one half of the chapter and the other.

Romans 6:12

Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ,

βασιλευω rule, reign

θνητος, η, ον mortal

σωμα, τος n see v.6.

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing

Some MSS read αὐτῇ instead of ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ. The TR has a conflate reading.

"The victory over sin that God has won for us in Christ is a victory that must be appropriated. Putting away those sins that plague us will be no automatic process, something that will happen without our cooperation. No, Paul insists, a determination of our own will is called for to turn what has happened in principle into actuality." Moo.

Wright comments, "If it is asked, as well it might be, what chance sin has got to rule, if the Christian has died to it, Paul's implicit answer here has to do with the sphere over which sin, though no longer enthroned, can exercise powerful attraction: the 'mortal body.' The Christian still possesses a body – that is, a whole person – which will die and, in terms of ethics, must be 'put to death' (8:13), since it still has desires which must not be obeyed. This 'mortal body' is not far from what Paul means by 'the flesh,' ... it is one of his ways of indicating the continuing ambiguity of the life of the Christian, an ambiguity that in no way takes back the trenchant and definitive statements made in vv. 2-11."

Romans 6:13

μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ.

μηδε nor, and not

παριστημι and παριστηνω present

As a servant presenting himself to a master for his use.

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος, ους n

member, bodily part

ὄπλον, ου n weapon, tool

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ὡσει like, as

ὡσει can mean 'as if', i.e. pretending to be something that you really are not, but here it bears its other sense, 'as if (because that is what you really are)'.

νεκρος, α, ον see v.9

ζῶντας see v.11

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness

The point is that you belong to God to serve him and not to serve sin – hence yield service to the one who is your Lord.

Romans 6:14

ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει, οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν.

κυριεῦω see v.9

Note the future tense. In the future it is certain because it is already accomplished 'in Christ'; in the present it is therefore to be actualised.

οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν.

Murray thinks that it is primarily the impotence of the law that is here in view. You are no longer subject to the broken power of the law whose dominion brought death. You live under Christ's reign of grace which gives life, cf. Jn 1:17.

Wright, however, argues that Paul's point here is consistent with his previous statement concerning the law in 3:21, 28; 4:15 and 5:20. "in the present context Paul's point is plain: those who belong to Christ, who have died and been raised in baptism, do not live in the Adam solidarity, and hence do not live under the law. This is exactly what we find in Gal 2:19: 'I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God.' The implication is striking. When we set the theological explanation of 6:14b alongside 6:14a, Paul is saying that, if one did live under the law, sin *would* indeed have dominion. That will take all of chap. 7 to explain."

Romans 6:15-23

The focus moves from freedom (vv. 1-14) to slavery. Once 'slaves to sin' (vv. 17,20), Christians are now 'slaves to righteousness' (v. 18), 'slaves to God' (v.22).

Romans 6:15

Τί οὖν; ἁμαρτήσωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν; μὴ γένοιτο·

"The questions that open the two main sections in Romans 6 reveal the common theme Paul pursues: 'Shall we go on sinning that grace may increase?' (v.1); 'Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?' (v.15). As the former question is sparked by what Paul said in 5:20 about the power of grace, so the question in 6:15 is stimulated by what he has just said at the end of verse 14. Proclaiming that believers have been transferred from the regime of the Mosaic law to the regime of grace may lead some Christians to think that sin does not matter. Indeed, the danger that believers will 'presume on grace' and not pursue a life of obedience to the Lord is an ever present danger in the Christian church." Moo.

Wright adds, "This question, like that of 6:1, is not confined to committing actual acts of sin. As the parallel with Gal 2:17 demonstrates, part of the point is that to come out from the sphere of Torah, for a Jew, meant that one was joining the 'sinners,' the ἁμαρτωλοί (*hamartoloi*), the lesser breeds without the law."

τι οὖν what then?

ἁμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

γένοιτο see 6:2

Romans 6:16

οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ὃ παριστάνετε ἑαυτοὺς δούλους εἰς ὑπακοήν, δοῦλοί ἐστε ὃ ὑπακούετε, ἥτοι ἁμαρτίας εἰς θάνατον ἢ ὑπακοῆς εἰς δικαιοσύνην;

παριστημι and παριστανῶ see v.13

δουλος, ου m slave, servant

ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

ἥτοι or; ἥτοι ... ἢ either ... or

θανατος see v.3

εἰς θάνατον is omitted by a few MSS – it would seem an accidental omission.

δικαιοσύνη see v.14

δικαιοσύνην would appear here not to have a forensic sense but "in keeping with Old Testament and Jewish usage, ... a moral sense: conduct pleasing to God." Moo.

Paul highlights the illogicality of the idea that the Christian's freedom from sin and death relieves him/her from obligation to God.

Romans 6:17

χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἦτε δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας
 ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε
 τύπον διδασχῆς,

χαρις, ιτος f grace, thanks
 παρεδόθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
 παραδιδωμι hand over, pass on
 τυπος, ου m pattern, example, type
 διδασχη, ης f teaching, what is taught

Paul is "contrasting the Christian pattern of teaching with the Jewish pattern (see 2:20)." Moo. There is the suggestion here that the early Christian kerygma included a body of ethical instruction.

Romans 6:18

ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας
 ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ·

ἐλευθερωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl
 ἐλευθερω free, set free
 ἐδουλώθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
 δουλωω enslave, make (someone) a
 slave

"We have been made 'slaves' of that moral conduct God expects of his people." Moo. Yet *this* slavery is true freedom. Wright considers 'righteousness' here a periphrasis for 'God'.

Romans 6:19

ἀνθρώπινον λέγω διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς
 σαρκὸς ὑμῶν· ὥσπερ γὰρ παρεστήσατε τὰ
 μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ ἀκαθαρσίᾳ καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ
 εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν, οὕτως νῦν παραστήσατε τὰ
 μέλη ὑμῶν δοῦλα τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ εἰς ἁγιασμόν·

ἀνθρωπινοσ, η, ον human, characteristic of
 mankind

Murray thinks that Paul uses this phrase to soften his reference to the Christian life as 'slavery'. So also Moo, "What he suggests, therefore, is that the limitations of our human understanding make it necessary for him to use imprecise, but still appropriate analogies."

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness
 σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature
 ὥσπερ as, just as
 παριστημι and παριστανω see v.13
 μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μελος see v.13
 ἀκαθαρσια, ας f impurity, immorality
 ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness, sin

καὶ τῇ ἀνομίᾳ εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν perhaps 'from one degree of lawlessness to another.'

οὕτως thus, in this way

"One thinks of the single-minded pursuit with which some people seek fame, money, or power. Our pursuit of righteousness and holiness should be just as dedicated." Moo.

Under the heading "What God gives versus what we do", Moo provides an excellent discussion of the relationship between indicative and imperative and the need for a balanced appreciation of both for an adequate understanding of the nature of the Christian life.

ἁγιασμοσ, ου m sanctification, holiness

Either the *state* of holiness or the *process* of sanctification. Murray thinks the former. The condition necessary for a person to approach the presence of God, cf. v.11, 'alive unto God.'

Romans 6:20

Ὅτε γὰρ δοῦλοι ἦτε τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ἐλεύθεροι
 ἦτε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ·

ότε conj when, at which time
 ἐλευθεροσ, α, ον free, free person

"Non-Christians often pride themselves on being free, in contrast to Christians, who in their estimation have lost their human autonomy by bowing the knee to Christ. Paul notes that non-Christians do, indeed, have a freedom – the freedom not to be able to live righteous lives. Genuine autonomy is not an option. If one is not serving God, then, whether knowingly or not, one is serving sin." Moo.

Romans 6:21

τίνα οὖν καρπὸν εἶχετε τότε ἐφ' οἷς νῦν
 ἐπαισχύνεσθε; τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἐκείνων θάνατοσ·

καρποσ, ου m fruit, harvest, outcome
 εἶχετε Verb, imperf act indic, 2 pl ἐχω
 τοτε then, at that time
 ἐπαισχυνομαι be ashamed

"The thought is the mirror of that in 5:5a: hope does not make us ashamed, because it truly leads to life; sin produces shame, because it leads to death. Here 'shame' is not simply associated with the feelings of disgrace or humiliation that belong to the deeds of sin themselves, but with the fact that conduct of that type leads to the human disintegration of death (cf. 1:32)." Wright.

τελοσ, ουσ n end, conclusion,
 ἐκεινοσ, η, ο that, those

The punctuation of this verse is a matter of controversy. Most older versions have no punctuation after *τοτε* and a question mark after *ἐπαισχυνεσθε*. This is reflected in AV and NIV and is supported by Murray. An alternative favoured by Nestle and incorporated in several modern editions of the Greek text, is to place the question mark after *τοτε* and a minor punctuation after *ἐπαισχυνεσθε*. This is reflected in NEB and NJB. Moo comments, "The NIV suggests that Paul asks a rhetorical question implying the answer 'none.' But it is preferable to follow here the punctuation adopted in, for instance, the NJB: 'What did you gain from living like that? Experiences of which you are now ashamed, for that sort of behaviour ends in death.' The verse then matches the structure of verse 22 almost exactly:

Before we were Christians (v. 21):*Status* – slaves of sin, free from righteousness*Result* – fruit bringing shame*Outcome* – death.**Now that we are Christians (v. 22):***Status* – free from sin, slaves to God*Result* – fruit bringing sanctification*Outcome* – life."**Romans 6:22**

νυνὶ δέ, ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας
δουλωθέντες δὲ τῷ θεῷ, ἔχετε τὸν καρπὸν
ὑμῶν εἰς ἁγιασμόν, τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωῆν αἰώνιον.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)

now

ἐλευθερωθέντες see v.18

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

δουλωθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

δουλωω see v.18

ἁγιασμος see v.19

ζωη, ης f life

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Romans 6:23

τὰ γὰρ ὄψωνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος, τὸ δὲ
χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος ἐν Χριστῷ
Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

ὄψωνιον, ου n pay, wages, compensation

χάρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

"Remuneration is the principle by which we become heirs of death; unmerited favour is that by which we receive eternal life." Murray.

Romans 6 – Postscript

It is helpful here to quote at some length from Wright's reflections on Romans 6:

"Being a Christian means living from within a particular story. It is the subversive story of God and the world, focused on Israel and thence on the Messiah, and reaching its climax in the Messiah's death and resurrection. No Christian can ever tell this story to frequently, or know it too well, because it is the story that shaped him or her in baptism and must continue to shape thought, life, and prayer thereafter. Otherwise one will be living a lie, allowing sin to continue exercising a sovereignty to which it has no more right... "This chapter shines a bright spotlight on the dangerous half-truth, currently fashionable, that 'God accepts us as we are.' Indeed, the question of 6:1 could be read as raising exactly this question: Will 'God's acceptance' do as a complete grounding of Christian ethics? Emphatically not. Grace reaches where humans are, and accepts them as they are, because anything else would result in nobody's being saved. Justification is by grace alone, through faith alone. But grace is always *transformative*. God accepts us where we are, but God does not intend to leave us where we are. That would be precisely to 'continue in sin, that grace may abound.' Unless we are simply to write Romans 6 out of the canon, the radical inclusivity of the gospel must be matched by the radical exclusivity of Christian holiness. There is no such thing as continuing to let sin reign in one's mortal body, and it will require serious moral effort to combat this tendency. The idea that Christian holiness is to be attained by every person simply doing what comes naturally would actually be funny were it not so prevalent. True freedom is not simply the random, directionless life, but the genuine humanness that reflects the image of God. This is found under the lordship of Christ. And this lordship makes demands that are as testing and difficult as they are actually liberating.

"The pattern, the motive and the moral power to live in true freedom (in other words, in 'slavery' to God) are found in that weaving of our life story together with the death and resurrection of the Messiah that happens in baptism. We are all too aware that thousands, perhaps millions, of the baptised seem to have abandoned the practice of the Christian faith and life; but we are nevertheless called to allow the dying and rising of Christ in which we have shared to have its force and way in our own lives. If Jesus and his dying and rising are simply a great example, we remain without hope; who seriously thinks that they can live up to that ideal in their own strength? But if the fact of the messianic events has become part of our own story through the event of baptism, and the prayer and faith that accompany it, and above all the gift of the Holy Spirit of which Paul will shortly say more – then we will indeed be able to make our own the victory of grace, to present our members, and our whole selves, as instruments of God's ongoing purposes."

Romans 7:1-8:11

"The main theme on the surface of Romans 7 – and of the first paragraph of Romans 8, which belongs closely with it – is the Jewish Law, the Torah. The conclusion is unwelcome to some, not least because it appears to make the passage irrelevant for those who have never lived 'under' the Torah. But Paul is here telling the story of Israel under one particular guise; this is the story that climaxes with the story of Jesus (8:3-4), and the way in which it does so is vital for understanding the basis of Christianity..."

"The argument of the passage falls into clear paragraphs. The introduction (7:1-6) leads to the question of whether the law and sin are identical (7:7-12). This produces the second-order question, whether the good law, despite being exonerated from the first charge, is nevertheless the cause of death (7:13-20). This in turn leads to Paul's paradoxical conclusion about the law (7:21-25). Paul can then expound the divine answer (8:1-11), which also, naturally, serves as the foundation of the further exposition of life in the Spirit (8:12-30)." Wright.

Romans 7:1-4

Paul provides us with an illustration of the relationship between law, death and freedom. Death annuls the demands of the law on the person now deceased; for example, the law which binds a man to his wife is annulled with the death of the husband. The annulment of this law gives freedom to the wife. In this example the dead and the living cannot be one and the same, but in respect to the spiritual truth they illustrate they can be: the same person who has died with Christ to the demands of the law is freed to live with and for the risen Christ. However, the illustration should not be turned into an allegory.

Romans 7:1

Ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε, ἀδελφοί, γινώσκουσιν γὰρ νόμον λαλῶ, ὅτι ὁ νόμος κυριεύει τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ;

ἢ οἱ

Provides a link back to 6:14-15, "You are not under the law ... or do you not know that the law only rules over someone during their lifetime?"

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

λαλεω speak, talk

"*nomos* refers to the Mosaic law throughout this context. his does not mean, however, that Paul addresses only Jewish Christians. Many of the Gentile Christians in Rome had probably been 'God-fearers,' that is, Gentiles sympathetic to Judaism but without becoming converts. They would have known the Mosaic law as well as Jewish Christians." Moo.

κυριεω see 6:9

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, how far; ἐφ' ὅσον while

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be alive

This is a general statement, of which the law regarding marriage is simply an example.

Romans 7:2

ἡ γὰρ ὑπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδετα νόμῳ· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήρηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός.

ὑπανδρος, ον married (of a woman)

γυνη, αικος f woman, wife

ἀνηρ, ἀνδρος m man, husband

δέδετα Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s δεω bind, tie

ἐαν if

ἀποθνησκω die, face death, be mortal

κατήργηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s
καταργεω cancel; pass be released
from

τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός Barrett considers the two genitives to be in apposition – 'she is done with the law as she is done with her husband.'

Romans 7:3

ἄρα οὖν ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρός μοιχαλὶς
χρηματίζει ἐὰν γένηται ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ· ἐὰν δὲ
ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ
νόμου, τοῦ μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν μοιχαλίδα
γενομένην ἀνδρὶ ἑτέρῳ.

μοιχαλὶς, ἰδος f adulteress, unfaithful
χρηματίζω be called
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

του μη εἶναι – του + infinitive expresses
consequence – "with the result that she is not
..."

Romans 7:4

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐθανατώθητε τῷ
νόμῳ διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ
γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ, τῷ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθέντι
ἵνα καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ θεῷ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἐθανατώθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
θανατοω kill, put to death

Cf. Gal 2:19. By death, you came out from
under the law's domain.

σῶμα, τος n body

"The era of the law has come to an end with
the redemptive work of Christ. To be 'under
the law,' then, means to be in that old era and
to effectively deny that Christ, 'the end of the
law,' has come." Moo.

Wright, addressing the question of who is the
'you' who has died, writes, "The whole clause
appears to be a shorthand way of saying three
things simultaneously: (a) the bodily death of
Jesus the Messiah is the representative event
through which the Messiah's people 'die with
him' (6:4-11); (b) you are in the Messiah by
baptism, and therefore share that death [so
chapter 6]; (c) your solidarity with the Messiah
can be expressed in terms of your membership
in his 'body.'"

νεκρος, α, ον dead
ἐγερθέντι Verb, aor pass ptc, m & n dat s
ἐγειρω raise
καρποφορεω bear fruit, be productive

To have died to the law does not mean to be
free to live as one pleases. The only way of
dying to the law is by dying with Christ and to
die with him is also to be raised with him.
That union with him that brings forgiveness is
also a union designed to bear fruit (cf. 6:21-
22).

Romans 7:5-6

"Paul now explains v. 4 with a two-sided
description of the old life and the new. This, as
is widely recognised, functions as the double
heading over the two sections, 7:7-25 and 8:1-
11." Wright.

Romans 7:5

ὅτε γὰρ ἦμεν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τὰ παθήματα τῶν
ἀμαρτιῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου ἐνηργεῖτο ἐν τοῖς
μέλεσιν ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ καρποφορήσαι τῷ
θανάτῳ·

ὅτε conj when, at which time
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

"The flesh' denotes physicality seen on the one
hand as corruptible and on the other as
rebellious; it is another way of saying 'in
Adam,' of demarcating that humanity that is
characterised by sin and consequently by
death. To be 'in the flesh' for Paul is to be
determined by 'flesh' in this sense, i.e., to live
under the dominion of sin and death, and thus
to be in the condition marked by the first half
of the various antitheses both of 5:12-21 and of
6:16-23." Wright.

παθημα, τος n passion, desire
ἀμαρτια, ας f sin
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

The law had no power to prevent sinful
passions but rather stimulated them, cf. vv 7-
12.

μελος, ους n member, bodily part
θανατος, ου m death

Romans 7:6

νυνὶ δὲ κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου,
ἀποθανόντες ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα, ὥστε
δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος καὶ οὐ
παλαιότητι γράμματος.

νυνὶ (originally an emphatic form of νυν)
now
κατηργήθημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl
καταργεω see v.2

The AV rendering seems to imply ἀποθανοντος (so Elzevir text of 1624) for which there is no manuscript authority, but which seems to be derived from a conjecture of Beza, who, following Erasmus, misunderstood a comment of Chrysostom (so Tischendorf).

κατεχω hold fast, restrain
 ώστε so that, with the result that
 καινοτης, ητος f newness

'Newness of Spirit' is a reference to the Holy Spirit who is the author of new life. Paul here anticipates 8:1-11.

παλαιοτης, ητος f age, oldness
 γραμμα, τος n letter (of alphabet), letter

Cf. 2 Cor 3:6f.; also Rom 2:29. "The point of all this for Romans 7 is to confirm that here Paul is dealing with 'the Jew,' living under the 'letter' of the Mosaic law, and contrasting this with the Spirit-given new life in Christ; and to show that throughout 7:1-8:11 we should keep in mind the discussion in chap. 2, which, demonstrating the inadequacy of the Torah to create and sustain ethnic Israel as God's people, pointed forward to the creation of a new people in whom God's will would be done, described somewhat oxymoronically as 'the uncircumcision that keeps the law' (2:26-27)... A new mode of service, then, has been opened up, a mode to which Torah pointed but which it could not bring to pass." Wright.

Romans 7:7-12

The verses that follow have caused much controversy: do they speak of the unregenerate state or is Paul describing his experience as a Christian? They do not seem to describe what we know of Paul's history before his conversion. Murray argues that verses 7-12 are a description of pre-regenerate conviction, a work of the Spirit. Barrett thinks that this section does not reflect Paul's experience but follows the pattern of the story of the Fall in Gen 2 & 3. Wright argues strongly that it depicts the history of Israel as God's covenant people, a history with which Paul identifies, for it *was* his history. In answer to the question of whether the law is sin, Paul tells "the story of the law's arrival on Sinai and Israel's recapitulation of the sin of Adam."

Romans 7:7

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὁ νόμος ἁμαρτία; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου, τὴν τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδειν εἰ μὴ ὁ νόμος ἔλεγεν· Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις·

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω
 γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Paul's negative evaluation of the law in vv 1-6 leads him to anticipate a conclusion that may wrongly be drawn by his Roman readers – that the law and sin are more or less equivalent. Note the use of the adversative ἀλλά 'No, the law is not sin, although it is indeed true that the law and sin are related...' NIV translation of ἀλλά as 'indeed' is misleading.

ἔγνων Verb, aor act indic, 1 s γινωσκω

The meaning here is more than 'come to understand' sin as a concept, it is knowing what sin meant in practice – knowing its reality and power (see 8a). Cf. 3:20.

τε and; τε γαρ for also

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, longing, lust

ἤδειν Verb, pluperf act indic, 1 s οἶδα

ἐπιθυμew long for, desire, covet

Wright comments, "This is not about Paul himself; it is about the moment in Israel's history, and indeed (5:13-14) in the history of humankind, when the arrival of the law meant that, as at the beginning, humans were faced with a specific command, so that the miscellaneous sin that had existed 'from Adam to Moses' (5:14) would again become 'trespass,' breaking a known law.

"That explains, as will become clear in the next three verses, the fact that Paul seems here to be referring also to the 'fall' of Genesis 3 (particularly with v.11: sin 'deceived me ... and killed me,' alluding to Gen 3:13; cf. 2 Cor 11:3). We should not attempt to decide between these two (Sinai and Eden): Paul's point is precisely that what happened on Sinai recapitulated what had happened in Eden."

Romans 7:8

ἀφορμὴν δὲ λαβοῦσα ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς κατειργάσατο ἐν ἐμοὶ πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν, χωρὶς γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία νεκρά.

ἀφορμη, ης f occasion, opportunity

λαβοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s λαμβανω

ἐντολη, ης f command

κατειργάσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

κατεργαζομαι accomplish, bring about

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω

Sin is at war against man, and the law gives it opportunity for attack. Barrett points out the analogy with the way in which the serpent used the command of God given to Adam and Eve in order to lead them into sin. Moo says that Paul "Probably has in mind the power of a definite prohibition to stimulate in sinful people a rebellious reaction."

χωρις without, apart from

νεκρος, α, ον dead

Romans 7:9

ἐγὼ δὲ ἔζων χωρὶς νόμου ποτέ· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀνέζησεν,

ζῶ live, be alive

ποτε once, formerly, at one time

ἐλθούσης Verb, aor act ptc, f gen s ἐρχομαι
ἀναζῶ come to life

The law gives sin a new lease of life. To what time does this refer? Many commentators see this as a reference to Paul's childhood before he became a 'son of the commandment' and assumed responsibility before the law. But Paul has made it quite clear that he had never been 'alive' in a spiritual sense without the law because he was born a sinner, condemned because of Adam's sin (5:12-21). Murray and others see the reference not to a particular time in Paul's development but to the psychology of the fallen man and the manner of sin's working. Barrett thinks that the language reflects the story of Adam and Eve and that Paul is here identifying himself with this history. Moo also thinks that Paul is speaking here not of personal experience but of corporate experience. He says, "The best explanation ... finds Paul in these verses to be describing the experience that he and all Jews have gone through as part of the people of Israel. Jews in Paul's day had a lively sense of their involvement with the great acts in the history of Israel... It would be natural for Paul to merge his own experience relative to sin and the law with the experience of his people Israel. As he has made clear throughout Romans, the coming of the commandment (= the giving of the law of Moses) meant for Israel not 'life' but 'death.' Their sin was exposed and magnified, and greater wrath came on them (4:15; 5:20)."

Romans 7:10

ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον, καὶ εὐρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ εἰς ζωὴν αὐτῆ εἰς θάνατον·

ἀπέθανον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death

εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρίσκω

ζωη, ης f life

Cf. Lev 18:5. "The purpose of the law in man's original estate was not to give occasion to sin but to direct and regulate man's life in the path of righteousness and therefore to guard and promote life." Murray.

θάνατος, ου m death

Wright comments, "This is, for Paul, the real irony of Torah, and it points forward to the paradoxical fulfilling of Torah's intention by the Spirit in 8:1-11."

Romans 7:11

ἡ γὰρ ἁμαρτία ἀφορμὴν λαβοῦσα διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς ἐξηπάτησέν με καὶ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπέκτεινεν.

ἀφορμὴ see v.8

Sin used the law as a bridgehead for its invasion.

λαβοῦσα see v.8

ἐξαπαταῶ deceive, lead astray

There are echoes of the story of the serpent in the Garden.

ἀποκτείνω and ἀποκτενω, -ννω kill, put to death

Wright comments, "The preliminary picture is complete: (a) sin and the law are quite distinct; (b) sin has taken over the law, the law that promised life; (c) using it as a base of operations, sin has produced the opposite of that which the law promised. This is of course why 'no human being will be justified' in God's sight on the basis of Torah (3:20); it is why the Torah became 'a dispensation of death' (2 Cor 3:7-11); it is why, despite the glory of the first exodus and the first covenant, a new exodus and a renewed covenant were necessary."

Romans 7:12

ὥστε ὁ μὲν νόμος ἅγιος, καὶ ἡ ἐντολὴ ἁγία καὶ δικαία καὶ ἀγαθή.

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

δικαίος, α, ον righteous, just

ἀγαθος, η, ον good

The law reflects the character of the lawgiver. Paul will now build on this positive affirmation to describe the positive role of the law in *exposing* sin.

Romans 7:13

Τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ ἐγένετο θάνατος; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία, ἵνα φανῇ ἁμαρτία διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ μοι κατεργαζομένη θάνατον· ἵνα γένηται καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς ἡ ἁμαρτία διὰ τῆς ἐντολῆς.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
γένοιτο see v.7

ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁμαρτία the culprit is sin, not the law.

φανῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s φαίνομαι midd.

and pass. appear, be seen, be revealed

κατεργάζομαι accomplish, bring about

γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

ὑπερβολῆ, ης f surpassing, beyond

measure, to an extreme

ἁμαρτωλός, ον sinful, sinner

ἐντολή, ης f command, order, instruction

Sin was in the world before the law, but the commandment was given that sin might be displayed in its true colours (cf. 5:20; Gal 3:14).

Romans 7:14-21

There are several basic views of verses 14-21:

- i) Paul is speaking here of his experience as an unregenerate man. Against this view, Barrett says, "In passages where Paul certainly describes his life before conversion there is no trace of spiritual conflict, or of a 'divided self'. Gal 1:13f and Phil 3:4ff depict the Jew practicing his religion more successfully than any of his contemporaries, blameless in his observance of the law, and entirely satisfied with his own righteousness."
- ii) Paul describes his experience as a Christian. This view is defended by Murray and also by Dunn. Dunn argues that Paul is describing the eschatological tension in which the believer is caught – the tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet.' Moo responds by drawing attention to the fact that here in Paul's description the battle ends in utter defeat. This does not fit with his description of the character of the Christian life.
- iii) A modified form of the previous view suggests that Paul is describing the *immature* Christian. Such a view is common among the school that distinguishes between the 'carnal Christian' and 'spiritual Christian' or advocates some form of 'higher life,' or 'second blessing'. In moderate form this view is defended by Lloyd Jones.
- iv) Paul is not speaking specifically of the regenerate or unregenerate but of the contrast between seeking to live by law and living by grace. Griffith Thomas writes, "The one point of the passage is that it describes a man who is trying to be good and holy by his own efforts and is beaten back by the power of indwelling sin. This is the experience of any man who tries the experiment, whether regenerate or unregenerate." Longenecker also supports this interpretation.

- v) The context is Paul's discussion of the role of the *Mosaic* law. Moo writes, "If we are to have any hope of accurately understanding these verses, we must start where Paul does: with the Mosaic law. His main concern is not anthropology, the Christian life, or theories of sanctification. These come in along the way, but the apostle's purpose here is to explain why the Mosaic law has brought death to Israel. The way sin has used the law to bring death to God's Old Testament people was the burden of 7:7-12. But one large question remains unanswered. How could sin do this? The answer comes in 7:14: 'I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.' Sin, after all, is no independent entity. It exists only as human beings miss the mark of God's holiness, and people are bound to sin because they are 'sold as slaves' to it. We agree with God's law with our minds, but we cannot obey it (7:15-20). "Paul summarises the struggle in 7:21-25: The good law of God is at war with the 'law of sin.' Because people are held captive under that law of sin, they can never escape the penalty for disobedience and death – at least, not on their own. But Christ does rescue us from 'this body of death' (vv 24-25). What Paul explains in these verses is that the law comes to people already held captive under sin; thus, of course, they are incapable of obeying it. It is human incapacity that explains the failure of the law. As Paul summarises the point in 8:3: The law was 'powerless ... in that it was weakened by the sinful nature.'" Paul identifies himself with this description insofar as he once sought to live by the law, but the description is moulded by his new understanding of the law in the light of Christ. Christ came to deliver the Jew from the burden of the Mosaic law which, though righteous and good, could only bring frustration and death. This last view is developed in a more thoroughgoing way by Wright who believes that Paul is reflecting on the history and experience of Israel, past and present.

Romans 7:14

Οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ὁ νόμος πνευματικός ἐστίν· ἐγὼ δὲ σάρκινός εἰμι, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to the spirit

Refers to the divine origin of the law, cf. v.12; 1 Cor 2:18.

σαρκινος, η, ον fleshly, material, belonging to this world

Just as sin still dwells in him, so does the flesh. The problem is not with the law but with the human condition.

πεπραμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
πιπρασκω sell, sell as a slave

Difficult to see how this could be used of the Christian. 'Under sin' is used to describe those without Christ (3:9), a state from which the Christian has been freed (6:18,22; cf. 6:2,6,14). Wright argues that "The point he is making is that the 'I,' the Jew, Israel 'according to the flesh' (cf. 9:5; 11:14; 1 Cor 10:18), belongs within the Adam solidarity, still held as a slave within the 'Egypt' of sin and death; and that the law, in its promise of life, is ontologically as well as morally mismatched with Adamic humanity, Israel included. The problem is not the Torah, but the sort of person 'I' am."

Romans 7:15

ὁ γὰρ κατεργάζομαι οὐ γινώσκω· οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ' ὁ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ.

οὐ γινώσκω 'I do not recognise and approve', i.e. the opposite of 'hate' in the second half of the verse.

θέλω wish, will

πράσσω practice, do

μισέω hate, despise, be indifferent to

Describes the powerlessness of the law, made powerless through sin – or perhaps rather, the powerlessness of the person living under law.

Romans 7:16

εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός.

σύμφημι agree with

καλός, η, ον good, right, proper

In other words, referring back to v.13, the law is not at fault.

Romans 7:17

νονι δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.

νονι now

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more

οἰκεω live, dwell

"Sin is personified as an evil power which takes up its residence within human nature, and thus controls men's actions." Barrett.

"Paul is not disclaiming responsibility for his actions. Rather, he is trying to explain his actions by revealing the force within himself that leads him to act as he does. That force is 'sin,' a power he has been describing throughout Romans 5-7." Moo. Wright comments, "Paul, having moved the problem off Torah on to the 'I,' now moves it one stage further, on to sin itself... The 'indwelling' of sin is a new idea, introduced for the first and only time in Paul's writings, perhaps formed on the analogy of the indwelling of the Spirit, which Paul will contrast with this condition in 8:9,11."

Romans 7:18

οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ οἰκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου, ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι, τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐ·

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

παρκεμαι be present, be at hand

The concluding οὐ is supported by κ A B C *et al.* Other MSS, D G K P Ψ 33 *et al* read οὐχ εὐρισκω. Metzger suggests the longer reading is an attempt to ameliorate the otherwise abrupt termination.

"Without something 'good' 'dwelling in me,' the 'I' cannot bring the good will into reality; again, Paul is preparing the way for the contrast with the Spirit's indwelling, doing what the law could not, in the following chapter." Wright.

Romans 7:19

οὐ γὰρ ὁ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ ὁ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong

Romans 7:20

εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ θέλω τοῦτο ποιῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγὼ κατεργάζομαι αὐτὸ ἀλλὰ ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία.

See v.17.

θέλω see v.15

οὐκέτι see v.17

κατεργάζομαι see v.13

οἰκεω see v.17

From the previous verses, Wright draws the following conclusion: "At the heart of Paul's exposition of the effects and meaning of Torah ... we find a key part of Paul's root-and-branch rejection of what would later become Marcionism. Israel itself, the 'I' that continues to live under Torah, and continues to discover that it points to sin within Israel and so condemns it to death, is God-given; Israel's delight in Torah (think of Psalm 119!) is a good, not a bad, thing; the problem is simply that that which is wrong with the rest of the human race – namely indwelling sin – is wrong with Israel too, and Torah can do nothing about it. Here in the middle of Romans 7, we find a short passage that picks up the theme of the vindication of Israel from early in chap. 3 and anticipates the full-dress statement, as the spiral of argument gradually unwinds, in chap. 11."

Romans 7:21

Εύρίσκω ἄρα τὸν νόμον τῷ θέλοντι ἐμοὶ ποιεῖν τὸ καλὸν ὅτι ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται·

Many argue that 'law' is used here in the sense of pattern of things, 'principle' or 'rule' (cf. vv. 23,25 and Rom 8:2). Wright, however, translates, "This, then, is what I discover about *the law*." He comments, "We are in a chapter that began with a complex argument about Torah, which grew directly out of 5:20 and 6:14 where there is no question that *nomos* meant Torah; and we are now at the point where, with the argument nearly complete, the writer is summing up, drawing the threads together. Are we really to say that at precisely this point he will start twisting and turning and saying 'this then is my conclusion – that I find a law?'"

καλός, η, ον good, right,
κακός, η, ον see v.19
παράκειμαι see v.18

Wright sees an echo of Cain. See also his *Climax of the Covenant*, Ch 12.

Romans 7:22

συνήδομαι γὰρ τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον,

συνήδομαι delight in
ἔσω inside, inner being

On 'inner man' cf. 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16. It is used elsewhere of that part of the regenerate nature that belongs to the age to come. However, Moo thinks that Paul is speaking of the 'two sides' of man, willing versus doing – not necessarily the Christian.

Romans 7:23

βλέπω δὲ ἕτερον νόμον ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου ἀντιστρατευόμενον τῷ νόμῳ τοῦ νοός μου καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντά με ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἀμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσίν μου.

βλεπω see
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

"Just as God in his law makes a claim on our lives, so sin, acting through our members, exerts its own claim on us. These two claims battle for our allegiance."

μέλος, ος n member, bodily part
ἀντιστρατευομαι war against
νοός, νοός, νοί, νοον m mind, thought
αἰχμαλωτίζω make captive, take prisoner

The upshot, Paul says, is that we are 'prisoners of the law of sin.' God's law simply does not have the power to deliver us from the power of sin." Moo. This 'other law' is the same Torah but now used against its proper purpose as an instrument of sin and death. "Paul, still exploring the depths of 5:20, is again describing the captivity, the enslavement, the 'Egypt' of sin and death, exacerbated by Torah, from which Christ and only Christ can deliver. This, seen with Christian hindsight, is the plight of the 'I,' of Israel, including the pre-Christian Paul himself, under Torah." Wright.

Romans 7:24

ταλαίπωρος ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπος· τίς με ρύσεται ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου;

ταλαίπωρος, ον miserable, wretched
ρύνομαι save, rescue
σῶμα, τος n body
θανάτος, ου m death

"Paul is speaking here of a condition of death that has already set in. For by 'body' he means not merely the material organisation of the body, but man in his present mode of existence, that which he elsewhere calls the 'body of sin' Rom 6:6, or 'of the flesh' Col 2:16." Ridderbos.

"The rescue he hopes for is probably deliverance from the sin-dominated body, spiritually dead because of sin." Moo.

Romans 7:25

χαρίς τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

Ἄρα οὖν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ τῷ μὲν νοῖ δουλεύω νόμῳ θεοῦ, τῇ δὲ σαρκὶ νόμῳ ἀμαρτίας..

χαρίς, ιος f grace; thanks

Most understand the opening statement as 'thanks be to God', or 'thank God.' Some MSS actually read εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ (8* A K P *et al*). However Gervais Angel understands the phrase to mean 'there is grace with God,' introducing 8:1.

Wright comments, "This verse looks back to 5:21, where 'grace' is obviously a periphrasis for 'God' (cf. too 6:23), and on to 8:3, where ὁ θεός (*ho theos*, 'God') is the emphatic subject of one of the most important sentences in the entire letter. The triple statement of Jesus' identity – Jesus, Messiah, our Lord – serves as the weighty christological summary at the end of this stage of the argument, matching those in 4:24-25; 5:11, 21; and 6:23, and pointing to the christology and consequent soteriology of 8:1-11, 17, 29-30 and supremely 31-39."

νοῦ Noun, dat s νοῦς see v.23

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

The final phrase seems to look back to and sums up the conflict expounded in the previous verses. The mind, while delighting in God's law, remains powerless to put it into practice.

Romans 8

Romans 8 focusses on the blessings conveyed to the Christian by the Holy Spirit.

Wright comments, "The first eleven verses of Romans 8 lie at the very heart of Romans 5-8 as a whole. They simultaneously complete the thought of the section that began with 7:1 and begin the majestic sequence that sweeps through to 8:30. As tightly argued as any piece of Pauline logic, they are at the same time suffused with a sense of exultation and celebration... We are still watching the unfolding of the Adam/Christ contrast of 5:12-21, and in particular the exposition of the great statement in the last verse of that seminal passage. 'As sin reigned in death' (and we must remind ourselves of the role of the law within that reign, as in 5:20), 'so grace also reigned through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' From this tight-packed statement, the key contrast for this present passage is that between death and life: 'life' is the golden thread that runs through 8:1-11, the gift of God that the law wanted to give but could not, the gift that comes because God's Son has dealt with sin and death and God's life-giving Spirit has replaced sin as the indwelling power within God's people. The promise of resurrection with which the passage concludes is not added for extra effect at the end of the paragraph. It is where the whole argument is leading."

Romans 8:1

Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Looks back to 5:12-21, but also, in the light of the end of chapter 7, looks forward to what follows: "I serve God's law with my mind, but sin's law with my flesh; there is *therefore* no condemnation, *because* God has dealt with sin in the flesh, and provided new life for the body." So Wright who continues, "The verdict of the last day has been brought forward into the present. This is, quite simply, the solid foundation for Christian joy."

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing;

οὐδέν not at all

κατάκριμα, τος n condemnation

τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "offers not just a designation of the people for whom there is no condemnation, but, in compact form, the reason why this is the case." Wright.

A number of MSS include μη κατα σαρκα περιπατουσιν ἀλλα κατα σαρκα after Ἰησου. Metzger comments, "The shorter text which makes the more general statement without the qualification which is appropriate enough at verse 4 is strongly supported by early representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text."

Romans 8:2

ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

Most commentators consider 'law' to be used here of a regulatory principle or power. Wright disagrees, arguing, "When scaling the sheer rock of Paul's thought it is important not to lose one's nerve and settle for an apparently easier path, a seemingly more natural route. The explanation of v. 2, after all, is found in vv. 3-4; and there, as the heart of the chapter so far, we find that the 'righteous verdict of the law,' τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ νόμου (*dikaioma tou nomou*), is now fulfilled 'in us who walk ... according to the Spirit.' We then find, by implication, that whereas 'the mind of the flesh' does not submit to God's law, the mind of the Spirit actually does (v.7), and that by the Spirit God will do what the law wanted to do but, through no fault of its own, was unable to do (8:3, 10-11; cf. 7:10). It is not fanciful, then, but strictly in keeping with the thrust of the whole passage, to say that when Paul speaks of 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' he is indeed referring to Torah, in a way for which we have only distantly been prepared by 3:27, 31. After all, *ho nomos* in vv. 3, 4, and 7 is clearly Torah. How obscure do we suppose Paul to have been?"

ἠλευθερω free, set free

"The Spirit exerts a liberating power through the work of Christ that takes us out of the realm of sin and the spiritual death to which sin inevitably leads." Moo.
Wright comments, "As we have already seen, talk of setting slaves free is exodus language: the present paragraph is describing how those who are in the Messiah, and indwelt by the Spirit, are brought out of the Egypt of sin and death and promised citizenship in the kingdom of life. There is no question but that Paul is referring in this verse to the same composite event that he has been describing in the previous chapters – namely, the messianic (and hence representative) death of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit."

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

ἠλευθέρωσεν σε There are several textual variants here. In place of σε some mss read με or ἡμας and some omit the personal pronoun altogether. ἡμας would appear to be a secondary generalisation, but it is difficult to choose between σε and με. Metzger hesitantly chooses σε as the more difficult reading. Barrett prefers to omit the pronoun on the ground that σε may have crept in through repetition of the ending of ἠλευθέρωσε. He suggests that the 'gnomic aorist' (expressing a timeless truth) should be translated, "The Spirit liberates from ..." Wright argues for 'you' singular, σε. "Like those old portraits whose eyes follow each onlooker around the room, this statement of freedom is aimed at every single hearer of the letter, whoever and wherever they may be."

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
θανατος, ου m death

Romans 8:3

τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἡσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινε τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, ἀδυνατος, ον impossible, weak

It was unable to deliver life – it offered it, but could not deliver.

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

Note Paul's play on the word σαρξ in this verse. The weakness lay not in the law but in those who received it.

ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας Cf. 8:32. The action is that of God, precluding any possibility of it being the action of a merciful Son placating an angry Father.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
πεμπω send
ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness

The word can express either identity or similarity. Here it must mean that Christ assumed a humanity like ours in every way except for sin.

περὶ ἁμαρτίας Christ was sent to deal with the problem of sin. Wright points out that this is a phrase used in the sacrificial language of the LXX.

κατέκρινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement
ον

Wright comments on the phrase 'God ... condemned sin' saying, "No clearer statement is found in Paul, or indeed anywhere else in all early Christian literature, of early Christian belief that what happened on the cross was the judicial punishment of sin... For Paul, what was at stake was not simply God's judicial honour, in some Anselmic sense, but the mysterious power called sin, at large and destructive within God's world, needing to be brought to book, to have sentence passed and executed upon it, so that, with its power broken, God could then give the life sin would otherwise prevent. That is what happened on the cross."

Murray thinks that Paul's words reflect his argument in Rom 6:2-14 and refer to the condemnation of sin's reign over the flesh effected in the death of Christ, i.e. not only a sentence declared upon sin but executed upon sin. God executed this judgment and overthrew the power of sin: the law could only condemn sin in a declarative sense. "In that same nature which in all others was sinful, in that very nature which in all others was dominated and directed by sin, in that nature assumed by the Son of God but free from sin, God condemned sin and overthrew its power."

Romans 8:4

ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα·

δικαίωμα, τος n regulation, requirement

Moo draws attention to the fact that δικαίωμα is singular, not plural, saying, "The difference may not be great if Paul is thinking of the way that the Spirit enables Christians to obey the commandments of the law (note v.7). But the singular word, along with the passive form of 'fulfil,' suggests a different idea: God in Christ has fulfilled the entirety of the law's demand on our behalf."

Wright says that ἵνα "states God's intention: that the righteous verdict of the law might be fulfilled 'in us.' The life the Torah intended, indeed longed, to give to God's people is now truly given by the Spirit." Paul chooses to use the word δικαίωμα here rather than δικαίωσις because of its formal balance with κατάκρινα.

πληρωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πληρωω
fill, fulfill, accomplish

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"Those who will find Torah's righteous decree fulfilled in them – those, that is, who will share in the resurrection life (8:10-11) – are those who in the present do not 'walk' according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Wright.

Romans 8:5-11

Paul begins a section on the work of the Holy Spirit. Note the various terms which seem to be used synonymously: 'Spirit'; 'Spirit of God'; 'Spirit of Christ'; 'Christ in you'. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes Christ present to the believer. There is a parallel here to John's doctrine of the Paraclete.

Verses 5-8 introduce a series of contrasts between σαρξ and πνεῦμα – 'the sinful nature' versus the Spirit. The sinful nature brings death while the Spirit brings life.

Verses 5 and 6 both begin with γάρ. Wright comments, "It seems to me more likely that both independently explain vv. 1-4, rather than that v. 6 is intended to explain something about v. 5."

Romans 8:5

οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος.

σαρξ see v.3

φρονεω think, have in mind

"The lifestyle of the flesh flows from a mind oriented to the flesh, whereas the lifestyle of the Spirit comes from a mind oriented to the Spirit." Moo.

Romans 8:6

τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη·

φρόνημα, τος n way of thinking, mind,
mind-set

θανατος see v.2

Not merely causes or leads to death but is death – it is existence in separation from God. Equally, *life and peace* are the characteristics of life from and with God.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

"It is the Christian *mind* that must become the initial, and transformative, locus of renewal (12:2, contrasting with 1:22, 28)." Wright.

Romans 8:7

διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρα εἰς θεόν, τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται·

διότι because, for, therefore

Here *because*.

ἐχθρα, ας f enmity, hostility, hatred

'Flesh-thinking' is hostile to God.

ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection;
pass. be subject, submit to, obey

Romans 8:8

οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέσσαι οὐ δύνανται.
ἀρέσσαι Verb, aor act infin ἀρεσκω please,
seek to please

"Despite its prominence in various Pauline passages, the idea that one can actually *please* God, or the Lord, is foreign to much thinking and writing on the apostle, perhaps because it suggests to some the thin end of a wedge that will end in works-righteousness. Paul has no such scruples (see, e.g. 12:2; 14:18; 1 Cor 7:32; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; 1 Thess 4:1). Those in the flesh cannot please God; but, by strong and clear implication, those in the Spirit can and do." Wright.

Romans 8:9

Ἦμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι,
εἶπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις
πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν
αὐτοῦ.

Paul shifts the focus of attention to his readers.

ἐν πνεύματι Paul shifts between the images of being 'in the Spirit' and the Spirit being 'in you'. Wright says that "The latter is what Paul wants to emphasise at this point, using the image of 'indwelling' that evokes the idea of the *Shekinah* dwelling in the wilderness tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple (cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19, etc.). The formulation 'in the Spirit' is more of a technical description, formed ad hoc to contrast with 'in the flesh'."

εἶπερ since, if it is true that

"The nuance in the middle of v. 9 is hard to catch, since 'if' (NIV) appears too doubtful and 'since' (NRSV) too certain. The Greek εἶπερ (*eiper*) hovers in between these two, meaning something like 'if after all' or 'if, as is indeed the case'; we may compare its use in 3:30 or 8:17. If it contains a shadow of doubt it does so within a basic affirmation." Wright.

οἰκω see 7:17

A Christian in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell is a contradiction in terms.

Romans 8:10

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ
ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην.

σῶμα, τος n body

νεκρος, α, ον dead

τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν "Christians are subject to the laws of decay and death, still living as they do in 'the body of humiliation' (Phil 3:21)." Wright.

πνεῦμα Some commentators have interpreted this as spirit (Sanday & Headlam etc. – and NIV!). Barrett, however, argues that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit; "Paul is not interested in psychological duality." Murray also argues that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit since this is the subject of these verses and Moo agrees saying that Paul "here refers to the Holy Spirit, the power of 'life' that has come to reside in the believer. It is because of this power of life within us that we can be certain of future resurrection." So also Wright for whom the Spirit is the theme of these verses as characteristic of the new covenant.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires

Murray says a reference to the righteous act of God in Christ's death and resurrection – the basis of our life. Wright argues that it refers to "God's faithfulness to the covenant, God's own righteousness."

Romans 8:11

εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ
νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας ἐκ νεκρῶν
Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ
σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἐνοικοῦν αὐτοῦ πνεῦμα
ἐν ὑμῖν.

ἐγείραντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s ἐγειρω
raise

Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν there are a number of textual variants here, several assimilating to the earlier τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

ζωοποιω give life, make alive
θνητος, η, ον mortal

"The God who raised the Messiah will also raise all the Messiah's people, you included." Wright.

ἐνοικω live in

"This, then, is the answer to 7:24b, no longer as a bare assertion of faith (as by itself, is 7:25a), but as a tight theological argument. Who will deliver from this body of death? Who, in other words, will give life to the dead? The law, though holy, just and good, cannot do this; God will, through Christ and by the Spirit and will thereby do what the law held out (Lev 18:5; Deut 30:15-20) but could not perform." Wright.

Romans 8:1-11 – Postscript

"At the end of this central passage we may reflect on the nature of Paul's achievement so far. This is the heart of his argument for assurance (those whom God justified, them God also glorified). For the Jew – for Paul himself prior to his conversion – the basis of assurance was membership in the covenant, whose outward badges were circumcision and Torah. The story of the exodus formed the backdrop to the Jewish expectation that the covenant God would once again act within history to deliver Israel. Paul has retold the story of the exodus, the freedom story, demonstrating that the Egypt of sin and death has been decisively defeated through the death of the Messiah, and that the Spirit is now leading God's redeemed people to their promised inheritance. Baptism has marked out God's renewed people; the Spirit is now 'the one thing that distinguishes those who are Christ's from those who are not.' [G Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 553.] The sign of the Spirit's work is first and foremost faith (1 Cor 12:3) and indeed faithfulness; and the fruit of the Spirit's work is the final resurrection. Thus is the path from justification to glorification, from 'passover' to the 'promised land,' laid out in this passage. Paul will now develop this picture, drawing on several interlocking images from the exodus story, and widening the angle of vision to include, not just humans, but the whole created order." Wright.

Romans 8:12

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν, οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν,

The presence of the Spirit has ethical consequences.

ὀφειλετης, ου m debtor, one indebted

'Under obligation.' Christians are debtors to God.

ζωω live, be alive

The 'flesh' has done nothing for us to render us under obligation to render service to it.

Romans 8:13

εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε, ζήσεσθε.

μελλω be going, be about, be destined

μελλω signifies an event which will surely happen because it has been determined by God. Hence Barrett translates the phrase as 'doomed to die'.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal
πραξις, εως f deed, action, practice

σῶμα, τοσ n body

θανάτω kill, put to death

Refers to an activity which must be pursued by the believer. The fact that the Christian has died to the law and to sin in Christ does not release him/her from the obligation of putting to death sinful actions and behaviour; rather it enables the Christian to do so. Our response is not optional, it is necessary. "Paul never suggests that the inheritance of future life requires that we stop sinning altogether. What he demands in this verse is clear, long-term progress in becoming less like the world (i.e., 'the flesh') and more like Christ." Moo. Wright comments, "As in Col 3:5-11, which explains Paul's meaning in more detail, he sees that there are styles of behaviour that, like weeds left to grow unchecked, have the capacity to take over the garden and choke all the flowers. There is only one way with such things: they must be uprooted, killed off. This is, of course, impossible for those who are still 'in the flesh'; but those who are led by the Spirit will find that the Spirit's inner agency enables them, if they will, to say 'no' to the practices that carry the smell of death with them."

ζήσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl ζωω

Romans 8:14

ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ εἰσιν θεοῦ.

ὅσος, η, ου as much as; pl. as many as, all

"In popular speech, Christians often use such language as 'led by the Spirit' to refer to guidance... But this is probably not what Paul means here. As in Galatians 5:18, where the same connection occurs, 'being led by the Spirit' means 'having the basic orientation of your life determined by the Spirit.' The phrase is a way of summing up the various descriptions of the life of the Spirit in 8:4-9." Moo.

Wright says, "The image here is taken from the wilderness wanderings of Israel, led by the pillar of cloud and fire (Exod 13:21-22; cf. Exod 14:19, 24; 40:38; Num 9:15-23; 10:34; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Neh 9:12; Pss 78:14; 105:39)." The Spirit, "now does for God's people that which the tabernacling presence of God did in the wilderness, assuring them of divine adoption and leading them forward to their inheritance."

υἱοὶ θεοῦ A picture taken from the OT (Deut 14:1; Is 43:6; Hos 1:10 etc.), but now given a Christological focus.

Romans 8:15

οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κρᾶζομεν· Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ·

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω
δουλεια, ας f slavery

πνευμα δουλεια the mind set of a slave which marked Paul and others before the Holy Spirit brought liberation – and which harks back to Israel's pre-exodus condition.

παλιν again, once more
φοβος, ου m fear
υιοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

"The legal act of adoption was not practiced by the Jews, so almost certainly Paul uses the image of the Greco-Roman practice whereby a man could formally confer on a child all the legal rights of a birth child. This, Paul suggests, is what God's Spirit confers on every believer – the rights and privileges of God's own children." Moo.

The parallel with Gal 4:6 requires us to understand πνευμα υιοθεσιας as a reference to the Holy Spirit which is the proof and anticipation of our adoption (v.23). To retain the parallelism between the two occurrences of πνευμα, some have understood both to refer to the spirit of man. On the other hand, Murray understands both to refer to the Holy Spirit and says that the first half merely states what the Holy Spirit is not (so also Moo). Paul could, however, be making use of the same term in different senses in the same verse (cf. his use of πνευμα in verse 16).

κραζω cry out, call out

Ἀββα does this imply that Greek speaking churches used this Aramaic term in prayer? "What is most important is that the Spirit enables us to experience the same kind of intimate relationship to the Father that Jesus did, who also called God 'Abba' (Mark 14:26). Not only does the Spirit confer on us this status; he also is the one who, testifying with our own spirits, gives us the inner certainty of knowing that we truly are God's dearly loved children." Moo.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

Romans 8:16

αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ.

συμμαρτυρω show to be true, give evidence in support of
τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

Romans 8:17

εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν.

κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives
what is promised (by God)

"This is the real reason why he implied that Christians were indebted to God (8:12), and it indicates the substance of the paragraph to come." Wright.

συγκληρονομος, ον sharing together,
sharing together God's blessings

συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ This term explains the way in which we have become heirs of God (cf Gal 3:6-4:7). What belongs to Christ by right as *the* Son of God, is ours by grace as those who are sons/children of God in him. "Though legally part of a new family, adopted children do not yet possess all the benefits of their new status. Thus, Paul reminds us, we Christians must still await the consummation of that new status. One day we will enter into the inheritance, following the Son who has gone ahead of us. We will share in his own glorious state. In the meantime, however, we must follow him in the road he himself walked on the way to glory – the road of suffering." Moo.

εἴπερ since, if it is true that
συμπασχω suffer together, share the same suffering
συνδοξασθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl
συνδοξαζομαι share in another's glory

Christ had to face suffering before he could enter upon glory. Christians should not expect a different pattern, for they are called to follow him (cf. 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 2:11; 1 Peter 4:13; Mk 10:39).

Romans 8:18-30

"The theme of 8:18-30 is the believer's future glory. The passage begins ('the glory that will be revealed in us,' v.18) and ends ('those he justified, he also glorified,' v.30) on this note. "In between, Paul makes two basic points about glory. (1) It is the climax of God's plan both for his people and for his creation generally. Since we have not reached that climax, we must eagerly and patiently wait for it (vv.18-25). (2) God himself provides what we need in order to wait eagerly and patiently. The Spirit helps us pray (vv.26-27), and God promises to oversee everything for our good (v.28) according to his unbreakable plan for us (vv. 29-30)." Moo.

Romans 8:18

Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ
νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν
ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς.

λογίζομαι reckon, count, calculate

γὰρ looks back to v.17.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
παθημα, τος η suffering, passion, desire
καιρος, ου m time, season, age

τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ this age, in contrast with the
age to come.

μέλλουσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s μέλλω
(before an infin) be going, be about

δοξα, ης f glory

ἀποκαλυφθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

ἀποκαλυπτω reveal, disclose

εἰς ἡμᾶς The glory that now characterises
Christ will be ours also; it will "reside 'in' us,
transforming us into Christ's own image (see
Rom 8:29)." Moo.

"The way Paul now justifies this opening
statement is to describe that future glory, and
the present situation in waiting for it, in order
to explain both his calculation and the present
in-between situation both of creation and of the
Christian – and, we might even say, of God."
Wright.

Romans 8:19

ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν
ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν νιδῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται.

ἀποκαταδοκία, ας f eager longing, deep
desire

κτισις, εως f creation, what is created

"With most modern commentators, we
conclude that Paul refers to all of subhuman
creation: plants, animals, rocks and so on."
Moo. "The whole creation is on tiptoe with
excitement." Wright. Cf. 4:13.

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Romans 8:20

τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάγη, οὐχ
ἐκούσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐφ' ἐπίδι

ματαιοτης, ητος f worthlessness, futility
ὑπετάγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὑποτασσω
subordinate, put in subjection; pass. be
subject, submit to

I.e., by God. "Creation itself is in bondage, in
slavery, and needs to have its own exodus."
Wright.

ἑκων, ουσα, ον of one's own free will

I.e., not on its own account.

ὑποτάξαντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s
ὑποτασσω

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what
is hoped for

I.e. this subjection to 'vanity' was not in itself,
the goal. "God did this precisely in order that
creation might point forward to the new world
that is to be, in which its beauty and power will
be enhanced and its corruption and futility will
be done away." Wright.

"The fate of creation is bound up with that of
humanity. As it was through them that creation
was marred, so it is through the glorified
children of God that it will be restored again."
Moo.

Romans 8:21

ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς
δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς
δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἐλευθερωω free, set free

δουλεία, ας f slavery

φθορα, ας f decay, corruption, depravity

Decay which is the shadow of death.

ἐλευθερία, ας f freedom, liberty

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

The liberty enjoyed by the children of God in
glory. "The thought seems to be not that
creation and Christians will simply all be free
and glorious in the same way, together, but
that the freedom for which creation longs, and
which it will be liberated into, is the freedom
*that comes about through the glorification of
the children of God.*" Wright.

Romans 8:22

οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ
συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν.

οἶδα know, understand

An incontestable fact. So Phillips translates,
"It is plain to anyone who has eyes to see that
at the present time all created life groans in a
sort of universal travail."

συστεναζω groan together

συνωδινω suffer great pain together (as of
a woman in labour)

See Matt 24:8; Mk 13:8; Jn 16:20-22. "It is a
most suitable similitude; it shows that the
groaning of which he speaks will not be vain
and without effect; for it will at length bring
forth a joyful and blessed fruit." Calvin.
Wright comments that Paul, "draws once more
on Jewish tradition, this time the theme of the
great tribulation, the great woes, that would
come upon the world in order for the new
world to be born."

ἄχρι until, as far as

Romans 8:23

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν, υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.

μονον adv only, alone

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος probably means the firstfruits of our redemption, namely the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 1:27; 5:5) rather than the firstfruits that the Spirit gives.

The meaning could be either:

- i) 'although we have the firstfruits of the Spirit' i.e. despite our present blessings we groan; or
- ii) 'since we have the firstfruits of the Spirit' i.e. the firstfruits have given us a longing for the full harvest.

The second is preferred by Moo, Dunn *et al.*

στεναζω sigh, groan, grumble

υἰοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

Cf. v.16. Adoption has elements both of 'already' and 'not yet.' In particular, we have not yet entered into our inheritance.

ἀπεκδεχομαι see v.19

ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption, deliverance, setting free

Another 'exodus' motif.

Romans 8:24

τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν· ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς, ὃ γὰρ βλέπει τίς ἐλπίζει;

ἐλπίς, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

ἐσώθημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl σωζω save, rescue, heal

Salvation is a reality in the present but it is not yet complete: the salvation which is ours now brings with it the hope of perfect redemption to come – including the resurrection of the body.

βλεπω see

Many MSS read τίς, τι καὶ 'for what one sees, why does he also hope for it?' The UBS text follows p⁴⁶ B* and a few other MSS and versions in reading τίς, "and regarded the other readings as expansions of a strikingly terse and typically Pauline type of question."

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect

"One does not anxiously scan the horizon for a boat already in port." Wright.

Romans 8:25

εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ βλέπομεν ἐλπίζομεν, δι' ὑπομονῆς ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Patience is endurance or continuance; it describes the attitude which hope engenders. "This word suggests the ability to bear up under the trials that come our way (cf. Rom 5:3-4; Heb 10:36; 12:1; James 1:3-4; 5:11)."

ἀπεκδεχομαι see v.19

Suggests a craning of the neck to spot someone or something coming. This patience has nothing in common with indifference or stoicism.

Romans 8:26

Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξόμεθα καθὼ δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις,

Now Paul answers the question, "But where is God in all this?"

ὡσαυτως adv in the same way, likewise

Moo argues that the link is to vv.24,25: "As hope sustains us in our time of suffering (vv.24-25), so also the Spirit sustains us in our time of weakness."

συναντιλαμβανομαι help, come to help

Cf. Lk 10:40. This is what Martha says that Mary should have been doing for her.

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness

"Those who cannot see that for which they eagerly hope need assistance to peer into the darkness ahead and to pray God's future into the present." Wright.

προσευχομαι pray

καθο adv as, according as, in so far as δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must, should, ought

This is part of the weakness of our present condition.

ὑπερεντυγχανω intercede, plead (for someone)

Some MSS add ὑπερ ἡμῶν after ὑπερεντυγχανει. Metzger says, "the longer reading makes explicit what is implicit in the decisively supported shorter reading."

"The children of God have two divine intercessors. Christ is their intercessor in the court of heaven (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1). The Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theatre of their own hearts (Jn 14:16,17)." Murray.

Wright comments, "Here, as in vv. 15-16, Spirit-inspired prayer is a key part of the experience of inaugurated eschatology (cf. Zech 12:10, where in the context of the coming great eschaton, God pours out upon the house of David, and upon Jerusalem, 'the spirit of grace and supplication,' producing mourning in the midst of the promised glory). It is God's intention that redeemed human beings should be set in authority over the world, should indeed thereby be the agents through whom the cosmos that still groans in travail should be set free. At the moment, however, these human beings are weak, since their own bodies, that part of creation for which they have the most immediate responsibility, are still subject to decay and death. In this condition they do not even know what to pray for, how it is that God will work through them to bring about the redemption of the world. Paul here assumes both that the church is called to the task of intercession and that the church finds this very puzzling – a double truth that most great teachers of prayer from that day to this would endorse. But, just as it is the Spirit's task to inaugurate genuine humanness within the Christian in the form of holiness (vv. 12-14) and the *Abba*-prayer (vv. 15-16), so here it is the Spirit's task to enable genuine humanness, that stance of humbly trusting God and so being set in authority over the world, which is to be anticipated in the life of intercessory prayer."

στεναγμος, ου m groaning, sigh
 ἀλαλητος, ον that cannot be expressed in words

Either unspoken or unable to be spoken. Barrett prefers the former, in harmony with v.27. Others suggest that Paul is referring to unintelligible utterances – a form of speaking in tongues. The sense is probably of a burden beyond expression. "The Spirit's own very self intercedes within the Christian precisely at the point where he or she, faced with the ruin and misery of the world, finds that there are no words left to express in God's presence the sense of futility (v. 20) and the longing for redemption. It is not (as some very early scribes added to the text, followed by the NIV) that the Spirit intercedes 'for us'; that misses the point, and makes Paul repeat himself in the following verse. What Paul is saying is that the Spirit, active within the innermost being of the Christian, is doing the very interceding the Christian longs to do, even though the only evidence that can be produced is inarticulate groans." Wright.

Romans 8:27

ὁ δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.

ἐραυνῶ search, examine, try to find out
 φρονημα, τος n way of thinking, mind
 ἐντυγχανῶ turn to (God on behalf of), plead, appeal
 οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

The Spirit places desires and longings in the heart of the believer which we cannot express in words. But God, who searches the heart, discerns and understands these longings and answers them, for they cannot fail to be in accord with his will. In this manner the Spirit intercedes from within on our behalf.

Romans 8:28

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

The thoughts here pick up that of v. 17b.

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

The call to love God was the most basic demand of Torah. It becomes a description of the Christian, cf. 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; Eph 6:24.

συνεργεῶ work with, work together with, help

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

παντα συνεργει εἰς ἀγαθον can be translated in one of two ways according to whether παντα is taken as subject or object of the verb:

- i) "All things work together for good ...";
- ii) "He (i.e. God, or the Spirit) works together all things to produce good ...".

To remove the ambiguity, some mss add ὁ θεος after συνεργει.

Wright argues that God must be the subject of the verb; he is the one who directs all things to the ultimate good of the believer. "All things" – not just the groanings of the previous verses, but the entire range of experiences and events that may face God's people – are taken care of by the creator God who is planning to renew the whole creation, and us along with it."

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will

κλητος, η, ον called, invited

οὔσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἶμι

This provides confident ground for the promise. The God who planned and purposed all things from the beginning will see it all through to completion. His calling of his people is part of that unshakable plan.

"Through faith in Jesus Christ 'all things' assume the form of a relationship in which the activity of God is not a mere stage play enacted for our observation, but is an activity in which we are intimately involved. This is the background of Romans 8 in which Paul explains that nothing either possible or conceivable can thwart the salvation of Christ." Berkouwer.

Christians, "like Israel, are assured that they are called for a purpose – namely, to show forth the praises of the one true God in all the world (cf. Eph 1:11-12; 1 Pet 2:9). And – this is still the thrust of v. 28 – those who find themselves in this category can be assured that the purpose will be fulfilled. God will accomplish it." Wright.

Romans 8:29

ὅτι οὐκ προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς·

προέγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s προγινωσκω
know already, know beforehand,
choose beforehand

'Foreknow' does not mean simply that God knew beforehand who would believe. This foreknowledge is not God's response to something which he sees in us but is God's act by which he distinguishes between one person and another (cf. 11:26). It speaks of a relationship established in eternity – God setting his love on his people before time began (cf. Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Acts 2:23; Rom 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:17, also Gal 1:15.).

"Foreknowledge is a form of love or grace." Wright.

προορίζω decide from the beginning,
predestine

This is distinguished from προέγνω which is equivalent to God's act of election, in that it focusses on the *destiny* which God has determined for his people.

συμμορφος, ον having the same form,
sharing likeness

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image
πρωτοτοκος, ον first-born, first

The aim of the conformity spoken of is firstly that Christ should be preeminent, but secondly that he should be preeminent among many brethren.

"This process will bring God's renewed people to the point where they reflect the Son's *image*, just as the Son is the true image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10). They are, that is, to become true, because renewed, human beings. This is the point, at last, to which the long argument beginning with 1:18 was looking forward. The image of God, distorted and fractured through idolatry and immorality, is restored in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God; and the signs of that restoration are visible in those who, like Abraham, trust in God's life-giving power and so truly worship and give glory to God (4:18-22). But the purpose is never simply that God's people in Christ should resemble him, spectacular and glorious though that promise is. As we saw in vv. 18-21, it is that, as true image-bearers, they might reflect that same image into the world, bringing to creation the healing, freedom, and life for which it longs. To be conformed to the image of God, or of God's Son, is a dynamic, not a static, concept. Reflecting God into the world is a matter of costly vocation... Conformity to the Son means, of course, conformity to his death." Wright.

Romans 8:30

οὐκ ἔκαλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν· καὶ οὐκ ἔδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὐκ ἔδοξασεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν.

δικαίωω justify, acquit, declare & treat as
righteous

δοξάζω glorify, exalt

The aorist signifies the inevitable completion of the purpose and plan of God: it is settled. "All has been accomplished in Christ: the foreshaping of Christ's people to be his younger siblings; their call through the gospel that announces his lordship; their justification by faith in the God who raised him from the dead; their glorification so that they are now already seated in the heavenly places in him (see Eph 2:6, and in the light of that, Eph 1:20-22; Col 3:1-4)... All these things, including 'glorification,' have happened already to and in Jesus, the Messiah; and what is true of the Messiah is true of his people... The steady beat of the verbs within Paul's solemn rhetoric underscores the steady beat of God's unshakable purpose set forth in the Messiah and completed by the Spirit." Wright.

Romans 8:31-39

Paul concludes his argument of chapters 5-8 with a "magnificent celebration of God's eternal commitment to his people." Moo. These verses share several key words and themes with the beginning of Ch 5.

Paul "adduces two reasons for us to celebrate our security: the *work* of God for us in Christ (vv.31-34) and the *love* of God for us in Christ (vv.35-39)." Moo.

Wright comments, "The argument of this paragraph is, in fact, the same as that of 5:6-10: that since God's love has done for Christians all that has been done in Christ, there is no power that can shake that love now, or turn it aside from completing the job. The love of God, enjoyed in the present, will outlast and defeat all enemies, including death itself."

Romans 8:31

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω

ταῦτα all the many reasons for the confidence that Paul has written about in chapters 5-8. Paul now poses four rhetorical questions, the implicit answer to each of which is 'Nobody'. Each question is followed by the reason or ground for the implied answer, 'Nobody.' "They are proffered not as a challenge to Paul's readers to think up clever answers or counterexamples but as a demonstration of the certainty of his case." Wright.

τίς καθ' ἡμῶν; Not that there are no adversaries, vv.35,36 refer to opposition. The thought is simply that no adversary is of any account when God is for us. Remember that Paul is writing this, "not from a comfortable armchair with the world at his feet, but on his way to fulfil a difficult and dangerous mission (delivering the collection to Jerusalem) that might cost him his life for one reason (opposition from Torah-observant Jews), and to begin another perhaps even more dangerous and difficult mission (to Rome, and thence to Spain) that might cost him his life for a different reason (the clash between his gospel and Caesar's kingdom). These, together with the normal hazards of his life as a missionary, and the threats from spiritual as well as human and natural forces, will be noted presently. But Paul stands firm as a Jewish-style monotheist: there is one God, and if this God is on our side, then no force on earth or elsewhere can ultimately stand against us." Wright.

Romans 8:32

ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίζεται;

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

φειδομαι spare, refrain from, keep oneself from doing

God did not spare him from the full measure of judgement due to our sin. "The way Paul puts it here suggests a comparison between Christ and Isaac. As Abraham did not spare his beloved son Isaac, so God does not spare his beloved Son (see Gen 22)." Moo. Only Jesus *did* suffer death for us: God did what Abraham had not done, for Isaac was spared.

παραδίδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

"Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas for money; not Pilate for fear; not the Jews for envy: but the Father for love!" Winslow.

οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not; used in questions expecting an affirmative answer.

σὺν αὐτῷ It is impossible for Christ to be given to us without 'all things' (all that is included in the promises and blessings of God) being given to us also, for all these things are *in him* and come to us with him. Cf. 1 Cor 3:21-23; 2 Cor 6:10.

χαρίζομαι grant, give, bestow

Romans 8:33

τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαίων·

There is some debate over the structure of Paul's argument in vv. 33-36. Do the opening words of 34, τίς ὁ κατακρινὼν belong with v.33 or with v.34? Murray argues that the phrase belongs with v.33, but it is equally possible to see the remainder of verse 34 as the answer to this opening question. Moo thinks that "The NIV reflects probably the best of options, with each verse featuring a question and answer." So also Wright who argues that this preserves the pattern of Paul's argument with his rhetorical questions:

- Who can be against us? No one; God, after all, did not spare the Son (vv. 31b-32)
- Who will bring any charge? No one; God, after all, is the justifier (v. 33).
- Who will condemn? No one; Christ Jesus, after all, died, was raised, and intercedes (v. 34).

ἐγκαλεω bring charges against, accuse

ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen

δικαιοω see v.30

There is no higher court of appeal than that of the judgment of God, who has already pronounced the verdict. Cf. Is 50:8-9a.

Romans 8:34

τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν; Χριστὸς ὁ ἀποθανών,
μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθεὶς, ὅς καὶ ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ
θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν·

κατακρινῶ condemn, pass judgement on
ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal
μᾶλλον adv more; rather, more than that

μᾶλλον δὲ formally indicates amendment or
correction to something. Here it stresses that
the death and resurrection of Christ are
inseparable aspects of one work for us.

ἐγερθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s ἐγειρω
raise

The aorist pass refers to the work of the Father.

Some MSS add ἐκ νεκρῶν after ἐγερθεὶς.
Metzger writes that the longer text has "the
appearance of being an explanatory gloss."

δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand

Indicates sovereignty, dominion and glory.

ἐντυγχάνω see v.27

Viewing the latter part of the verse as an
answer to the opening question, the logic is
this: Christ died for us, enduring our
condemnation. More than that, he is risen and
now intercedes for us. Who then can bring
anything before the judgment seat of God
which will result in our condemnation when
we have such a Saviour as our advocate? He
never loses a case.

"That he makes intercession 'for us' is the
reminder that the particularity of concern and
provision which we noted already in the 'for us
all' of v.32 is exemplified here also.

Intercession must have regard to the distinctive
situation of each individual." Murray.

Wright comments, "As the servant songs have
already been alluded to in this passage, it is
possible that, with Jesus' atoning and justifying
death also mentioned, we should detect a
reference to the intercessory work of the
servant of the Lord in the fourth song, at Isa
53:12."

Romans 8:35

τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ;
θλιψίς ἢ στενοχωρία ἢ διωγμὸς ἢ λιμὸς ἢ
γυμνότης ἢ κίνδυνος ἢ μάχαιρα;

χωρίζω separate

του Χριστου some MSS read του θεου while B
reads θεου της ἐν Χριστω (see v.39). The
reading Χριστου is strongly supported and
binds together verses 34 and 35.

Christ not only defends us, he loves us, cf. Gal
2:20. There follows "a formidable list of
potential enemies who seem bent on separating
believers from God's love... Paul speaks of that
which he knows; he had himself faced all these
enemies, except perhaps the sword, and he
must have known that this too might come his
way, whether judicially in a Roman court or
casually on the road (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-29)."
Wright.

θλιψίς, εως f trouble, suffering
στενοχωρία, ας f distress, difficulty, trouble
διωγμός, ου m persecution
λιμός, ου m & f famine, hunger
γυμνότης, ητος f nakedness, poverty
κίνδυνος, ου m danger, peril
μάχαιρα, ης f sword, war, violent death

Romans 8:36

καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Ἐνεκεν σοῦ
θανατοῦμεθα ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν
ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

"The quotation of Psalm 44:22 in verse 36 is a
bit of a detour in the logic of Paul's argument.
But the detour reveals two of his key concerns:
to remind us that suffering is a natural and
expected part of the Christian life (cf. 5:3-4;
8:17), and to root the experience of Christians
in the experience of God's old covenant
people." Moo.

ἐνεκα (ἐνεκεν and εἵνεκεν) because of, for
the sake of

θανάτω kill, put to death, put in danger of
death

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

λογίζομαι reckon, count

προβάτον, ου n sheep

σφαγή, ης f slaughter

As those who follow the Saviour, the Lamb of
God, and are being conformed to his image.

Romans 8:37

ἀλλ' ἐν τούτοις πᾶσιν ὑπερνικῶμεν διὰ τοῦ
ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς.

ὑπερνικῶ be completely victorious

Not only a conqueror but completely and
gloriously so. It is because Christ has more
than conquered (cf. Col 2:15) that we have this
confidence. "In other words, we are not only
able to win a victory over these enemies, we
are able to see them off the field entirely."
Wright.

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

The aorist may signify particularly the love
which God has shown us in the cross of Christ.

Romans 8:38

πέπεισμαι γάρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε δυνάμεις

πέπεισμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s πειθω
persuade; perf act & pass have
confidence, be confident

"The final γάρ *gar* of this section explains the shout of triumph in terms of the settled conviction (grounded on what Paul knows of the Messiah, Jesus, the Lord of the world and 'our Lord') that the one true God has poured out, through this Jesus, love of the most powerful and unbreakable kind." Wright.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)
θάνατος, ου m death

The last enemy (1 Cor 15:26).

ζωῆ, ης f life

The present life with all its difficulties.

ἀρχῆ, ης f beginning, origin, power

Murray and Moo suggest the contrast here is between angels and demons.

ἐνεστῶτα Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc pl
ἐνιστημι be present

μελλω (ptc. without infin) coming, future

οὔτε δυνάμεις breaks the pattern of contrasting pairs. Murray suggests the meaning here is 'mighty work.'

Romans 8:39

οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις ἕτερα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρῖσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

ὕψωμα, τος n height

βάθος, ους n depth

Cf. Eph 3:18 for similar use of spacial language.

κτίσις, εως f creation, what is created
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
δυνήσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
δυναμαι

χωρίζω see v.35

"The love of God from which we cannot be separated is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is only in Christ Jesus it exists, only in him that it has been manifest, only in him is it operative, and only in Christ Jesus as Lord can we know the embrace and bond of this love of God." Murray.

"As the chapter began with 'no condemnation' (Rom 8:1), so it ends with the bookends of 'no separation' (8:35,39)." Moo.

Wright comments, "We are back with the picture that has been there in Romans from the beginning: God and creation, with the human race poised in between, belonging within the latter but called to reflect the image of the former. Idolatry had reversed God's intended order: humans had worshiped that which was not God, had ceded power to that which, being itself corruptible, could only bring death. Now, in the Messiah, Jesus, humanity had been restored; death has been defeated, and creation itself, so far from being shunned as essentially evil, awaits its redemption. Christian assurance, despite caricatures, is the very opposite of human arrogance; it is the fruit of humble, trusting faith. Those who follow the Messiah into the valley of the shadow of death will find that they need fear no evil. Though they may sometimes seem sheep for the slaughter, yet they may trust the Shepherd, whose love will follow them all the days of their life."

And he concludes by offering the following 'paraphrase' of the final two verses of Romans 8; "Paul has spoken, and we must speak, of the love of the one true God. This love of God calls across the dark intervals of meaning, reaches into the depths of human despair, embraces those who live in the shadow of death or in the overbright light of present life, challenges the rulers of the world and shows them up as a sham, looks at the present with clear faith and at the future with sure hope, overpowers all powers that might get in the way, fills the outer dimensions of the cosmos, and declares to the world that God is God, that Jesus the Messiah is the world's true Lord, and that in him love has won the victory. This powerful, overmastering love grasps Paul, and sustains him in his praying, his preaching, his journeying, his writing, his pastoring, and his suffering, with the strong sense of the presence of the God who had loved him from the beginning and had put that love into action in Jesus. This is the love because of which there is no condemnation. This is the love because of which those who are justified are also surely glorified. And this is the love, seen supremely in the death of the Messiah, which reaches out to the whole world with the exodus message, the freedom message, the word of joy and justice, the word of the gospel of Jesus."

Romans 8:31-39 – Postscript

Wright, speaking of the OT allusions in the previous verses, comments, "By skilful use of this complex web of biblical allusion and quotation, Paul is underscoring his basic contention from 3:21 onward. Those who believe in Jesus the Messiah, who respond with love to God's loving action in his death and with faith to God's raising him from the dead, are constituted as the renewed Israel of God. They are the true children of Abraham; they are the true servant people; they are the people who claim and sing as their own the psalms of the faithful covenant people. Law, prophets and writings are thus called in as witnesses to the fact that, in the midst of suffering and oppression, the one God of Israel has, in long-promised redeeming love, reconstituted Israel in and around Jesus as the true people of this one God."

Romans 9-11

These chapters in Romans have sometimes been viewed as a digression (Dodd argued that they were an old sermon Paul slipped in at this point breaking the flow from Romans 8 to Romans 12). Such views arise from a failure to understand the burden of Paul's ministry and his insight into the gospel.

From the beginning of this letter Paul has made it clear that the gospel he preached was that 'promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures' (1:2) and that the risen Saviour whom he proclaimed was none other than the promised Messiah, son of David (1:3, see also 1:16). Yet he knew from personal experience that most Jews rejected the gospel while there was a far better response from the Gentiles. Paul's ministry was therefore addressed to largely Gentile churches. How could he continue to maintain that the gospel he preached was a fulfilment of God's promise to his people *Israel*?

This situation was exacerbated by the tensions between Jews and Gentiles within the churches – tension which evidently existed also at Rome (see chapter 14). It is likely that after the relapse of the edict of Claudius which had expelled the Jews from Rome, Jews, including Jewish Christians, had returned to the city. A largely Gentile church had now experienced an influx of Jewish members. The Jewish Christians may have been suggesting that the Gentiles were only second-class people of God while the Gentiles, in turn, may have been suggesting that there was no significance in being a Jew or even that God had abandoned all concern for the Jews.

It is against such a background, and as an integral part of Paul's exposition of the gospel, that he pens chapters 9-11. "Two questions dominate these three chapters: the question of unbelieving Israel, and the question of God's faithfulness." Wright.

Romans 9:1-5

"The basic fact which though it is never actually mentioned, lies behind every verse in the opening paragraph, and sets in motion the whole long argument of chs 9-11 is that, notwithstanding her privileges, and his apostolic labour, Israel has rejected the Gospel that Paul preached." Barrett.

Romans 9:1

Ἀλήθειαν λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ, οὐ ψεύδομαι, συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ,

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

συμμαρτυρεω give evidence in support of
συνειδησις, εως f conscience, awareness

"In the Holy Spirit' confirms the witness of conscience. It is only as we are indwelt by the Spirit and live in the Spirit, only as our minds are governed by the Spirit may we be assured that the voice of the conscience is in conformity with truth and right." Murray.

The construction "gives the strongest possible emphasis to what he is about to say." Wright.

Romans 9:2

ὅτι λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῆ καρδία μου·

λυπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain

μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great

ἀδιάλειπτος, ον endless, constant

ὀδυνη, ης f pain, sorrow

"We should remind ourselves that the hearers of the letter would not yet know, at this point, what he was talking about; the effect of this statement would naturally be to excite sympathy and concern. Paul has led them to the point where they may, perhaps, be ready to listen to the topic he must now raise, if only because they have learnt to trust him. If he now turns to a matter of such agonising concern to himself, they should share it as well." Wright.

Romans 9:3

ἠχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα,

εὐχομαι pray, wish, long

ἀναθεμα, τος n cursed, under the curse of God

Cf. 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8-9. "The word carries overtones of the curse put on various people in Israelite history." Wright.

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

"The grammatical construction of the sentence shows that Paul recognises that the wish is scarcely capable of fulfilment." Barrett.

συγγενης, ους m relative, kinsman, fellow-countryman

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

"Paul did not consider it possible to be separated from Christ (8:38,39). Yet he expresses an intensity of love for his own people patterned after the love of the Saviour (Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)." Murray. Cf. Moses' prayer in Ex 32:30-32.

Romans 9:4

οἵτινες εἰσιν Ἰσραηλῖται, ὧν ἡ υἰοθεσία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ αἱ διαθήκαι καὶ ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ ἡ λατρεία καὶ αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι,

ὅστις, ἧτις, ὁ τι who, which

Ἰσραηλῖται "The name is important. In many Jewish intertestamental books, foreigners use the word 'Jew' as a simple national designation, but when Jews speak about themselves and their special position in salvation history, they call themselves 'Israelites.'" Moo.

υἰοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

See Ex. 4:22; Hos 11:1. The word is used here in a different way from 8:16,23. "Paul's application of the same word to regenerate believers and to Israel 'according to the flesh' within the space of twenty verses summarises the tension between Israel's promises and the church's blessing that infuses these chapters." Moo.

δόξα, ης f glory

Perhaps referring to the glory of God's visible presence at the Exodus. Cf. Ex 16:7; 24:16; 40:34-35. Paul has emphasised that 'glory' is the inheritance of the Christian, in Christ.

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

The singular, 'covenant' is strongly supported (p⁴⁶ B *et al*), but the plural (⋈ C K Ψ *et al*) is probably original. The plural may refer to the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

νομοθεσια, ας f (God's) giving of the law (to Israel)

λατρεία, ας f service, worship; pl. rites

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

"The force of this list is thus to say: the privileges that now belong to all those in Christ – 'not least,' Paul might add, 'those of you in Rome' (see 1:7,15) – are actually the privileges God promised to Israel according to the flesh. You Christians have come, as he says explicitly in 11:17 and 15:27, to share in the spiritual blessings of Israel. You must now spare a thought, and a prayer, for their present plight." Wright.

Romans 9:5

ὧν οἱ πατέρες, καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων, θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

At least Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Cf. 1:3. "The point, then, is that God, having called ethnic Israel to be the light of the world, has now shone that light lavishly on the wider world, while Israel seems to have chosen to remain in darkness. Israel, called to be God's messenger to the world (3:1-2), has seen the message successfully delivered while itself failing to give heed to it. The irony and the tragedy of the situation is the reason both for Paul's anguish and for this poignant way of expressing it." Wright.

εὐλογητος, η, ον blessed, praised
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order, eternity

σαρκα· ὁ ὧν ... There are three main punctuations/interpretations of this phrase:

- i) Placing a comma after *σαρκα* and referring the words that follow to ὁ Χριστος ('who is God over all, blessed for ever.')
- ii) Placing a stop after *σαρκα* and taking the following words as an independent clause, either:
 - a. 'God who is over all be blessed for ever' *or*
 - b. 'He who is God over all be blessed for ever' *or*
 - c. 'He who is over all is God blessed for ever'.
- iii) Placing a comma after *σαρκα* and a stop after *παντων* ('... who is over all. God be (or is) blessed for ever'.)

The manuscript evidence is of no value here since the punctuation is a later addition.

The majority of the committee compiling UBS Greek Testament preferred the second of the above options, though a significant minority argued for the first reading.

Sanday and Headlam argue for the first option, as does Moo, and Murray argues for a variation on this reading, asserting that Paul does here refer to Jesus as God. Moo concludes, "This verse ... deserves to be numbered among those few in the New Testament that explicitly call Jesus 'God.'" Wright similarly comments "Grammatically the arguments weigh heavily on the side of (i); in other words, on the side of saying that Paul does indeed here ascribe divinity to Christ. Of the various arguments here, perhaps the strongest is that it would be highly unusual for Paul to write an asyndetic doxology – that is, an expression of praise that is not linked to a word in the immediately preceding sentence." And he concludes by saying, "If we read v. 5 in this way, what force does it add to the opening paragraph as a whole? Just this: that the Messiah who is from Israel's own race, their highest privilege and final hope, is the very embodiment of their sovereign Lord, their covenant God. And it is he whom they have rejected; this is precisely the point Paul makes in 10:21, at the close of the main 'story' of chaps. 9 and 10. Just as Israel rejected their God on Mt Sinai, precipitating Moses into his extraordinary prayer (see above), so now Israel according to the flesh has rejected its God as he came in the flesh, precipitating Paul into his own version of that prayer and his own great, unceasing grief. Israel's highest privilege, when spurned, becomes the cause of Israel's greatest tragedy.

"But even that tragedy contains within itself the seeds of hope. Just because the Messiah 'according to the flesh' is also 'God over all, blessed for ever,' and particularly because his 'flesh' was the place where God 'condemned sin' (8:3), so the strange and sad story of Israel's fate, to which Paul will now turn, is designed to lead on and out into new life. Read in this way, 9:5 becomes an exact, if ironic, summary of both parts of the argument which will now unfold."

Romans 9:6-13

"Since God has so clearly given Israel a position of unique privilege, does not Israel's defection mean that God's intention has broken down? The word of promise has been proved false by history. Paul's blunt negative answer to this question is supported by an analysis of the meaning of Israel." Barrett.

Wright adds, "It is of primary importance in reading Romans 9-11 to realise that its backbone is a *retelling of the story of Israel from Abraham to (Paul's) present day*. From 9:6 to 10:21, Paul is retelling the great narrative that every Jew knew. His retelling belongs with (though it subverts) other Second Temple retellings of the Jewish story: it is a retelling that speaks to what God has been doing all along, and that leaves Paul in a position to mount the fresh argument of chap. 11... Israel, Paul is saying, is Messiah-focused. The long story that began with Abraham reached its climax, its goal, its τέλος (*telos*) in him. And Israel is also Messiah-shaped. The pattern of Israel's history (rejection, failure, and exile followed by astonishing covenant renewal) is none other than the pattern of death and resurrection."

Romans 9:6

Οὐχ οἷον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.
οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ·

οἶος, α, ον relative pronoun such as, of what kind

οὐχ οἷον δε ότι 'But it is not as though ...'

ἐκπέπτωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐκπιτω
fall off, fall away, lose, fail

Cf. Is 55:11. "To defend the gospel, Paul must defend God's faithfulness to his promises to Israel. For if God has gone back on his word to Israel, then a deep chasm between the Old and New Testament opens up, and the good news can no longer claim the God of Israel as its author." Moo. Wright adds, "The word for 'failed' in 9:6a means, literally, 'fall,' and though several transferred senses such as 'fail' are well attested we should note that Paul uses the language of 'stumbling,' 'tripping up,' and 'falling' several times later on in the argument. The answer to the implied question is: it is Israel that has stumbled, not God's word. In fact, Israel's stumble has been because of God's own Torah (9:32f.)."

οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, οὗτοι Ἰσραήλ· Cf. 2:28-29. "Israel is not a term like Ammon, Moab, Greece or Rome. 'Israel' cannot be defined in terms of physical descent, or understood simply on the human side; it is created not by blood and soil, but by the promise of God, and therefore exists within the limits of God's freedom." Barrett.

Romans 9:7

οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ, πάντες τέκνα,
ἀλλ'· Ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα.

σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring

The Greek is ambiguous, it could mean:

- i) Neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children; or
- ii) Nor are all the children of Abraham counted as seed.

The second fits better with Paul's general use of the term 'seed of Abraham,' cf. 4:13, 16, 18; Gal 3:16,19,29; 2 Cor 11:22 – and especially the following verse. For Paul, the phrase has a Christological focus.

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants
κληθήσεταιί Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s καλεω

Cf. Gen 21:12. Natural descent does not make children of promise.

Romans 9:8

τοῦτ' ἔστιν, οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα·

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise, what is promised

Children who derive their origin from the promises of God.

λογιζομαι reckon, count, calculate, credit,
suppose

"The word 'counted' is of fundamental importance in this epistle. It has already occurred in several contexts, but especially in the quotation from Gen 15:6 (Rom 4:3). It points to the creative freedom of God, who creates 'righteousness' by 'counting' it, and annuls sin by not 'counting' it (4:6,8). He can raise up sons to Abraham out of stones (Matt 3:11; Lk 3:8) and freely determines what is seed and what is not.

"'Seed' thus understood in the light of the creative freedom of God, is necessarily bound up with the 'promise.' Ishmael was a true son of Abraham, with as much of his father's blood in his veins as Isaac had; but he was a child of the flesh, not of promise. Isaac's birth, which took place in the context of human death and sterility (4:19), depended entirely upon God's gracious promise." Barrett.

Romans 9:9

ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος· Κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρα υἱός.

Cf. Gen 18:10 or 18:14.

καιρος, ου m time, appointed/proper time
ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s

ἔρχομαι
ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

"The quotation reminds us of God's gracious and miraculous intervention to enable Sarah, who was infertile, to bear the child of the promise (see Rom 4:18-20). The initiative, Paul makes clear again, is with God.

Inheriting the promise is not based on birth alone; it depends on God's gracious intervention.

"This same point becomes even clearer in 9:10-13. For one can argue that Isaac and Ishmael are distinguished by a key physical difference: The former was born to Sarah and the latter to Hagar. Thus, to dispel any idea that physical descent plays a role in the promise, Paul brings us down one generation, to two children born of the same parents and at the same time." Moo.

Wright comments, "The point here, in case we missed it in the flurry of detail, is that God has done what was promised. The word of God has not failed (the 'word' here refers back to 9:6). God promised a son (Genesis 18); then, when the time came for a choice (Genesis 21), God reaffirmed the earlier word concerning Isaac."

Romans 9:10

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ῥεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν·

μονον adv only, alone

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνός, μιας, ἑνός one, a, an,
single

κοιτη, ης f bed, marital bed, act of
intercourse, conception

Romans 9:11

μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, ἵνα ἢ κατ' ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη,

μηπω adv not yet

γεννω give birth to; pass be born, cause

μηδε nor, and not, not even, neither

πρασσω practice, do, collect (of taxes)

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

ἢ οἱ, (ἢ ... ἢ either ... or, ἢ και οἱ even),
than

φαυλος, η, ον evil, wrong, bad

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing, what is
chosen

The main question here is whether the election Paul speaks of is personal or 'national' in the sense of God's choice of Israel and rejection of Edom. On the basis of the personal histories in vv. 11 and 12 Moo concludes that "it is hard to resist ... the conclusion that Paul is thinking of Jacob and Esau here as individuals." On the other hand, Wright comments, "The point is, though, that Paul is not here discussing what an abstract, impartial deity would or should have done; he is discussing the long purposes of God for Israel, and through Israel for the world. Central to those purposes is the principle that all must be of grace, 'not of works, but of the one who calls.'"

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will
μενω remain, stay, abide

Romans 9:12

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, ἐρρέθη αὐτῇ ὅτι Ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι·
ἐρρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω
μειζων, ον and μειζοτερος, α, ον (comp of μεγας) greater, greatest
ἐλασσων, ον (comp of μικρος) lesser, inferior, younger

Romans 9:13

καθὼς γέγραπται· Τὸν Ἰακώβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἡσαὺ ἐμίσησα.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Mal 1:2-3.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for
μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to

The meaning here is 'reject' in contrast to Jacob's calling.

"This ... raises for Paul, as it does for contemporary readers, the major question: Has God been unjust? To answer this, Paul continues the story of Israel with its next major moment: the exodus from Egypt." Wright.

Romans 9:14

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ; μὴ γένοιτο·

Paul anticipates the question that might pass through the minds of his readers. It "is essentially the same question as Paul grappled with in chap. 3, that of the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (*dikaio syne theou*)." Wright.

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λεγω
ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

Here the sense is 'injustice.' Cf 3:5.

γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι; μη
γενοιτο 'certainly not/ by no means'

Romans 9:15-18

"Determining right or wrong, what is just or unjust, demands a standard for measurement. The standard is ultimately nothing less than God's own character... God, therefore, acts justly when he acts in accordance with his own person and plan. This is precisely the point Paul makes in 9:15-18. The argument falls into two parallel parts, each with a quotation from the Old Testament (vv. 15 and 17) and a conclusion drawn from the quotation ('therefore,' vv.16,18)" Moo.

Romans 9:15

τῷ Μωϋσεῖ γὰρ λέγει· Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω.

Cf. Ex 33:19. In context, an expression of God's mercy in the face of Israel's idolatry with the golden calf.

ἐλεήσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ἐλεαω and ἐλεω be merciful, show kindness
ἂν particle indicating contingency
οἰκτιρήσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s οἰκτιρω have compassion on

Justice would lead to God rejecting all. It is only because of his mercy and compassion that any are embraced as his people.

Romans 9:16

ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ.

θελω wish, will

τρέχω run, exert oneself

"Salvation lies within man's grasp neither by his volition nor by his active exertion." Murray.

Romans 9:17

λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή τῷ Φαραῷ ὅτι Εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου, καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῇ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ.

γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture
ἐξεγειρω raise, bring to power

I.e. gave him this position of power in Egypt.

σε Pronoun, acc s συ
ὅπως (or ὅπως ἂν) that, in order that
ἐνδείξωμαι Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 s
ἐνδεικνυμαι show, give indication of
διαγγελῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s διαγγελλω
proclaim, preach
ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person, authority, reputation
γῆ, γης f earth

As with Pharaoh, so also Israel exists for this twofold purpose:

- i) To provide the occasion or context for God to demonstrate his power through a great act of deliverance.
 ii) To act as the means by which that act is published throughout the world.

Both took place precisely because Israel rejected the Gospel.

Wright comments, "What God has done to Pharaoh is not arbitrary. Pharaoh has already enslaved God's people and resisted the call to set them free. God has in view not the protracted punishment of Pharaoh for his own sake, but the worldwide proclamation of God's power and name."

Romans 9:18

ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει.

σκληρυνω make stubborn; pass be stubborn, be hardened

The hardening spoken of must be understood in the context of v.17. Nevertheless it is an offensive term which raises the natural objection of v.19.

Murray comments on this hardening, "There can be no question that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Though the instances are comparatively few in which the activity of Pharaoh is explicitly mentioned (cf. [Ex] 7:13; 8:32(28); 9:34), yet they are sufficient. But, preponderantly, the terms are to the effect that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart (cf. Ex 4:31; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8)... It is impossible to suppress or tone down the sovereign determination of God's will any more than in the first part of the verse."

Wright comments, "Paul is not, then, using the example of Pharaoh to explain that God has the right to show mercy, or to harden someone's heart, out of mere caprice. Nor is it simply that God has the right to do this sort of thing when someone is standing in the way of the glorious purpose that has been promised.

The sense of this passage is gained from its place within the wider story line from 9:6-10:21 – that is, as part of the story of Israel itself, told to explain what is happening to Paul's 'kinsfolk according to the flesh.' God's action upon Pharaoh was part of the means, not only of rescuing Israel from slavery, but of declaring God's name in the world."

Romans 9:19

Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν· Τί οὖν ἔτι μέμφεται; τῷ γὰρ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνθέστηκεν;

Cf. 3:6. Paul anticipates the question that may be raised by his reassertion of God's sovereignty in salvation in v.18.

ἔρεῖς Verb, fut act indic, 2 s λεγω

ἔτι still, yet, moreover

μεμφομαι find fault with, blame

βουλημα, τος n will, purpose, intention

ἀνθέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s

ἀνθίστημι resist, oppose, withstand

Romans 9:20

ὃ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ

ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ; μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα

τῷ πλάσαντι Τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως;

"Paul again does not answer as we might expect. He offers no logical explanation of how God's determinative will and human responsibility cohere. Still less does he suggest that God's will is but his response to human decisions – as we would have expected him to say if, indeed, God's will to save were based on foreseen faith. No, rather than taking the defensive, Paul goes full speed ahead with yet further assertions of the freedom of God to do as he wants with his creatures." Moo.

Wright argues that Paul is continuing to reflect on the history of Israel and now has in mind the story of the exile. His point is that "God has the right both to remake nations and peoples in a new way and to withhold judgment for a while in order that salvation may spread to the rest of the world."

ὁ Ο!

μενουν and μενουνγε rather, on the contrary, indeed, much more

ἀνταποκρinoμαι reply, answer back

ἐρεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s λεγω

πλασμα, τος n what is moulded (of clay)

πλάσαντι Verb, aor act ptc, m dat s πλασσω

mould, form; perhaps create

οὕτως thus, in this way

Dodd says that Paul's argument here is "the weakest part of the whole epistle," adding that man is not a pot and will answer back. But this is to miss the point. Moo writes, "As in the case with any analogy, the parallel is by no means perfect. Human beings, created in God's own image, have the power to think and make decisions; they are far more than inert clay. But the analogy works well as the one vital point the apostle wants to make here: God's right to fashion from the clay the kinds of vessels he wants."

For this analogy, cf. Is 29:15,16; 45:9; 64:8,9; Jer 18:1-6.

Wright comments, "If Bonhoeffer was right that putting the knowledge of good and evil before the knowledge of God was indeed, and remains, the primal act of human rebellion, then for a human to set up a standard and demand that God keeps to it already smacks of such rebellion. And where the humans are themselves among the sinners who have no claim on God except for judgment, their choice is in fact between accepting that judgment at once and accepting instead God's strange purpose in remoulding them to carry forward his larger plans. Paul's quotation of Isa 29:16 indicates that this is what he has in mind: the judgment on Israel, following its utter infidelity, will be the prelude to a new beginning, and Israel has no right to complain if this is so."

Romans 9:21

ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦος ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν;

ἢ οἱ

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, power

κεραμεύς, εως m potter

πηλος, ου m mud, clay

φυραμα, τος n lump

ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

σκευος, ους n object, thing, vessel

ἀτιμία, ας f disgrace, shame, dishonour

"Paul uses similar language to describe the different roles believers have in the 'household of God' (see 2 Tim 2:20). So, again, he may be depicting the different roles people have played in salvation history. But the parallel with 'objects of his wrath' and 'objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory' (Rom 9:22-23) suggest rather that he is thinking of God's freedom to choose some people to be saved and leave others in their spiritual deadness." Moo.

The contrast may be between the larger part of Israel, presently in rebellion against God, and the 'remnant' of believing Israel through whom the gospel is presently being brought to the world. God has made these two from the same lump.

Romans 9:22

εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπόλειαν,

Verses 22-24 form an unfinished sentence. The sense is, '... Wouldn't that put the matter in a different light?'

εἰ here = 'what if...'

θέλω wish, will

θέλων – God determined to delay the punishment of those rebelling against him for the very purpose of making a public display of his wrath and power at the end of history.

ἐνδείξασθαι Verb, aor midd infin

ἐνδεικνυμαι see v.17

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

γνωρίζω make known, disclose, know

δυνατος, η, ον strong, powerful; τὸ δυνατόν power

ἤνεγκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s φερω bring, carry, bear, lead

μακροθυμία, ας f longsuffering, patience

σκευος, ους see v.21

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

κατηρτισμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc

pl καταρτίζω make complete; act &

midd make, prepare

ἀπολεία, ας f destruction, utter ruin

Wright comments, "Paul is speaking at two levels. He is talking of the pre-exilic generation, with whom God bore patiently despite their persistent idolatry, sending prophet after prophet to them until the only reaction left was the devastating judgment of exile. And he is talking of his own generation, those upon whom, as he said in 1 Thess 2:16, wrath was now coming 'to the uttermost.'"

Romans 9:23

καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλέους, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν,

καὶ ἵνα is supported by p⁴⁶ vid s A *et al*, a few MSS, including B, read simply ἵνα. The absence of καὶ was probably an attempt to simplify the construction.

God's delay serves also the greater purpose of displaying his glory in salvation.

γνωρίσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s γνωρίζω see v.22

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

δόξα, ης f glory

ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion

προετοιμαζω prepare beforehand

Note that this latter group are not *deserving* of glory as the former are deserving of wrath.

"Behind verses 22-23 is a Jewish tradition that questioned why God was waiting so long to judge sinners and establish justice in the world. The cry of the martyrs in Revelation 6:10 reflects the same question: 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' Paul answers the question by showing how God is using this time before the end to prepare for an even greater display of his powerful judgment and to bring glory to his chosen people." Moo.

Romans 9:24

οὓς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἰουδαίων ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐξ ἐθνῶν;

μονον adv only, alone

Ἰουδαίος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean
ἐθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

The covenant promise has not failed but comes to effect in the true Israel, the children of promise, the true seed (cf. Galatians 3-4). Basic to Paul's thought is the promise given to Abraham that in his seed *all the families of the earth* will be blessed. This, God has accomplished by 'calling' whom he wills to be his own.

Romans 9:25-29

In verses 25-26 Paul shows how the Old Testament confirms God's purpose to call the Gentiles. In verses 27-29 he shows that the Old Testament confirms God's promise to call *some* from among the Jews.

Romans 9:25

– ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ Ὠσηὲ λέγει· Καλέσω τὸν οὐ λαόν μου λαόν μου καὶ τὴν οὐκ ἠγαπημένην ἠγαπημένην·

λαος, ου m people, a people
ἠγαπημένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s
ἀγαπαω love, show love for

A free quotation of Hos 2:23 (2:25 LXX).

Romans 9:26

καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ οὗ ἐρρέθη ἑαυτοῖς· Οὐ λαός μου ὑμεῖς, ἐκεῖ κληθήσονται υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος.

A verbatim quotation of the LXX of Hos 1:10a (2:1 LXX).

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι

τοπος, ου m place

οὗ adv where

ἐρρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λεγω

ἐκει there, in that place, to that place

κληθήσονται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 pl καλεω
ζωω live, be alive

In Hosea the reference is to the northern tribes of Israel, previously rejected by God but on whom he will now show mercy. But Paul picks up on the echo in Hosea of the promise made to Abraham (cf. Hos 1:10 and Gen 13:16; 22:17; 28:14; 32:12 and also the quotation Paul uses in v.27). It is part of Paul's argument that God is fulfilling his promise made long ago to Abraham in saving a people from every nation under heaven.

Wright adds, "Together, the two Hosea passages speak of the restoration Israel can expect after exile: it will be a strange reversal of judgment, in which a new word of grace will be spoken to a new people."

Romans 9:27-29

"In the preceding verses the call of the Gentiles had been supported by and represented as the fulfilment of Old Testament promises. In these three verses the Isaianic witness is added to confirm Paul's thesis that the covenant promise did not contemplate or guarantee the salvation of all ethnic Israel." Murray.

Romans 9:27

Ἡσαΐας δὲ κράζει ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ· Ἐὰν ἢ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸ ὑπόλειμμα σωθήσεται·

Cf. Is 10:22-23.

κράζω cry out, call out

ἐὰν if, even if, though

ἢ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἰμι

ἀριθμος, ου m number, total

ἄμμος, ου f sand, seashore

θαλασσα, ης f sea

ὑπολειμμα, τος n remnant

"The remnant conception emerged in the prophets as a message of both judgment and hope – judgment, because the continuing sinfulness of Israel brought God's judgment on the people as a whole, resulting in the salvation of only some of the people, hope, because despite Israel's sinfulness, God maintained his commitment to his covenant and pledged to save at least some of the people." Moo.

σωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s σωζω
save, rescue, heal

Romans 9:28

λόγον γὰρ συντελεῶν καὶ συντέμνων ποιήσει κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

συντελεω complete, carry out, establish

συντεμνω cut short, bring about swiftly

γη, γης f earth

Some MSS (followed by the TR), have a longer reading, conforming Paul's quotation to the LXX.

"Verse 28, which quotes from Isaiah 10:23, is difficult to interpret. But probably it reinforces the note of judgment from Romans 9:27: God will carry out the judgment he has decreed against Israel with certainty and with despatch." Moo.

Romans 9:29

καὶ καθὼς προείρηκεν Ἡσαΐας· Εἰ μὴ κύριος
Σαβαὼθ ἐγκατέλιπεν ἡμῖν σπέρμα, ὡς Σόδομα
ἂν ἐγενήθημεν καὶ ὡς Γόμορρα ἂν
ὁμοιωθήμεν.

προείρηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s προλεγω
say beforehand, warn in advance

Σαβαωθ (a descriptive name of God in
Hebrew, lit. of the armies) κυριος Σ.
Lord Almighty

ἐγκατέλιπεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
ἐγκαταλείπω abandon, leave behind
σπερμα, τος η seed, offspring

The only change from the LXX of Is 1:9 is that Paul uses here the word 'seed' rather than 'little remnant'. In Paul's teaching here 'seed' and 'remnant' have the same meaning, namely those who are partakers of the promise, cf. v.8. "The 'remnant,' the 'holy seed' (cf. Isa 6:13; Ezra 9:2; Mal 2:15), is critical to Paul's argument in chap 11." Wright.

ὁμοιωθήμεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl
ὁμοιω make like; pass resemble, be like

"Cf. Gen 19:29, in which Lot and his family escape from Sodom because 'God remembered Abraham' – a foretaste of the exodus [cf. Exod 2:24 with Pss 105:8-9, 42; 106:45], and now of the new exodus that happens in the gospel." Wright.

Wright concludes, "The story Paul has told in vv. 6-29 is the story of what it means for Israel to be the people of the crucified Messiah... This is the hidden dimension of God's strange purpose of election: Israel has been called, exactly as in 5:20 and 7:7-25, to be the place where sin gathers itself into one place in order to be dealt with at last. Israel is the people through whom the evil of the world is funnelled down onto the representative Messiah. The story of Abraham's family through the exodus and exile to the Messiah himself is a story of the cross casting its shadow ahead of it. The extraordinary things Paul says about God's strange ways with Israel, especially in 9:14-24, all reflect the theology of the cross he stated in 8:3. The judgment on Israel – including its 'hardening' in unbelief! – is the result of the divine purpose, that the Messiah would bear, all by himself, the weight of the world's sin and death. This in turn looks on to the conclusion in chap 11, as we shall see."

Romans 9:30-10:13

The emphasis on divine sovereignty in the preceding verses does not eliminate human responsibility, nor is the one incompatible with the other.

The theme of righteousness and faith dominate the following paragraphs. Paul contrasts two kinds of righteousness, each contrast occupying a central place in each of these three paragraphs:

- i) 'Righteousness that is by faith' versus 'a law of righteousness' 9:30-31 – paragraph 9:30-33;
- ii) 'God's righteousness' versus 'their own [righteousness]' 10:3 – paragraph 10:1-4;
- iii) 'The righteousness that is by faith' (10:6) versus 'the righteousness that is by the law' (10:5) – paragraph 10:5-13.

"Israel failed to enjoy the blessings of the messianic salvation because she had been preoccupied with a righteousness based on the law. Gentiles, on the other hand, are streaming into the kingdom because they have embraced a righteousness based on faith." Moo.

Nevertheless, we should remember that it is precisely through the ministry of the 'remnant' within Israel that the gospel has come to the Gentiles. The subject matter of chapters 9-11 remains the covenant faithfulness of the God of Abraham.

Romans 9:30

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; ὅτι ἔθνη τὰ μὴ διώκοντα
δικαιοσύνην κατέλαβεν δικαιοσύνην,
δικαιοσύνην δὲ τὴν ἐκ πίστεως·

ἐροῦμεν Verb, fut act indic, 1 pl λέγω

ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n

nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

διώκω seek after, pursue, follow

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is
right

καταλαμβάνω obtain, attain

πίστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

The Gentiles were "ignorant of God's promises and excluded from the covenant, they had no concept of right standing with God. But when God offered it to them in his grace and through the preaching of the gospel, they responded in faith and so obtained it." Moo.

Romans 9:31

Ἰσραὴλ δὲ διώκων νόμον δικαιοσύνης εἰς
νόμον οὐκ ἔφθασεν.

νομον δικαιοσύνης this phrase is the subject of some debate. It is probably shorthand, meaning that Israel sought righteousness through their own observance of the Mosaic law. Paul expands this thought further in the first half of the following verse.

"The thought, in fact, is here not far from 7:21-25: the more Israel clung to the law, the more it found that evil lay close at hand, and that covenant membership could not be had that way." Wright.

ἔφθασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s φθάνω

arrive at, achieve

Romans 9:32

διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως ἀλλ' ὡς ἐξ ἔργων·
προσέκοψαν τῷ λίθῳ τοῦ προσκόμματος,

They had seen the law as a means of providing them with inalienable identity as the people of God over against those without the law, rather than seeing its true intent (cf. 10:4).

προσκοπτω stumble, strike something
against

λίθος, ου m stone, precious stone

προσκομμα, ατος n that which causes
stumbling or offence

"Paul explains this basic problem again in 9:32b-33, but in different terms. He draws the picture of a walker so intent on pursuing a certain goal that she stumbles and falls over a rock lying in her path. So Israel, myopically concentrating on the law and its demands, missed Christ, 'the stone' that God placed in her path. This imagery comes from Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16, which Paul quotes in Romans 9:33. These texts, along with another 'stone' text (Ps 118:22), are quoted together in 1 Peter 2:6-8, suggesting that they may have been brought together via the key word 'stone' by Christians before Paul's day." Moo.

Romans 9:33

καθὼς γέγραπται· Ἴδοὺ τίθημι ἐν Σιών λίθον
προσκόμματος καὶ πέτραν σκανδάλου, καὶ ὁ
πιστευὼν ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυθήσεται.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

τίθημι place, set, appoint

πέτρα, ας f rock, solid rock

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence, obstacle

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

καταισχυνω put to shame, humiliate

Romans 10:1

Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ
ἡ δέησις πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰς
σωτηρίαν.

ἀδελθοι contrasts the spiritual relationship Paul has with fellow Christians with the fleshly relationship he has with Israel (cf. 9:3).

εὐδοκία, ας f good will, pleasure, desire

ἐμος, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my, mine

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

"This is the desire of his heart, the desire that springs out of the grief and pain that reside there (9:2); and this desire turns to prayer... He wants to draw his largely Gentile audience in Rome (11:13) to share his earnest desire for the salvation of Jews." Wright.

Romans 10:2

μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν·
ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν,

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify

ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

ἐπίγνωσις, εως f knowledge

Religious zeal in itself is of no benefit nor is it pleasing to God. For a supreme example of such misguided zeal, see that of Paul/Saul himself prior to his conversion (Acts 22:3; 26:5, 8; Gal 1:14; Phil 3:6).

Romans 10:3

ἀγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ζητοῦντες στήσαι, τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν·

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand, disregard

τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην "'God's righteousness' is a shorthand, here, for the entire sweep of covenantally loyal actions God had undertaken from Abraham to the Messiah. Paul's kinsfolk, like his own earlier self, have remained ignorant of it all, unaware that this was what God was up to and that it was what God had said all along.

"As a result, they have not submitted to this covenant history. They have resisted it, like the wicked tenants in Jesus' parable (Mark 12:1-12 and par., culminating in the rejection – and vindication – of the 'stone' the builders refused), hoping to claim the inheritance as their own. They have attempted, in other words, to set up a status of covenant membership in which the principle of 9:6-29 would be quietly set aside; this would be a status for all Jews, and only for Jews. No pruning down to a remnant; no admission of Gentiles (except by becoming full Jews through proselyte initiation). This is the 'righteousness' they sought to establish: a status that would be 'their own.' This does not refer to a status they might have achieved by moral effort, by climbing a ladder called 'works,' but a status that would be theirs and theirs only. Romans 10:3 is a statement of what Paul principally objects to, on the basis of the gospel, within the Judaism to which he had himself belonged. He does not regard his contemporaries as proto-Pelagians, trying to pull themselves up by their own moral bootstraps in order to be good enough for God and to earn 'works-righteousness' of that sort. Rather, they believed that God's covenant with Abraham was their exclusive and inalienable possession, whereas Paul had come to believe that, through the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the long covenant story as set out in the Scriptures had all along had a different shape. Paul is not turning his back on Judaism and its traditions. He is claiming to interpret them in their own terms, through their own Scriptures, and around their own Messiah (9:4-5)." Wright.

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

Cf. Phil 3:9.

ζητοῦντες Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s ζητεω seek

στήσαι Verb, 1 aor act infin ἵστημι and ἵστανω establish, fix

ὑπετάγησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ὑποτασσω subordinate; pass. be
subject, submit to

I.e. failed to believe in Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:4

τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion, termination

The end (τέλος) of the law was righteousness, but because of the weakness of the flesh it could not deliver. But now Christ is the end (goal) of the law εἰς δικαιοσυνη (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). Christ delivers for us what the law could not, and by this means both fulfils and brings it to its proper fruition. "The Messiah is the goal of the Torah so that there may be righteousness – the righteousness of the 'Torah of righteousness!' – for all who have faith." Wright. Wright provides extensive argument for this understanding of τέλος as 'goal,' 'completion,' rather than 'abrogation,' 'termination.' He shows how it reflects Paul's argument throughout Romans. Moo prefers to understand the phrase εἰς δικαιοσυνην as stating the purpose of the first clause rather than qualifying νομου.

Romans 10:5-11

Wright argues that our reading of these verses must be shaped firstly by "think[ing] one's way into a world of thought that Paul would have taken for granted" (the world of second Temple Judaism), and secondly by taking note of the entire context of the scriptures he quotes. So Wright comments, "At first sight, admittedly, it seems ... here is Moses telling people to keep the Torah, and here is something called 'the righteousness of faith' telling them simply to believe!" But to read Paul in this way is to read him in a post-Enlightenment framework rather than in his own context. So Wright continues: "Deuteronomy 30 comes immediately after the chapters in which Moses has held out to the people the covenantal blessings and curses... The final and most emphatic curse is exile: Israel will not simply suffer blight, mildew, barrenness, poverty, sickness, and a hundred other evils in the land, but will ultimately be driven off the land itself, scattered among the nations of the earth (28:63-68; 29:22-28...). It is assumed that all these things will come to pass; Deut 29:4 bewails the fact that Israel has remained hard hearted, and the curses are bound to follow.

"But after they have all happened, and in particular after the exile has done its worst, then there will come a great reversal. Deuteronomy 30 is a prediction of the return from exile, pointing to the spiritual and moral renewal that will make that return possible and appropriate. Israel will return to YHWH with all its heart and soul (30:2, 6). YHWH will turn Israel's captivity around, and regather his people (vv. 3-5). YHWH will circumcise Israel's heart to love YHWH, so that Israel may live (v. 6). Blessing will once more follow, if Israel will now be obedient (vv. 8-10). And the central blessing is life itself: God has set life before them (v. 15), the life that results from keeping the commandments (v. 16) as opposed to disobeying and so incurring death (vv. 17-18). Life is what they must choose (v. 19). They must love YHWH, obey his voice, and cleave to him, 'for he is your life, and the length of your days' (v. 20). The whole chapter might be entitled, 'the new obedience which brings new life.'

"In the middle of Deuteronomy [30] we find vv. 11-14, the passage Paul quotes in 10:6-8. The commandment is not too hard; it is not far off. You do not need someone to go up to heaven and bring it down, so that you may hear it and do it; you do not need someone to cross the sea and fetch it, so that you may hear it and do it (this language about impossible quests to the deep, or to heaven, has become proverbial in 4 Ezra 4:7-8). 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth, and in your heart, so that you may do it' (v. 14). The chapter, in other words, presumes that Israel has been sent into exile and is now going to turn to YHWH from the heart, and proceeds to explain what it really means to 'do' the law and so to 'live.' This life-giving 'doing' will be a matter, not of a struggle to obey an apparently impossible law, but of heart and mouth being renewed by God's living 'word.' It will not be a matter of someone else teaching it to them from a great distance. Verse 14, significantly, omits even the mention of 'hearing' the commandment; it will be inside them, in their mouth and heart. We cannot but think of Jer 31:33-34: In the restoration after the exile, the people will not need to be taught the commandments, because they will be written on their hearts. And this cannot but remind us of Rom 2:25-29, a passage that Paul is about to echo in 10:9-10. It should be clear already that Paul has the context, and overall meaning, of Deuteronomy 30 firmly in mind. This is anything but a clever proof-text taken out of context.

"This should make it clear, too, that Paul's quotation of Lev 18:5 in 10:5 is not set in opposition to Deuteronomy 30. He is not setting up a straw person ('Moses encouraged that stupid and impossible system we know as works-righteousness') in order then to knock it down with a bit of clever but slippery eisegesis of another part of the Pentateuch... Lev 18:5 brought together two things, 'doing the law' and 'living'; 'the one who does these things shall live by them.' This is what the 'righteousness which is from the the law' declares; this is how Leviticus 18 was heard in Paul's own day. Had Paul really meant that Christ is the termination of the law, we should have expected him to oppose such a view. But he does not suppose that Deuteronomy does any such thing. It offers, he insists, a fresh explanation, granted exile and return, for what 'do the law and live' might actually mean. In the original passage, the lines Paul quotes each end with 'so that you may do it.' Here, as in 2:25-29 and elsewhere, Paul's point is that those who share Christian faith are in fact 'doing the law' in the sense that Deuteronomy and Jeremiah intended. Those who believe that Jesus is Lord, and that God raised him from the dead, are the new-covenant people, the returned-from-exile people. The story of Israel in 9:6-29 took us as far as exile, pointing ahead to what might happen beyond (9:24). That story reached its dramatic climax in the Messiah, the one upon whom the curses ultimately fell (Gal 3:13). Now all who believe in the Messiah, whether they be Jew or Gentile, are thereby 'fulfilling the law'; they are 'doing' it in the sense Deuteronomy 30 intended; and they thereby find 'life,' as 8:9-11 demonstrated, the life that Torah wanted to give but could not (7:10), the life that can now be spoken of more specifically as 'salvation' (10:9, 10, 13). And that, of course, was all along the point of the paragraph (10:1-13). Paul has prayed for the salvation of his kinsfolk; now, starting with Torah itself, he has shown the way by which that salvation may be found."

Romans 10:5

Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει ὅτι τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ὁ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτῇ.

The γὰρ indicates that Paul is now providing an explanation of "why the Messiah is the goal of the law for righteousness to all who believe... The *gar*, in fact, governs vv. 5-9 as a whole, not simply v. 5. Paul's explanation runs as follows: 'For, while Moses does indeed write concerning Torah-righteousness that "the one who does them shall live in them," what "doing" and "living" come to mean when God restores Israel after exile, is defined afresh by Deuteronomy 30, not in terms of an impossible demand, but in terms of God's gift of God's own word; and this "word" is the word of faith, faith that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead.' This, taken as a whole, explains verse 4, and thereby, in turn, explains how salvation is now available for all who share this faith." Wright.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness
ζήσεται Verb, fut mid indic, 3s ζῶ live, be alive

Cf. Lev 18:5, also Gal 3:12.

Romans 10:6

ἢ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει· Μὴ εἶπης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου· Τίς ἀναβήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν·

πιστις, εως f faith, trust
οὕτως thus, in this way
εἶπης Verb, aor act subj, 3s λεγω

The quotation alludes to Deut 9:4 which is a warning to the Israelites against thinking that they were accepted by God because of their own righteousness.

ἀναβήσεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3s
ἀναβαινω go up, ascend
καταγαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin καταγω
bring down, bring

Wright comments here regarding Paul, "Here he casts Jesus himself in the role that other thinkers gave to Torah or to Wisdom. Jesus the Messiah is himself God's life-giving, covenant-renewing, community-defining gift to God's people. His 'coming down from heaven' and his 'coming up from the deep' are the events through which this gift is made available to all." Wright.

Romans 10:7

ἢ· Τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν.

ἢ or
καταβαινω come or go down, descend

ἄβυσσος, ου f abyss, underworld, world of dead

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἀναγαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἀναγω bring up, lead up

Romans 10:8

ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; Ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν, ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν.

ἐγγύς adv near
ῥῆμα, ατος n word, thing, matter
στομα, τος n mouth
κηρύσσω preach, proclaim

"The general point he wants to make about the righteousness by faith is clear enough: Through Christ's being brought down to earth (i.e. his incarnation, Rom 10:6) and his being brought up from the dead (10:7), God has made righteousness readily available (10:8). One does not have to ascend into heaven or plumb the depths of the sea to discover it. All one needs to do to attain righteousness is to respond in faith to the gospel as it is preached." Moo.

Moses' words, which in context refer to the law, Paul applies to the gospel. Some think that Paul, viewing Christ as the end of the law, is here showing that what the Old Testament said of the law now applies to Christ. But the focus is rather on the accessible nature of God's revelation. "As God made available his will to his old covenant people, so now he makes available his will for the new covenant. Yet the new covenant word has an added element of 'nearness.' Christ, as the One who brings the law to its culmination (v.4), also writes that law on the hearts of God's people, as was predicted by Jeremiah in his famous 'new covenant' prophecy (Jer 31:31-34). So in Christ, the law has come near to God's people in a way that it never had before. All that is now required of human beings is that they accept God's word in faith." Moo.

"God has brought his 'word' near to you, placing it on your lips as you confess Jesus as Lord, writing it on your heart as you believe that he was raised from the dead... [Paul's] own announcing of Jesus as the risen Lord, summoning people to 'the obedience of faith' (1:5), is itself part of the answer to the prayer of 10:1." Wright.

Romans 10:9

ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πιστεύσης ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ·

ἐὰν if

ὁμολογήσης Verb, aor act subj ὁμολογεῶ
confess, declare

The confession, 'Jesus is Lord' is one of the oldest expressions of Christian belief, cf. Acts 22:16; Phil 2:11; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5.

πιστεύσης Verb, aor act subj, 2 s πιστεῶ
believe (in), have faith (in)

ἐγειρω raise

νεκρός, α, ον dead

"Jesus' resurrection was, for Paul, the demonstration that he really was the Messiah; his belief in Jesus as the turning-point of Jewish and world history, the bearer of God's purposes, the climax of the story of God's covenant, is unthinkable without it... Belief in Jesus' resurrection is thus not an arbitrary dogmatic test, a demonstration that one is prepared to believe something ridiculous on someone else's supposed divine authority. Genuine heart-felt belief can only come about, Paul believed, through the action of the Spirit in the gospel. This faith is the sure sign that the gospel has done its work." Wright.

σωθήσῃ Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s σωζῶ
save, rescue, heal

Romans 10:10

καρδίᾳ γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην,
στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται εἰς σωτηρίαν·

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

Wright comments on the parallelism of these two phrases: "The two are closely correlated but not identical. 'Righteousness' denotes the status people have on the basis of faith: a present legal status that anticipates the future verdict of the divine lawcourt, a present covenantal status that anticipates final affirmation of membership in God's people. 'Salvation' denotes the actual rescue from sin and death effected in the future by the promised resurrection, and likewise anticipated in the present (so, e.g., 8:24). 'Salvation' is not a status but an event, and it is promised to those who have 'righteousness' as their status. "The connection of righteousness with faith is clear; the connection of salvation with verbal confession of Jesus as Lord is not so obvious. It may well be that Paul is thinking of 'Jesus is Lord' as the baptismal confession, and that, as in Romans 6, he is understanding baptism as the present anticipation of final resurrection – that is, salvation from sin and death."

Romans 10:11

λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή· Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ
οὐ καταισχυθήσεται.

γραφή, ης f writing, Scripture

καταισχυθῶ put to shame, humiliate,
disgrace

Cf. Isa 28:16. On the theme of shame, cf. 1:16; 5:5 and 9:33.

Romans 10:12

οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ
Ἑλλήνου, ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς κύριος πάντων,
πλουτῶν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους
αὐτόν·

Cf. 3:22-23.

διαστολή, ης f distinction, difference
τε enclitic particle and, and so; τε καὶ and
also

Ἕλληνα, ηνος m a Greek, non-Jew

ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς κύριος πάντων Caesar's claim.
Wright remarks, "As in 3:27-30, monotheism
undergirds the universality of the gospel –
though, as elsewhere in Paul, it is monotheism
with Jesus at the heart of it."

πλουτεῶ be rich, grow rich

ἐπικαλεῶ call, name, surname; midd call
upon, appeal to

Romans 10:13

Πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου
σωθήσεται.

ἂν particle indicating contingency

ὄνομα, τος n name, person

σωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s σωζῶ

Cf. Joel 2:23. "The 'LORD' in Joel is Yahweh, the covenant name of God. But Paul identifies this 'Lord' with Jesus (see Rom 10:9, 12), the 'stone' of Isaiah 28:16 (Rom 10:11). Verse 13, then, is important evidence that the early Christians identified Jesus with God." Moo. Wright adds, "The quotation from Joel is a further point at which we are right to hear echoes of God's renewal of the covenant. Joel 2 sits comfortably alongside Deuteronomy 30 as a powerful statement of how God will restore the fortunes of Israel after devastating judgment [cf. Acts 2:16-21]. When we read the whole chapter there are various echoes of what Paul has already said." He also remarks, "We should not miss the force of v 13 in relation to the argument of chaps 9-11 as a whole. If 'those who call on the name of the Lord' is a regular biblical designation of 'Israel,' then v. 13 is an exact functional equivalent of 11:26a: 'All Israel shall be saved.' Verse 13 supplies Paul's initial answer to the problem of 10:1 and suggests the correct way of understanding 11:26a."

Romans 10:14

Πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν; πῶς δὲ πιστεύσωσιν οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος;

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)
χωρις prep with gen without, apart from
κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Romans 10:15

πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν; καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ.

ἐὰν if
ἀποσταλῶσιν Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl
ἀποστελλω send, send out

This series of questions underlines the necessity of the apostolic mission.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
ὠραιος, α, ον beautiful, attractive,
welcome, pleasant

πους, ποδος m foot
εὐαγγελιζω act. and midd proclaim the
good news

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

The quotation from Is 52:7 shows that the emphasis is upon heralds being sent *by God*. It also shows that the condition has been met – Preachers have been sent.

Note the context in Isaiah 52. Paul has already quoted Is 52:5 in Rom 2:24. Isaiah 52 "contains the basic scheme of salvation history as Paul presents it in Romans: sin and disobedience of Israel at the present (Isa 52:4-5), to be changed when God sends the good news of 'salvation' to Zion (52:7), and both Israel (52:9) and the Gentiles ('the ends of the earth,' 52:10) are saved. The alert reader of Romans should be led by the explicit quotations back to this great Isaiah prophecy and allow Isaiah and Paul mutually to interpret one another." Moo.

Wright adds, "As the following passage seems to indicate, Paul understands the message concerning YHWH's servant in Isaiah 52-53 as the message about Jesus the Messiah. The people who announce the servant-message are therefore the people who now, in his own day, proclaim Jesus. The effect of vv. 14-15 is to say: this is how my own apostolic ministry fits into the larger narrative of exile and restoration, of God restoring the covenant in the Messiah and calling both Jews and Gentiles into the renewed community (9:24)."

Romans 10:16

ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ· Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει· Κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν;

οὐ πάντες litotes, meaning 'only a few.'
Echoes the remnant theology introduced in 9:6b.

ὑπακουω obey, be subject to
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel
ἀκοη, ης f report, news, hearing

Cf. Is 53:1. Paul quotes again from the same section of Isaiah, the introduction now to the passage regarding the suffering servant. τῇ ἀκοῇ Wright comments, "Though this word can also refer to the faculty of hearing, the act of hearing or listening, and the organ with which one hears (i.e., the ear), the meaning here is the thing that is heard: the report or message (see also Gal 3:2, 5; the KJV's 'faith cometh by hearing' is thus misleading, as is 'act of hearing')." "

Romans 10:17

ἄρα ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀκοῇ διὰ ῥήματος Χριστοῦ.

'faith comes from the message, and the message happens through the word of/about the Messiah'

πιστις, εως f faith, trust, belief, the
Christian faith

A restatement of v.14.

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter

ῥήματος Χριστοῦ many manuscripts have the more common phrase ῥήματος θεου, which would appear to be secondary.

The 'word of Christ' probably means the word *concerning* Christ, "the message about his lordship and resurrection (vv. 8-9)." Moo. Paul does not often use ῥημα, preferring to use λόγος. Wright thinks he may have used ῥημα here because his mind was still on Deut 30:14 (ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥημα), which he quoted in v.8. It also allows him to lead into Ps 18:5 [LXX] which follows.

Romans 10:18

Ἀλλὰ λέγω, μὴ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; μενουῦνγε· εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν, καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν.

μενουν and μενουνγε rather, on the
contrary, indeed

γη, γης f earth
φθογγος, ου m voice, sound, tone
πέρατα Noun, nom/acc pl περας, ατος n
end, boundary, conclusion
οικουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth

Paul would have had the whole context of Psalm 19 in mind here with its link between general and special revelation. Wright comments, "If Paul has the rest of Psalm 19 in mind, he may have taken vv. 1-6, as well as vv. 7-11, as referring to Torah, in which case he would be celebrating the fact that the 'word' of Deut 30:14 was now freely available to all, as God always intended. The link between the occurrences of *rhema* in vv. 8 and 17-18 seems to point in this direction. This seems to be the most likely understanding, though certainty here is perhaps out of reach."

Romans 10:14-18 – Conclusion

"The Gentile world, then, has heard the gospel. Not all have believed; but, as he said in 9:30, Gentiles who were not looking for covenant membership have received it. Meanwhile, Israel, embracing the Torah, which did indeed hold out the status of 'righteousness,' the prospect of covenant membership, has not attained to that Torah. Instead (and this is what is driving the whole section), Israel has to look on as outsiders come to share the blessings that had been promised, blessings to which they had looked forward for so long. This is the point with which the chapter now closes." Wright.

Romans 10:19

ἀλλὰ λέγω, μὴ Ἰσραὴλ οὐκ ἔγνω; πρῶτος Μωϋσῆς λέγει· Ἐγὼ παραζηλώσω ὑμᾶς ἐπ' οὐκ ἔθνει, ἐπ' ἔθνει ἀσυνέτω παροργιῶ ὑμᾶς.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

Wright thinks that the sense 'know' is better here than 'understand.' "Israel had long ago been warned that the Gentiles would be coming in to share, and even apparently to take over, the blessings they had been promised. What Israel could not claim ignorance of, in other words, was not 'the gospel,' as is sometimes suggested, but the more specific point that Paul had stated first in 9:30-31. This is what the first two quotations are about." Wright.

πρῶτος, η, ον first

παραζηλωσω make jealous

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people

ἀσυνετος, ον without understanding

παροργιῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s παροργιζω
make angry, make resentful

Cf. Deut 32:21. "[Paul] will in the next chapter use this key category of 'jealousy' as the fulcrum around which to turn his crucial argument." Wright.

Romans 10:20

Ἥσαίᾳς δὲ ἀποτολμᾷ καὶ λέγει· Εὐρέθην ἐν τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ζητοῦσιν, ἐμφανῆς ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἐμὲ μὴ ἐπερωτῶσιν.

ἀποτολμᾶω be or become bold

"a reference to the stark, almost horrifying content of what is said, more than to the prophet's state of mind." Wright.

εὐρέθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s εὕρισκω

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγώ

ζητεῶ seek, search for

ἐμφανῆς, ες visible, revealed

ἐπερωτῶσιν Verb, pres act ptc, m dat pl

ἐπερωτᾶω ask

Cf. Isa 65:1, see also Rom 9:30.

"Isaiah 65 comes straight after the long prayer for God to intervene at the time of Israel's devastation (63:15-64:12), a prayer that Paul himself might have been imitating in 10:1." Wright.

Romans 10:21

πρὸς δὲ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ λέγει· Ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐξεπέτασα τὰς χεῖράς μου πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα.

όλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

ἐξεπέτασα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s

ἐκπεταννومي hold out

χειρ, χειρος f hand, power

λαος, ου m people, a people

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

ἀντιλεγω object to, oppose

Cf. Isa 65:7.

"Paul understands the first verse to refer, as in 9:30, to the Gentiles who are coming in even though they were not expecting or wanting to, and the second to refer, as in 9:31-3, to Israel itself, remaining recalcitrant...

"Having told his version of the story about God and Israel in the past, Paul will now move cautiously to tell a story about God and Israel in the future." Wright.

Romans 11

See Ralph Martin's 'Excursus on Israel's Salvation and the Gentiles' Reconciliation' in his commentary on *2 Corinthians*, pp.268-270.

"Paul ... unfolds his teaching about God's enduring faithfulness to Israel in two stages. If 9:6-29 have surveyed the history of God's faithfulness to Israel in the past, 11:1-10 focus on the present and 11:11-32 on the future." Moo.

Romans 11:1

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἀπόσωτο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ;
μὴ γένοιτο· καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Ἰσραηλίτης εἰμὶ, ἐκ
σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν.

Λέγω οὖν 'So this is the question I must raise
at last ...'

ἀπόσωτο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀποθεομαι push aside, reject
λαος, ου m people, a people

Several MSS (p⁴⁶ G it^{f,g,z} et al) read τον
κληρομενον in place of τον λαον. This appears
to be a Western assimilation to Ps 94:14.

γένειτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γινομαι
σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring
φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people

Paul's own existence as a Jewish Christian, and
the nature of his ministry, prove that God did
not cast off his people.

On Paul's sense of his own Jewishness and its
privileges, see 2 Cor 11:22; Gal 1:13-14; Phil
3:4-6.

Romans 11:2

οὐκ ἀπόσωτο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν
προέγνω. ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ἐν Ἠλίᾳ τί λέγει ἡ
γραφὴ, ὡς ἐντυγχάνει τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τοῦ
Ἰσραήλ;

Cf. 1 Sam 12:22; Ps 94:14 [93:14 LXX].

προέγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s προγινωσκω
know beforehand, choose from the
beginning

Cf. 8:29. What does ὃν προεγνω qualify? If it
is taken as restricting those whom God has not
cast off the statement could be taken to refer to
the remnant – God did not reject the remnant
from among his people. But this is probably
not Paul's meaning. "Whom he foreknew' does
not identify the 'people' Paul is talking about,
rather it explains why God remains faithful to
that people. Paul, in other words, has all of
(physical) Israel in view here, and he is
reasserting the common Old Testament
teaching that God chose Israel as his very own
people." Moo.

Wright draws attention to the context of the
quotation from 1 Samuel. "This passage brings
two particular overtones into Paul's context.
First, the statement is Samuel's, as part of his
promise that he will never stop interceding for
Israel, despite their sin and folly. Samuel
stands in the tradition of Moses interceding for
Israel; Paul has stood in the same tradition in
9:1-5 and 10:1, and the implication here is that
he is not only an example of a Jew who has
been faithful to the gospel but is also part of
the means, through his prayer, of Israel's
continuing non-forsakenness. He highlights
this praying role, as the next part-verse makes
clear (11:2b): the link between v. 2a and v. 2b
is Elijah's intercessory task. Second, the
Samuel passage is all about God's provision
for Israel through the choice of the first king,
Saul; and Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin.
Paul, whose Hebrew name was Saul, seems
content here to suggest, by implication, that
just as God provided for Israel through the
choice of the Benjaminites Saul a thousand
years ago, so now he has done the same thing."

ἢ or, (ἢ ... ἢ either ... or, ἢ και or even),
than

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present
meaning) know, understand

Ἠλιας, ου m Elijah

γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture

ἐντυγχανω turn to (God on behalf of), plead

"Paul more naturally, though, identified
himself with the prophetic tradition than the
kingly... The prophet with whom the young
Saul of Tarsus seems to have identified above
all, and with whom the converted Paul still felt
a strong affinity, was Elijah. Paul's early 'zeal'
was in the tradition of Elijah's zeal against the
prophets of Baal; but now he saw himself in a
subsequent part of the story, standing all but
alone before God as the true, and persecuted
prophet, praying for the people." Wright.

Romans 11:3

Κύριε, τοὺς προφῆτας σου ἀπέκτειναν, τὰ
θυσιαστήριά σου κατέσκαψαν, κἀγὼ
ὑπελείφθην μόνος, καὶ ζητοῦσιν τὴν ψυχὴν
μου.

Cf. 1 Kings 19:10,14.

ἀποκτεινω and ἀποκτενω, -ννω kill, put to
death

θυσιαστηριον, ου n altar (of incense)

κατασκαπτω demolish, destroy

κἀγω a compound word = και ἐγω

ὑπελείφθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s

ὑπολειπω leave, leave remaining

μονος, η, ον only, alone

ζητεω seek, search for, look for

ψυχη, ης f self, life

Romans 11:4

ἀλλὰ τί λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ χρηματισμός; Κατέλιπον ἑμμαντῷ ἑπτακισχιλίους ἄνδρας, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔκαμψαν γόνυ τῆ Βάαλ.

χρηματισμος, ου m oracle, reply from God

Cf. 1 Kings 19:18b

κατέλιπον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
καταλειπω leave, leave behind, keep
(for oneself)

ἑπτακισχιλιοι, αι, α seven thousand

ἄνθρωπος, ἄνδρος m man, husband

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τι
who, which

καμπτω bend, bow (of the knee)

γόνυ, γονατος n knee

A 'remnant' "in the manner spoken of by Isa 1:9 quoted in 9:29."

Romans 11:5

οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λείμμα κατ' ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν·

οὕτως thus, in this way

καιρος, ου m time

λείμμα, ατος n remnant, small remainder

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

"God's word affirms a continuing role for Israel in salvation history. But Israel cannot claim this role as a matter of right, for it is due solely to the working of God's grace." Moo. "If Paul and the other Jewish Christians are a new kind of 'remnant,' called by God's grace in the gospel of Jesus, there is no reason why others should not join them. That is the argument of 11:11-16 and beyond." Wright.

Romans 11:6

εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις.

χάριτι Noun, dat s χάρις, ιτος f

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more

ἐπει since, because, for

After the final χάρις above, some MSS add the obverse statement εἰ δὲ ἐξ ἔργων, οὐκέτι ἐστὶ χάρις, ἐπεὶ τὸν ἔργον οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἔργον. Metzger comments, "There appears to be no reason why, if the words were original, they should have been deleted. The existence of several forms of the addition likewise throws doubt upon the originality of any of them."

Romans 11:7

τί οὖν; ὃ ἐπιζητεῖ Ἰσραὴλ, τοῦτο οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν, ἢ δὲ ἐκλογὴ ἐπέτυχεν· οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἐπωρώθησαν,

ἐπιζητεω seek, desire, search for

ἐπέτυχεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἐπιτυγχανω
obtain, receive, attain

Cf. 9:31. The parallel suggests that what they sought was 'righteousness.'

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing, what is
chosen

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ἐπωρώθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

πωροω make stubborn, make hard,
make insensitive

A different verb, σκληρυνω, is used in 9:18 but the idea conveyed is the same.

Wright says that it is vital to understand what Paul is saying here, particularly as it is also a vital move in the decisive statement at 11:25. "Paul is drawing on the Jewish tradition that runs like this: when God delays outstanding judgment, those who do not use this time of delay to repent and turn back to him will be hardened, so that their final judgment, when it comes, will be seen to be just. This apocalyptic context of 'hardening' is vital; ignoring it leads interpreters either into abstract discussions of predestination and reprobation or into the idea of a temporary 'hardening,' which is then reversed. As the analogy with Pharaoh in 9:17-18 indicates, this 'hardening' is not something that comes for a while, during which something else happens, and which is then removed. The 'hardening,' rather, is what happens during a temporary suspension of the judgment that would otherwise have fallen, to allow time for some to escape. In the case of Pharaoh, the result was the exodus from Egypt, seen as a sign of God's glorious power and the reputation of the divine name (9:17). In the present case, the result is that there is time not only for the Gentiles to come in (11:11-15), but also for more Jews, like Paul himself, to recognise that the risen Jesus is indeed Israel's Messiah and to serve him in 'the obedience of faith.'"

Romans 11:8

καθὼς γέγραπται· Ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα κατανύξεως, ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν καὶ ὄτα τοῦ μὴ ἀκούειν, ἕως τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας.

Cf. Deut 29:4 and Isa 29:10.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s διδομι

κατανύξις, εως f stupor, numbness

βλεπω see, be able to see

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

σημερον today

"It is the Jewish Scriptures themselves that speak of YHWH pouring out a 'spirit of stupor' (Deut 29:4 [29:3 LXX]), and making eyes not to see and ears not to hear. Tragic though this is, this is part of what Israel already should have known (10:19)." Wright.

Romans 11:9

καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει· Γενηθήτω ἡ τράπεζα αὐτῶν εἰς παγίδα καὶ εἰς θήραν καὶ εἰς σκάνδαλον καὶ εἰς ἀνταπόδομα αὐτοῖς,

Cf. Ps. 69:22-23. "Elsewhere in this letter, and frequently in the NT, this psalm is seen as a prediction of the sufferings of the Messiah. (See, e.g., Rom 15:3, quoting Ps 69:9; elsewhere Matt 26:37 and Heb 12:2 quoting Ps 69:20; Matt 27:34, 48 and par. quoting Ps 69:21; John 1:17 quoting Ps 69:9; John 15:25 quoting Ps 69:4; Acts 1:20 quoting Ps 69:25). The judgment that is called down on impenitent Israel in this passage is not something separate from the central gospel events, the events concerning Jesus." Wright.

γενηθήτω Verb, aor pass dep imperat, 3 s
γίνομαι
τράπεζα, ης f table, food, meal

'Table' has the sense of table fellowship and hence is a symbol of unity. Barrett comments, "The unity and interrelatedness created by the law and so highly valued in Judaism were no more than a delusion since they were a union in sin (3:20), not righteousness." On the other hand, in the gospel, 'table fellowship' has embraced the Gentiles, cf. Gal 2:11-21.

παγίς, ἰδος f snare, trap
θήρα, ας f trap
σκάνδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence, obstacle
ἀνταπόδομα, τος n repayment, retribution

Romans 11:10

σκοτισθήτωσαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν τοῦ μὴ βλέπειν, καὶ τὸν νῶτον αὐτῶν διὰ παντὸς σύγκαμψον.

σκοτιζομαι be or become darkened
νωτός, ου m back
σύγκαμψον Verb, aor act imperat, 3 s
συγκαμπω bend

The bent back is a symbol of bondage (cf Gal. 4:25).

Romans 11:11-32

In verses 11-23, Paul repeats a basic theme several times. "God's rejection of Israel is not his last word. He has brought about that rejection in order to further his plan for salvation history. This plan initially is bringing salvation to the Gentiles, but it ultimately is intended to 'bounce back' and benefit Israel as well..."

"Considerable debate surrounds this sequence. Does Paul think of it as a continuing oscillation, which repeats itself many times over the course of history as Jews and Gentiles interact with each other? Or does he view it as a single, linear sequence, which leads from the Jewish rejection and Gentile acceptance of his own day to a climax of greater Jewish response to the gospel in the last days? We prefer the latter, and we will show why as the exegesis proceeds." Moo.
Wright thinks differently, as we shall see below.

Romans 11:11

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τῷ αὐτῶν παραπτώματι ἡ σωτηρία τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, εἰς τὸ παραζηλώσαι αὐτούς.

Cf. v.1.

πταίω stumble, go wrong, sin

Cf 9:32-33.

πέσωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πιπῶ fall,
fall down

γένοιτο Verb, aor opt, 3s γίνομαι
παραπτῶμα, τος n sin, wrongdoing

σωτηρία, ας f salvation

ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation,
people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

As illustrated in Paul's ministry as depicted in Acts. When he was drummed out of the synagogues he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-47; 14:1-3; 18:4-7; 19:8-10; 28:23-29).

παραζήλω make jealous

Cf. Deut 32:21. Verse 10b looks back to 10:19 and on to v. 14.

Romans 11:12

εἰ δὲ τὸ παράπτωμα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος κόσμος καὶ τὸ ἥττημα αὐτῶν πλοῦτος ἔθνῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῶν.

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
ἥττημα, τος n defeat, failure

Implies a cutting down of numbers. "What is in view is the great loss, as by overthrow in battle, sustained by Israel when the kingdom of God was taken from them. They are viewed as a defeated host deprived of their heritage."

Murray

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
ποσος, η, ον how much(?), how many(?)
μαλλον adv more; rather, instead, more
than that
πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness,
fulfilment

"Fullness' is itself a rare term in Paul, but there is another parallel occurrence close by in 11:25. Other parts of that verse are controversial, but at this point we are on safe ground: by the 'fullness of the Gentiles,' we may confidently say, Paul means 'the total number of those Gentiles who believe the gospel of Jesus.' He is well aware that large numbers of Gentiles do not believe it, and never will. The 'fulness' will consist of all those who eventually do. There is no reason to suppose that 'the fullness' of Israel will mean anything more than this: the complete number of Jews, many more than at present, who likewise come to faith in the gospel." Wright.

Romans 11:13

Ἦμῖν δὲ λέγω τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. ἐφ' ὅσον μὲν οὖν εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος, τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω,

This part of the letter is intended to warn Gentile Christians against a sense of superiority.

ὅσος, η, as much as, how much; ἐφ ὅσον
inasmuch as, while
διακονια, ας f ministry, service,
contribution, help
δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt

Romans 11:14

εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν.

εἴ πως if by any means, if by some means
παραζηλωω make jealous
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature
σωζω save, rescue, heal

Paul makes it clear that his ministry to the Gentiles does not mean he lacks concern for his own people. "He was taking to the Gentiles the news that Israel's God, Abraham's God, was welcoming them into the one family now reconstituted around the Messiah (4:1-25). And he was seeking to hold this up before his fellow Jews so as to make them see what was happening and, becoming jealous, long to have a share in the eschatological blessings themselves." Wright.

Romans 11:15

εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀποβολὴ αὐτῶν καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, τίς ἢ πρόσλημψις εἰ μὴ ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν;
ἀποβολη, ης f loss, rejection
καταλλαγη, ης f reconciliation, being put
into fellowship with God
προσλημψις, εως f acceptance

Black argues that ἀποβολη and πρόσλημψις are technical terms in Rabbinic Judaism for God's rejection and acceptance of men. πρόσλημψις occurs here alone in the NT. Wright says that it must "be explained in terms of vv. 12 and 14. If, after all that has happened, Jews come back into the family, hearing and believing the gospel as in 10:6-13, then, says Paul, the significance of this will be like a kind of resurrection."

ζωη, ης f life
νεκρος, α, ον dead

ζωη ἐκ νεκρῶν Murray views as a reference to revival. Moo suggests that the reference may have apocalyptic overtones, associating the conversion of the Jews with the resurrection of the dead, "the last and climatic stage in God's plan for salvation." Wright argues that this is to read Paul's words outside the train of his thought in this chapter. "The 'now' of 11:31 strongly suggests that Paul is not postponing this hoped-for salvation to some distant future."

Romans 11:16

εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀπαρχὴ ἁγία, καὶ τὸ φύραμα· καὶ εἰ ἡ ρίζα ἁγία, καὶ οἱ κλάδοι.

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

What is this firstfruit? There are three views:
i) Christ;
ii) Present Jewish believers;
iii) The patriarchs.

Wright argues that the 'firstfruits' and the 'root' are not necessarily the same. "The argument so far, and some of Paul's other uses of the same image, would lead us to assume that the 'first fruits' refers to the 'remnant' chosen by grace, including Paul himself (see particularly 16:5; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Thess 2:13)." 'Holy' here does not mean 'automatically saved', but, as in 1 Cor 7:14, to be regarded as 'holy by extension', not to be despised.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart
to/by God; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people
φυραμα, τος n lump
ρίζα, ης f root, source

Moo suggests that the 'root' is the patriarchs and that therefore the 'firstfruits' probably refers to the patriarchs also. "God's promise to the patriarchs has not been revoked, their descendants remain 'holy.' By this Paul does not mean that all their descendants will be saved. Rather, 'holy' (ἅγιος), as in the Old Testament and 1 Corinthians 7:14, means that the people continue to be 'set apart' by God for special attention. This continuing special relationship between God and Israel gives reason to hope for a future spiritual renewal of the people – a hope Paul spells out in verses 23-24."

Wright takes 'root' to be the Messiah. "The olive tree in the illustration [to come] is Israel, the true seed of Abraham, into which wild branches have been grafted but into which, far more easily, natural branches can be regrafted. And the crowning privilege of Israel, the human and historical focus of the nation's long story as God's people, is the Messiah (9:5). It is considerably easier, I think, to see the 'root' that 'bears' both Gentile and Jewish Christians (11:18) as the Messiah than as the patriarchs."

κλαδος, ου m branch

Romans 11:11-16 – Conclusion

"We conclude that 11:11-16 begins the argument that God still wants and intends to save more Jews by lining up Israel according to the flesh with both Adam and the Messiah, as the argument of chaps. 5-8 might have prepared us for. Israel has acted out both the trespass of Adam and the redemptive 'casting away' of the Messiah. Within this Paul addresses a warning to the Gentile Christians in Rome: even the Gentile mission in which he exults has this as its oblique purpose, to bring more Jews to faith and so to salvation. For Jews to embrace the gospel now, after all they have gone through, would be like resurrection from the dead. They are, after all, the relatives according to the flesh not only of the existing remnant, but of the Messiah himself." Wright.

Romans 11:17-24

Paul is well aware that in this extended picture he is portraying something that is 'against nature' (v. 24). It is improper to accuse him of ignorance of agricultural practice. "He intends us to understand that what God has done with the olive tree is a miracle of grace, not the sort of thing that people do all the time." Wright.

Romans 11:17

Εἰ δέ τινες τῶν κλάδων ἐξεκλάσθησαν, σὺ δὲ ἀγριέλαιος ὢν ἐνεκεντρίσθης ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ συγκοινωνὸς τῆς ρίζης τῆς πύθης τῆς ἐλαίας ἐγένου,

κλαδος see v.16

ἐξεκλάσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl

ἐκκλαω break off

ἀγριέλαιος, ου f wild olive tree

ἐνεκεντρίσθης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s

ἐγκεντριζω graft (of branches)

συγκοινωνος, ου m sharer, participant

ρίζα see v.16

πιότης, ητος f richness (of plants)

Many mss read τῆς ρίζης καὶ τῆς πιότητος but Metzger argues for the more difficult τῆς ρίζης τῆς πιότητος supported by א* B C Ψ

ἐλαία, ας f olive tree

For the olive tree as a symbol of Israel, see Jer 11:16,17. Paul uses this picture for the 'true' Israel – the 'Israel of God.' "The olive tree in the illustration clearly stands for the people of God, the people stretching back to Abraham and now including both Gentiles and Jews (the main OT reference is Jer 11:16-17: Israel as an olive tree whose branches are broken off in judgment; see also Ps 52:8; Hos 14:6). The Messiah (most probably) is the 'root' through whom the tree now gets its life (v. 17), the one who holds the whole thing in place, enabling Gentile members to gain life (v. 18)." Wright.

ἐγένου Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s γινομαι

Romans 11:18

μὴ κατακαυχῶ τῶν κλάδων· εἰ δὲ κατακαυχᾶσαι, οὐ σὺ τὴν ρίζαν βαστάζεις ἀλλὰ ἡ ρίζα σέ.

κατακαυχῶ Verb, pres midd/pass imperat, 2 s

κατακαuchaομαι boast against, despise, be proud, triumph over

Cf. 3:27-30.

βασταζω carry, bear, tolerate

Christian Gentiles are grafted into Israel. Hence the Gentiles are not to boast in the cutting off of Israel or to think of themselves as superior to the Jews. "The context reveals that the Gentiles were guilty of an arrogance toward Jews in general that extended to both Old Testament Israel and to Jewish Christians as well." Moo.
Paul's use of the second person singular throughout vv 17-24 emphasises his point.

Romans 11:19

ἐρεῖς οὖν· Ἐξεκλάσθησαν κλάδοι ἵνα ἐγὼ ἐγκεντρισθῶ.

ἐρεῖς Verb, fut act indic, 2 s λέγω
ἐγκεντρισθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s
ἐγκεντριζῶ see v.17

Romans 11:20

καλῶς· τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ ἐξεκλάσθησαν, σὺ δὲ τῇ πίστει ἔστηκας. μὴ ὑψηλὰ φρόνει, ἀλλὰ φοβοῦ·

ἀπιστία, ας f unbelief, unfaithfulness
πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις
ὑψηλος, η, ον high, proud, exalted, uplifted
φρονεω think, have in mind
φοβεομαι fear, be afraid (of), reverence

There is no room for pride in faith. Faith acknowledges an utter indebtedness to God.

Romans 11:21

εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῶν κατὰ φύσιν κλάδων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, οὐδὲ σοῦ φείσεται.

φυσις, εως f nature, natural condition
φειδομαι spare, refrain from

The evidence for the inclusion or omission of μη πως is finely balanced. Wright thinks it hard to explain as a gloss.

φείσεται Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
φειδομαι

"Here, too, there is a strange echo of an earlier passage, 8:32: God did not spare the beloved son. Once again, Paul is thinking of the Jews as the Messiah's people according to the flesh; but this time their fate is held up as a warning to Gentile Christians. This is what happens if you regard yourself as automatically part of God's people, instead of continuing by faith alone. Faith remains the only valid badge of membership; anything else will lead inevitably to 'boasting.'" Wright.

Romans 11:19-21 – Postscript

Wright comments, "What does the threat of being cut off actually mean? After the long argument of 3:21-8:39, it is highly unlikely that Paul would envisage individual Christians being justified by faith at one moment, assured of 'sharing in the glory of God' (5:2; 8:30), and at another moment losing both faith and salvation. On the contrary; his regular view is that when God begins a good work, through the gospel and the Spirit, that good work will come to completion (Phil 1:6). What is more likely is that this is a warning to an entire church (as, for instance, in the messages to the churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3). Individual Christians may be muddled or sinful, but they will be saved, even if only, in some cases, 'as through fire' (1 Cor 3:15). A church, however, that begins to boast in the way Paul is warning against may not last another generation. The only way forward is through faith; and faith, by its very nature, means dependence on God, rather than confidence in human status, birth, privilege or merit."

Romans 11:22

ἴδε οὖν χρηστότητα καὶ ἀποτομίαν θεοῦ· ἐπὶ μὲν τοὺς πεσόντας ἀποτομία, ἐπὶ δὲ σὲ χρηστότης θεοῦ, ἐὰν ἐπιμένῃς τῇ χρηστότητι, ἐπεὶ καὶ σὺ ἐκκοπήσῃ.

χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness, mercy

Cf. 2:4.

ἀποτομία, ας f severity, cutting off
πεσόντας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc pl πιπτω
fall, fall down, fall to one's ruin

Cf. v. 11.

ἐὰν if, even if, though
ἐπιμένῃς Verb, aor act subj, 2 s ἐπιμενω
remain, stay, persist in
ἐπει since, otherwise

Used here in the unusual sense of 'otherwise.'

ἐκκοπτω cut off, cut down, remove

Paul's words "function to counter the egotism that the Gentile Christians in Rome are displaying, not only toward Jews but also toward God himself." Moo.

Romans 11:23

κάκεινοι δέ, ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμένωσι τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ, ἐγκεντρισθήσονται· δυνατὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς πάλιν ἐγκεντρίσαι αὐτούς.

κάκεινος, η, ο contraction of και ἐκεινος
and that one, and he

ἀπιστία, ας f unbelief, unfaithfulness
ἐγκεντριζῶ v.17

δυνατος, η, ον possible, strong, powerful,
able
παλιν again, once more

Romans 11:24

εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐξεκόπης
ἀγριελαιίου καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ἐνεκεντρίσθης εἰς
καλλιέλαιον, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ
φύσιν ἐγκεντρίσθησονται τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐλαίᾳ.

φυσίς v.21

ἐξεκόπης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s ἐκκοπῶ
cut off, remove

ἀγριελαιῖος v.17

παρὰ preposition with contrary to
ἐνεκεντρίσθης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s
ἐγκεντριζῶ

καλλιέλαιος, οὐ f cultivated olive tree

πόσος, η, ον how much

μᾶλλον adv more, rather, more than that

ἰδῖος, α, ον one's own

ἐλαία v.17

"Paul stops short here of predicting that God will graft unbelieving Israel back into the people of God again – but only just short." His words "prepare the way for the explicit prediction of v.26." Moo.

The very picture Paul uses underlines two vital points:

- i) The blessings enjoyed by Gentile Christians are precisely the covenant blessings God promised to Abraham;
- ii) The only way for Jews to share in those blessings is the same way in which Gentile Christians have come to share in them, namely, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Both of these clear points pull the rug from under the feet of dispensational claims that Jews and Christians have separate promises and separate paths to salvation.

Romans 11:25

Οὐ γὰρ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ
μυστήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι,
ὅτι πάρωσις ἀπὸ μέρους τῷ Ἰσραὴλ γέγονεν
ἄχρι οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ,

θέλω wish, will

ἀγνοεῶ not know, be ignorant, fail to
understand

Indicating an important point is being made,
cf. 1:13; 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor 1:8; 1 Thess
4:13.

ἵνα μὴ ᾔτε ἑαυτοῖς φρόνιμοι cf. Prov 3:7.

μυστηριον, οὐ n secret, mystery (of
something formerly unknown but now
revealed)

Cf. Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:1; 4:1; 15:51; Eph 1:9;
3:3,4,9; Col 1:26,27; 2:2; 4:3; 1 Tim 3:9,16.
Paul uses the word 'mystery' of the plan and
purpose of God revealed through the gospel of
Jesus Christ – particularly of the inclusion of
the Gentiles in his plan. The mystery referred
to here is described in three clauses:

- i) Israel has experienced a hardening in part
- ii) Until the full number of the Gentiles has come in
- iii) And so all Israel will be saved.

παρὰ preposition with dat with, in the
presence of

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

παρωσις, εως f stubbornness, lack of
feeling

Cf. 11:7. Paul is not here making a new point
but is summarising what he has said earlier.

μερος, ος n part, piece, in part, partly

ἀπο μερους – in part, partly – refers to the fact
that the hardening was not total in its extent.
There remains 'a remnant'.

γένονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

ἄχρι (and ἄχρις), ἄχρι οὗ until

πλήρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

There is considerable discussion on the
meaning of the term πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν. It
may refer to the gospel having been preached
among all the nations and a people having
been saved from every tribe and tongue. Black
suggests that πλήρωμα is a technical term
taken from Jewish apocalyptic.

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

"Paul does not believe that all Gentiles
everywhere will believe the gospel, any more
than they have done so far. He believes, rather,
that there is a mode of 'completion' (perhaps,
when the gospel has been announced to all the
nations?) in God's mind... Until this has been
reached, final judgment will be delayed,
leaving those still impenitent in their state of
'hardening.' And this 'hardening,' as we saw,
leads to judgment, unless those subject to it
come to their senses, repent, and believe (2:3-
6)." Wright.

Romans 11:26

καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται· καθὼς
γέγραπται: Ἦξει ἐκ Σιών ὁ ῥύόμενος,
ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβ.

οὕτως adv. thus, in this way

πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ – there are four basic
interpretations:

- i) All Israel = the whole church, Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ, which constitutes the whole family of Abraham (Calvin, Wright).
- ii) All Israel = national Israel who will be converted at the return of Christ (Premillennialists);
- iii) A large part of ethnic Israel to be converted after the bulk of Gentile conversion (Hodge, Vos, Murray, Moo);
- iv) Elect Jews who are even now being added to the church (Bavink, Hendriksen).

Moo argues that "Paul here predicts the salvation of a significant number of Jews at the time of Christ's return in glory. The present 'remnant' of Israel will be expanded to include a much larger number of Jews who will enter the eternal kingdom along with converted Gentiles." Hence, he suggests, Paul applies the quotation from Isaiah 59:20-21 to Christ at his return.

Wright argues that there is no temporal sequence here; οὕτως means 'thus', 'in this way', 'by this means' not 'then'. There are no special terms for the salvation of Jews.

"Abraham's true family are 'not those of the law only, but all who share in Abraham's faith' (4:16); 'the Jew is the one in secret' (2:29); 'you are all one in the Messiah, Jesus, and, if you belong to the Messiah, you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise' (Gal 3:28-9); 'it is we who are "the circumcision," we who ... put no confidence in the flesh' (Phil 3:3-4). These are simply the tip of the iceberg. Paul has spent half his writing life telling his readers that Abraham's family, Israel, the Jews, the circumcision, are neither reaffirmed as they stand, nor 'superseded' by a superior group, nor 'replaced' with someone else – that is what he is arguing against in 11:13-24 – but transformed, through the death and resurrection of Israel's Messiah and the Spirit of Israel's own God, so that Israel is now, as was always promised, both less and more than the physical family of Abraham: less as in 9:6-13; more, as in 4:13-25.

"In particular, 9:6 gives the lie to the constantly repeated assertion that one cannot make 'Israel' in 11:26 mean something different from what it means in 11:25. 'Not all who are of Israel are in fact Israel'; Paul opened his great argument with a clear signal that he was redefining 'Israel,' and here the argument comes full circle...

"The phrase 'all Israel,' then, is best taken as a polemical redefinition, in line with Paul's redefinition of 'Jew' in 2:29, of 'circumcision' in 2:29 and Phil 3:3, and of 'seed of Abraham' in Romans 4, Galatians 3, and Rom 9:6-9. It belongs with what seems indubitably the correct reading of 'the Israel of God' in Gal 6:16."

This is the way in which God is saving 'all Israel'. Wright continues, "The best interpretation of what Paul is saying is this: 'A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in; and *that process is the way in which God will save "all Israel."*' This is in fulfilment of the scripture ...' (On the 'hardening' see Deut 29:4; Isa 6:9-10; 29:10; 2 Macc 6:12-15; see also the Commentary on 9:14-18.)"

σωθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s σωζω
save

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
ἦκω come, have come, be present

The text in Isaiah 59:20-21 reads 'The Redeemer will come *to* Zion,' but this is changed by Paul to read '*... from* Zion.' Paul may be assimilating the wording to other passages in the Old Testament which speak of deliverance coming 'from Zion' (e.g. Ps 14:7; 53:6; 110:2; Isa 2:3).

Moo thinks Paul may have used these words to imply that deliverance will come from *heaven*, i.e. the heavenly Zion.

But Wright argues that Paul is not using this text to speak of the Parousia. Again, he argues that Paul has the entire context of the quotation in mind. "The backbone of the scriptural citation comes from Isa 59:20-21. Isaiah 59 opens with a lament for Israel's continuing sinfulness; this includes vv. 7-8, which Paul has quoted as part of his indictment in 3:15-17. Then we read of YHWH himself intervening, wearing righteousness as a breastplate and salvation as a helmet (v. 17). YHWH will bring terrible judgment, so as to be feared by the nations of the earth, from east to west (vv. 18-19). In that context, 'a deliverer will come to Zion [or: he will come to Zion as deliverer], and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression.' At least, that is the meaning of the MT. The LXX has already altered this to mean 'the deliverer will come on behalf of Zion, and will turn ungodliness away from Jacob.' Paul has altered this again; the deliverer, he says, shall come out of Zion (ἔξει ἐκ Σιων ὁ ῥυόμενος ...). Perhaps he still has Deuteronomy in mind as well, because in 33:2, the beginning of the blessing of Moses, which ends with the salvation of Israel (33:28-29), we find 'The Lord comes from Sinai' (Κύριος ἐκ Σινα ἦκει ...). So far from pulling the text toward the parousia, he seems rather to be emphasising the opposite: the redeemer, by whom he must mean Jesus the Messiah, 'comes' from Zion into all the world, like YHWH 'coming' from Sinai to establish the covenant and give Israel its inheritance. As the Messiah does so, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob. Once again texts that were unambiguously about YHWH in the Scripture are taken by Paul to refer to Jesus. And once again texts that looked forward to a future event are taken by Paul, not indeed to exclude the many still-future elements of his gospel (see Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15), but to highlight the significance of what is already happening through the gospel."

ῥυομαι save, rescue

ἀποστρεφω turn away, remove

ἀσεβεια, ας f godlessness, wickedness

Paul alters the text of his quotation to shift the focus from Israel's repentance to God's sovereign act of removing their sin.

Romans 11:27

καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἢ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

παρα preposition with gen with

διαθηκη, ης covenant, will, testament

ὅταν when

ἀφέλωμαι Verb, aor midd subj, 1 s ἀφαιρεω
take away

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

Wright comments, "The substance of the covenant is this: God will take away Israel's sins. This is not, then, an alternative 'covenant,' a way to salvation for Jews and Jews only, irrespective of the entire apocalyptic salvation history Paul has laid out in 9:6-10:21. Nor has it much to do with the 'pilgrimage of the nations to Zion,' anticipated in some biblical and post-biblical prophecy (e.g., Isa 2:2-3; Ps Sol 17:26-46). At most it would be an ironic reversal of that whole idea. This is the same covenant renewal Paul has spoken of again and again in the letter: The hope for Israel according to the flesh lies not in clinging to its privileged status and hoping that, despite everything, God will in the end make a way of salvation other than that revealed in Jesus the Messiah and by the Spirit. Nor does it make any sense to suppose that in the last minute massive numbers of Jews alive at the time will suddenly arrive at Christian faith. What would Gentiles alive at that time say about God's impartiality, one of the major themes of the whole letter? What might they say about God's constancy? No: the hope of salvation lies in the Messiah as the τέλος νόμου ... the Torah's true goal, and in the renewal that remains available through him. God's salvation must be found where God has accomplished it, revealed it, and proclaimed it."

And Wright concludes his comments on these verses as follows: "This, Paul is saying, is how God is saving 'All Israel,' the people promised long ago to Abraham. God is doing it, not by having two tracks, a Jewish one and a Christian one ...; not by having a 'Christian' scheme in the present and then re-inventing a 'Jewish one at the last minute; nor by suddenly relenting and allowing a partial last-minute version of the 'favoured nation clause' that had been sternly ruled out up to that point; but by God doing, throughout the period that begins with the Messiah's death and resurrection, what had always been promised in Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and elsewhere. This is probably the implication of the last clause of v. 27: 'Whenever I take away their sins' (ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν ...). That is, God is providing in the present time the path and the means of covenant renewal, of forgiveness, of healing and transformation, of life in and by God's Spirit: the way (in other words) of faith. Paul meant what he said in 11:23, picking up 10:1-13: They can be grafted in again, if they do not remain in unbelief. That rules out any suggestion of a mode of salvation, or path to salvation, which does not involve the faith spoken of in chap. 10. I therefore conclude that in this passage Paul speaks of the ultimate salvation of all God's people, not only Gentiles but also an increasing number of Jews, a salvation to be brought about through the suspension of judgment (involving the 'hardening' of those who do not believe) so that the gospel could spread to the Gentile world, and so by that means ethnic Jews might become 'jealous' and so come to believe in their own Messiah."

Romans 11:28

κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἐχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας·

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel
ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

"The enmity referred to may be from Israel toward God or from God toward Israel. It is best to take it both ways: hostility exists between God and his people Israel because of their refusal to submit to God's righteousness in Christ (see 10:3)." Moo.

ἐκλογη, ης f election, choosing
ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved
πατηρ, πατρος m father

"... It certainly does not mean that every Jew from that day to this, or every Jew in some hypothetical final generation, will eventually be saved. It means, rather, that God's own desire, like Paul's, is for them to find salvation in the full and final way it has now been achieved and unveiled. God has not written them off." Wright.

Romans 11:29

ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κληῖσις τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἀμεταμελητος, ον free from regret,
irrevocable

χαρισμα, τος n gift (from God)

Cf. 5:15-16; 6:23.

κλησις, εως f call, calling

God's word has not and cannot fail.

Romans 11:30

ὡσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλεήθητε τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ,

ὡσπερ as, even as, just as

ποτέ once, formerly, at one time

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

ἠλεήθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl ἔλεαω

and ἔλεεω be merciful; pass. receive

mercy

ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience

Romans 11:31

οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπειθήσαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ νῦν ἐλεηθῶσιν·

οὕτως v.26

ὑμετερος, α, ον possessive adj of 2 pl your

A dative of advantage – 'for the sake of ...'

ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion

ἐλεηθῶσιν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl ἔλεαω

and ἔλεεω

Some MSS read νυν ἐλεηθωσιν (x B D^{ef}) but the νυν is omitted by many MSS while ὕστερον (subsequently) is added in its place by others. The νυν is probably original being the harder reading (Barrett, Black, Moo). The reading with νυν suggests that the Jews are already being gathered in.

Wright adds, "The mercy that is shown to Israel according to the flesh is not something for which they will have to wait until some putative final day; it is not, therefore, something that can get the church off the hook by postponing a serious reckoning with contemporary Judaism until a conveniently delayed eschaton – as the laissez-faire thought of the Enlightenment might urge. It is available 'now'; and Paul's kinsfolk can, he hopes and believes, be provoked into seeking it by being 'jealous' of the way in which Israel's privileges are being enjoyed by the Gentiles. And this is precisely where the section began (9:1-5)."

Romans 11:32

συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθειαν ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ.

Cf. Gal 3:22.

συνέκλεισεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
συγκλειω make or keep prisoner
ἀπειθεια, ας f disobedience
ἐλεήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐλεαω and
ἐλεεω

"God has brought all men into a position which merits nothing but his wrath in order that his relations with them may be marked by nothing but mercy." Barrett.

Romans 11:33-36

"The concluding doxology emphasises the sovereignty and inscrutability of God. Paul does not think that God's ways and purposes are now still invisible; they have been revealed in the Messiah. But he does believe that without the revelation granted in the gospel nobody would ever have worked them out. And yet, seen with hindsight, God's way of putting the world to rights, God's way of doing all things from creation to new creation, turns out to be spectacularly right, full of wisdom and insight, of appropriate judgment and overflowing mercy." Wright.

Romans 11:33

Ἵψ βάρθους πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ· ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ.

ὦ Ο!

βαθος, ους n depth, greatness
πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth
σοφια, ας f wisdom, insight, intelligence

Could be translated either:

i) ... the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (NIV); or

ii) ... the depth of the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God (Barrett, Cranfield, Wright).

γνῶσις, εως f knowledge, understanding
ἀνεξεραυνητος, ου unfathomable, i.e.
impossible of explanation by human
minds

κριμα, τος n judgement, verdict,
condemnation, punishment

I.e. his "executive" decision for the direction of salvation history (see Ps 19:9; 36:6; 119:75)."
Μοο.

ἀνεξιχνιαστος, ου untraceable, i.e.
impossible of understanding by human
minds, unfathomable

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey

"Human arrogance seizes upon this inscrutability as a reason to doubt, to mock, or to question God's wisdom or goodness; the humility proper to faith stands in awe that the God of all creation is the God of the gospel of Jesus, whose utter trustworthiness was demonstrated once for all in Jesus' resurrection." Wright.

Romans 11:34

Τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου; ἢ τίς σύμβουλος αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο;

The three questions of this and the following verse may correspond in reverse order to the three attributes in v.33, i.e. knowledge, wisdom and riches.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω
νοῦς, νοος, νοι, νοῦν m mind, thought,
purpose

συμβουλος, ου m counsellor, adviser

The quotation is from Isaiah 40:13. Yet Christ, by his saving work, discloses the mind of God to us.

Wright comments, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" asks Isaiah (40:13) at the start of his mighty exposition of God's creative power, the power now placed at the service of Israel-in-exile, God's unchangeable might now to be unleashed to bring about the return from exile through the work of the servant. Paul has cast himself in the role of present-day prophet, announcing the Isaianic gospel of the servant (10:14-17); now he celebrates Isaiah's God, the one through whom that gospel is initiated and confirmed."

Romans 11:35

ἢ τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ;

προέδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s προδιδομι
give first

ἀνταποδίδωμι repay, return

Cf. Job 41:3. "God is debtor to none, his favour is never compensation." Murray. "If the first two questions remind us of how far we are from fully understanding God, the final question reminds us of God's grace, a great theme of these chapters." Moo.

Romans 11:36

ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα· αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

Paul's words express his understanding of the plan of salvation. They are not a reflection of Hellenistic philosophy such as Stoicism – though Paul here uses similar language. Paul's words call us to humility before God.

δοξα, ης f glory
αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Chapters 12-16 which follow are an exposition of what it means to give God all the glory.

Postscript

"In Romans 9-11 Paul belongs in the tradition of the great psalmists. He starts with an urgent problem; he wrestles with it in grief and prayer; he retells the story of Israel, laying out God's acts from of old and in the present. Finally he bursts through to a paean of praise. From this point in the letter we look back and see, as glorious mountain peaks, 4:24-25 and particularly 8:28-30 and 38-39. But where we now stand is higher than them all, so high that some climbers feel dizzy and prefer to return quickly to the lower slopes. Paul is not of such a mind. He will stay and give praise. This, he implies, is what we humans, we Jews, were made for." Wright.

Romans 12 ff.

"Paul has briefly touched on the practical significance of what he writes throughout Romans 1-11 (see, e.g., 6:11-13, 19; 11:18,20). But beginning in chapter 12 Paul turns his full attention to the ethical implications of the gospel." Moo.

Wright, commenting particularly on the opening verses, says, "The underlying thrust of these verses is that Christians, Jew and Gentile alike, now offer to the one true God the full and final sacrificial worship in which Israel's worship (cf. 9:4) is made complete."

Romans 12:1

Παρακαλῶ σὺν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

παρακαλεῶ exhort, encourage, urge
οἰκτιρμος, ου m compassion, mercy

"These are the tender mercies of God, the riches of his compassion (cf. 2 Cor 1:3; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12)." Murray.

The cognate verb has occurred in Paul's quotation of Exod 33:19 at 9:15. "It stands here as a way of summing up 'the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge' as invoked in 11:33." Wright.

παριστημι and παριστανω present, bring into one's presence

Cf. 6:13,16,19.

σωμα, τος n body

Perhaps in deliberate contrast with Greek philosophy which paid little attention to the body in its ethical teaching. Here standing for the whole person and every aspect of its life.

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim
ζῶσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s ζαω live, be alive

"As new covenant Christians, we no longer offer animal sacrifices; we now offer ourselves as 'living sacrifices.' 'Living' perhaps has a theological meaning: We offer ourselves as people who have been brought from death to life (see 6:13). This may, however, be reading more into the word than we should. Paul probably wants us simply to contrast ourselves with the dead animal sacrifices of the Old Testament (see also John 6:51). But God demands sacrifices that are 'holy,' that is, apart from profane matters and dedicated to his service." Moo.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart to/by God

εὐάρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

It is Christ's death which makes the believer acceptable to God, cf. 14:18. Wright insists that the full sense of 'well-pleasing' should not be watered down. "Paul insists in several passages that Christian worship and obedience, holiness and unity do indeed please God, and if we have articulated his other doctrines (e.g., justification) in such a way as to exclude this notion, we have clearly misrepresented him. (see 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20 – all the same word as here; see also the use of ἀρέσκω ... in 1 Cor 7:32; 1 Thess 2:4; 4:1; and, most strikingly, Rom 8:8, where 'those in the flesh' cannot please God but, it is strongly implied, 'those in the Spirit' can and do.) In fact, the alternative to 'pleasing God' is not simply living at a morally neutral state, neither pleasing nor displeasing; it may well be 'to please oneself' (15:1), or (in a bad sense) 'to please other people' (Gal 1:10). If we want to enquire further as to how it can be that a human being, a creature and a sinner, can please the living God, the holy creator, the logic of the letter as a whole, and of Paul's arguments elsewhere, suggests that it might have something to do with being restored in God's image (see 1:18-25 and the Commentary; 8:29; Col 3:10)."

λογικος, η, ον rational, spiritual
λατρεία, ας f service, worship

Barrett comments that Paul means a worship consisting not in outward rites but in the movement of man's being. He considers that this is described better as 'spiritual worship' than 'rational'.
Murray prefers 'rational' (though for similar reasons), i.e. worship or service which involves the mind and reason rather than being mechanical.
Moo thinks the meaning is 'informed' or 'understanding.' "We give ourselves to God as his sacrifices when we understand his grace and its place in our lives. We offer ourselves not ignorantly, like animals brought to the slaughter, but intelligently and willingly. This is the worship that pleases God."

Romans 12:2

καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

"The leading thought of verse 2 is the pattern of behaviour. In connection with the concrete and practical details of life there is no more searching question than that of the pattern of thought and action which we follow. To what standards do we conform?" Murray.

συσχηματίζομαι be conformed to, be shaped by, live after the pattern of

On use of this and the following verb, cf. Phil 3:21.

αἰών, αἰῶνος m age, world order, eternity

All that belongs to this present age as distinct from the age to come. Cf. 1 Cor 7:29-31; 1 Jn 2:17. "We must have patterns that abide, patterns that are the earnest of and are continuous with the age to come." Murray. Paul's argument here is based on his 'two-age' understanding of salvation history, rooted in Jewish thinking but transformed by the coming of Christ. The age to come has broken into history with the death and resurrection of Christ. The old has gone; the new has come. "Paul sees the new age, long awaited within Judaism, as having broken in to the present age in the Messiah, and understands Christians as living at their point of overlap, needing constantly to reject the pressures of the present age and to be open to the life of the new, the life offered in the Messiah." Wright.

μεταμορφοῦμαι be changed in form, be transformed

ἀνακαινώσις, εὖς f renewal

νοῦς, νοός, νοί, νοῦν m mind, thought, reason, understanding

A call to have the mind of the Messiah (1 Cor 2:16; also see Phil 2:5f. though a different word is used).

"Sanctification is a process of revolutionary change in that which is the centre of consciousness. This sounds a fundamental note of biblical ethic. It is the thought of progression and strikes at the stagnation, complacency and pride of achievement so often characterising Christians. It is not the beggarly notion of second blessing that the apostle propounds but that of constant renewal, of metamorphosis in the seat of the consciousness." Murray. Cf. 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16; Col 3:10; Titus 3:5.

δοκιμάζω test, prove, discern

Prove by experience – learn how good and satisfying it is to do God's will, cf. 1 Tim 6:6. "The Christian is not meant to rely simply on lists of ethical commands, but to be able to discern (NRSV), to test and approve (NIV), what God's will is... There is such a thing as knowing and doing God's will, and ... we are commanded to pursue it, as Paul indicates in 1 Cor 3:18-23, humbly but confidently." Wright.

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

εὐάρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

τέλειος, α, ον complete, whole, perfect

Romans 12:1-2 – Postscript

"Verses 1 and 2 offer a fine balance between sacrifice and fulfilment, between an ethic of self-denial and one of self-discovery. Even the self-discovery, however, is the discovery of the *new* self that one is called to become in Christ and by the Spirit." Wright.

Romans 12:3

Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἐκάστω ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως.

Paul turns now to the behaviour of Christians one towards another. It is in our corporate life that the inbreaking of the kingdom is made visible. The γὰρ links this section to vv. 1-2, as Wright puts it, "Offer God the true worship; be transformed by having your minds renewed; because you should be thinking as one person in the Messiah."

δοθείσης Verb, aor pass ptc, f gen s δίδωμι

Paul is gently reminding the Romans of his authority as an apostle, a derived authority: God has graciously equipped him for this particular task and has also laid hold of Paul's readers in grace.

ὑπερφρονεῶ hold too high an opinion of oneself

δεῖ must, should, ought

φρονεῶ think, have in mind

This is the verb used in Phil 2 of the need for Christians to have the same mind/mode of thinking that shaped Christ himself.

σωφρονεῶ be in one's right mind

ἐκάστος, η, ον each, every

μερίζω divide, assign, apportion

μέτρον, ον n measure, degree, quantity

πίστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

A Christian's opinion of themselves should be in proportion not to their natural capacities but to God's gifts. If this is so, they will never be boastful, for they will remember that they have nothing that they have not received (1 Cor 4:7). Perhaps this is Paul's meaning – the measure by which the Christian is to measure all things is faith which excludes all self-congratulation. I.e. there is a single measure for all (so Wright – each person stands only by faith, cf. 11:19-25).

Romans 12:4

καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πράξιν,

καθάπερ as, just as

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, a, an, single

σώμα, τος n body

Cf. 1 Cor 12.

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου much, many

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, ος n

member, bodily part

πραξις, εως f what one does, function

Romans 12:5

οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη.

οὕτως thus, in this way

ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ Christians, together, are the presence and expression of Christ on earth.

ἀλλήλων, οἱς, ος one another

το δε καθ εἷς ἀλλήλων μελη 'and each member belongs to all the others'.

Romans 12:6

ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,

The participle ἔχοντες seems to correspond to no finite verb. Barrett understands it as an imperative. "since we have ... let us ..."

χαρίσμα, τος n gift (from God)

Varied gifts given to different individuals for the corporate edification of the church. Cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6.

δοθείσαν Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s δίδωμι

διαφορός, ον different

εἴτε if, whether

This, like other such lists in Paul's writings, is not intended to be a definitive list; it is an *ad hoc* listing of examples. Comparing this list with that in 1 Corinthians 12, Wright comments, "Possibly this list is deliberately general, emphasising 'ordinary' rather than 'extraordinary' gifts, because Paul does not actually know what special gifts the Christians in Rome may possess. His main point is that just as God has given him grace for his task (v.3), so God gives the church grace for its multiple and mutually supportive tasks, and whatever they are they must be exercised to the full extent of one's powers."

ἀναλογία, ας f proportion

"The prophet, when he speaks God's word, is not to go beyond that which God has given him to speak. But he is to exercise the gift to its full extent." Murray (so also Wright).

Romans 12:7

εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ,

διακονια, ας f ministry, service

Often used of ministry of the word, but could refer to ministry of mercy (cf. Acts 6:1-6). Furthermore, all Christians are to be servants – the term does not refer to an *office* but to a *function* in which all are to engage.

διδασκω teach

διδασκαλια, ας f what is taught, teaching

Romans 12:8

εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει, ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, comfort, counsel

μεταδιδούς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s

μεταδιδωμι share, give, impart

ἀπλοτης, ητος f generosity, liberality

Suggests an absence of any ulterior motives or aims.

προϊστάμενος Verb, pres midd ptc, m nom s
προϊστημι be a leader, have authority over

σπουδη, ης f earnestness, diligence, eagerness

ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show kindness

ἰλαροτης, ητος f cheerfulness

Romans 12:9-13

"There now follows a series of clauses containing only participles, with no finite verb. It is evident and undisputed that these participles must be understood as imperatives, 'Abhor', 'cleave' etc." Barrett. Barrett suggests that this reflects Rabbinic Hebrew usage for lists of rules and that this list may even come from such a Semitic source. Cf. 1 Thess 5:12–22 and 1 Pet 3:8–12.

Romans 12:9

Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστρυγόντες τὸ πονηρόν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ.

ἀνυποκριτος, ον sincere, genuine

Dunn comments, "As in 1 Cor 12–13, Paul's thought moves from talk of the body of Christ to the theme of love ... subsumed under the appeal of vv 1–2."

Moo suggests that the verbless first clause is a heading to what follows, 'Love that is sincere will be ...' It introduces the many facets of sincere love listed in vv.9b-13. Nygren translates loosely, "This is what love is like", and Wright suggests, "These are the ways ... in which love will show itself to be the true version rather than the counterfeit."

ἀποστρυεω hate

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

κολλαομαι unite oneself with

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

Cf. 1 Thess 5:21–22. "Our attachment to the good is to be that of the devotion illustrated in the bond of marriage." Murray.

Romans 12:10

τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,

φιλαδελφια, ας f brotherly love

Barrett comments that the term does not seem to have been used metaphorically before the New Testament.

ἀλληλων, ος, ους one another

φιλοστοργος, ον loving, devoted

"With v 10 the body imagery gives way to that of the family... The Christian use of these typically family words does rather stand out in its consistency, and the combination of both words underscores the point. This too is part of the redefinition of boundaries in which Paul engages – a sense of family belongingness which transcended immediate family ties and did not depend on natural or ethnic bonds. The organic imagery of the interrelatedness of the body requires to be supplemented by the emotional bond of family affection." Dunn.

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

προηγεομαι out-do, lead the way (τιμη ἀλληλους π. perhaps be eager to show respect to one another)

'Showing the way to one another in respect.'

"Another side of such love is the readiness to recognize strengths and to praise attainments of family members." Dunn.

Romans 12:11

τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες,

σπουδη, ης f earnestness, eagerness, zeal

ὀκνηρος, α, ον lazy, troublesome

ζεω boil – with enthusiasm or with devotion

'Aglow in the Spirit'

'Serving the Lord' "probably functions once again as something of a control or check on what might otherwise be interpreted as an invitation to unbridled enthusiasm. The love which binds a congregation together needs that inner spontaneity bubbling up within if it is to remain fresh and personally real, but it can easily become too experiential and 'frothy' unless it expresses also the fundamental commitment to Christ as Lord and is motivated by the desire to serve him." Dunn.

Some few Western MSS read *καίρω* in place of *κυριω*.

Romans 12:12

τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες,

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

"As earlier, ἐλπις has its usual Hebraic sense of confident trust (sure hope) rather than the more Greek sense of tentative expectation (hoping for better things); see on 4:18." Dunn.

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

"The association of hope, rejoicing, affliction, and patient endurance is one which came naturally to Paul (cf. 5:2–5), and 'persistence in prayer' as an expression of 'endurance in affliction' was equally natural (cf. 8:18–27)." Dunn.

θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering
ὑπομενω endure, remain behind

"The sequence again echoes 1 Cor 12–13 (here 13:7)." Dunn

ὑπομενω should not be given too passive a connotation. It implies a positive attitude to suffering.

προσκαρτερω devote oneself to

Dunn says that this is "an even stronger, or more positive, word – 'to busy oneself with, be devoted to, hold fast to or persevere in something.'" He comments further, "Such hope sustains the patient endurance in suffering and the persistence in prayer. Likewise it is itself sustained by prayer; for in the midst of suffering only an uninhibited crying out to God can provide sufficient safety valve for the pressures of potential despair."

Romans 12:13

ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

χρεία, ας f need, want

"Here personal difficulties, particularly financial and daily necessities are probably in view (cf. Acts 2:45; 4:35; 6:3; 20:34; 28:10; Eph 4:28; Phil 2:25; 4:16; Titus 3:14; 1 John 3:17)... Paul's talk later and elsewhere of a 'sharing' (κοινωνία) in the sense of 'gift or contribution' 'for the saints' (15:26; 2 Cor 8:4) suggests strongly that Paul has the collection particularly in mind ... but that would only be a particular example of a more general involvement in common concern for the bodily needs of one another." Dunn.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

"By describing the members of the churches as 'saints' Paul reminds his listeners once again that they are the eschatological equivalent to the Israel of old. And though the boundaries of the people of God have been redrawn in terms of grace and faith rather than of physical descent and law, the ancient obligations of Israel to care for the disadvantaged within the wider community have not been withdrawn or redefined, but still remain part of the scriptural definition of the will of God." Dunn.

κοινωνεω share, take part, contribute
φιλοξενία, ας f hospitality
διωκω seek after, pursue, persecute

I.e. the hospitality is not to be grudging. "Within Judaism the memory of Israel's experience as 'strangers in Egypt' was a powerful reinforcement of the impulse to hospitality (especially Lev 19:34 and Deut 10:19)... Hospitality was a key feature of Jesus' ministry, both in his dependence on it (Mark 1:29–31; 14:3; Luke 10:38–42) and in his practice and commendation of it as a model of divine generosity (Mark 2:15–17; Matt 11:19//Luke 7:34; Luke 14:1–24). The early mission would likewise depend on such hospitality (e.g., Mark 6:8–11 pars.; Acts 16:15; 18:3; see also 16:1–2, 13, 23)... Subsequently hospitableness is regarded as a desirable characteristic in a bishop (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)." Dunn.

Romans 12:14-21

"In vv 14–21 Paul broadens his perspective from the internal relationships within and among the Christian congregations to take in their relationships with the wider community within which they had to live and make their living. Paul evidently was mindful of the political realities which confronted these new small groups within the cities of the Roman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean. In particular he would be aware of the fact that the little churches in Rome were an endangered species, vulnerable to further imperial ruling against Jews and societies. His first concern therefore is to urge a policy of avoiding trouble by refusing retaliation to provocations and by responding with positive good to all hostile acts directed against them." Dunn.

Romans 12:14

εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε.

Paul now shifts to the use of the imperative.

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

"The idea 'bless' comes wholly from the Hebrew בָּרַךְ and gains its distinctive character from the distinctively Jewish idea of God blessing his human creatures, where 'bless' has a much stronger force than the Greek εὐλογεῖν – 'bless' in the sense of bestow grace and peace, sustain and prosper (as in the classic formulation of the Aaronic benediction – Num 6:24–26). When one person blesses another, the clear implication is that he calls on Yahweh to bestow his favour on the other, although a particular blessing (expression of that favour) could of course be requested (as in Gen 27:27–29; 49:28; Deut 33; 1 Sam 2:20). By way of antithesis καταρᾶσθαι obviously means to call on God to withhold his favour (both specific and providential), and, possibly, also to act as a power for ill in the life and circumstances of the one cursed (e.g., 2 Sam 16:5–13; 2 Kgs 2:24)." Dunn.

ὕμας is omitted by p⁴⁶ B and a few other sources.

καταραομαι curse, place a curse upon

Cf. Matt 5:38-48; Lk 6:27-35; 23:34; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Pet 2:20-23; 3:9. A distinctively Christian attitude; "It is hard to imagine this teaching becoming the norm in the church, as it clearly did from the very start, unless it was firmly rooted in the words and example of Jesus himself." Wright.

Romans 12:15-16

"The fact that vv 15–16 seem to focus attention back once again more on the internal relationships of the Christian congregations should not be seen merely as a disruption of the wider concern. On the contrary, these verses should be taken as some indication of the degree to which Paul saw the life of the Christian churches as integrated into the wider life in the city. The call for sensitive sympathy with those caught in the ups and downs of daily life (v 15), for a proper modesty of self-esteem and for a genuine solidarity with the most lowly ranked or disadvantaged within the congregation (v 16) is of a piece with the positive will to bless the persecutor (v 14) and to do good to the malicious and spiteful (v 17). Paul did not see a Christian's life as divided neatly into two sets of attitudes and obligations – one to fellow believers, the other to nonbelievers. The same sympathetic concern and positive outgoing love should be the rule in all cases – a love which does not reckon or depend on receiving a positive response in turn. For this not only Jesus' words but Jesus' example provided the model which would be not far from the surface of Paul's mind." Dunn.

Romans 12:15

χαίρειν μετὰ χαϊρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων.

χαίρω v.12

κλαιω weep, cry; trans weep for

Cf. 1 Cor 12:26. Dunn comments "The parallel with 1 Cor 12:26 and Phil 2:17–18 suggests that Paul had the internal relationships of the Christian congregations particularly in view, but there is no reason he should not have had wider associations in view as well." Wright goes further, commenting, "In this context it may be best to read vv. 15-16, not as commands about the internal life of the church, but as suggesting how Christians should live alongside their pagan neighbours."

Romans 12:16

τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες, μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι. μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς.

Cf. Phil 2:1-4.

ἀλλήλων, οἱ, οὗς v.10

φρονεω think, have in mind

"Paul would want Christian congregations to decide as far as possible by consensus, by seeking the mind of the Spirit on matters affecting their life and worship together (cf. I Cor 2:16; 6:5; 7:40; 14:37–38), even if in matters of personal lifestyle different views and practices were quite acceptable (see chap. 14)." Dunn.

ύψηλος, η, ον high, proud, exalted

'Do not cherish proud thoughts.'

ταπεινος, η, ον humble, lowly, poor
συναπαγομαι associate with humble
people or be engaged in humble tasks

ταπεινοίς can be taken as neuter, in which case the sense is 'be engaged in humble tasks', but it is more likely to be a reference to humble people, since this is the only use of ταπεινός elsewhere in the NT. Dunn comments, "Here again Paul takes it for granted that Christians should live in accordance with this insight, as also commended and exemplified by Jesus (in particular Matt 5:3–5; 11:29; 18:4; 23:12; cf. Mark 10:42–45). The ambiguity of ταπεινός (neuter or masculine) cannot be resolved, and may have been deliberate (Barrett), and is usually left open—menial or lowly tasks, or people held in low esteem by the influential and powerful."

φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

'Do not be wise in your own estimation.' Cf. Prov 3:7.

Romans 12:17

μηδενι κακον αντι κακου αποδιδοντες·
προνοουμενοι καλα ενωπιον παντων
ανθρωπων·

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
αντι prep with gen for, in place of
αποδιδωμι render, give back, repay

"The exhortation to return evil with good ... is presented as more distinctively Christian [than the *lex talionis*] (Matt 5:38–48//Luke 6:27–36; see further on 12:14, but also on 13:10). It quickly became a firm part of Christian parenesis (1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9; Pol. *Phil.* 2.2)." Dunn.

προνοεω have in mind to do

"The basic meaning of προνοεω is 'think beforehand,' so 'take into consideration' or 'take thought for,' blending into the proactive sense 'provide for' (LSJ). Both here and in 2 Cor 8:21 the thought seems to be more of the need for sensitivity to the views of others than of active material provision, as in 1 Tim 5:8." Dunn.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, beautiful

Not only do well, but manifestly do well

ενωπιον before, in the presence of

'In the sight of all.'

Romans 12:18

ει δυνατον, το εξ υμων μετα παντων
ανθρωπων ειρηνευοντες·

δυνατος, η, ον possible, able
ειρηνευω live or be at peace

Cf. 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Thess 5:13 also Heb 12:14. "Paul is realistic: he knows that there will be many times when living at peace with every other inhabitant of the street, let alone the city, will be impossible. But he summons Christians to make every effort in that direction." Wright.

Romans 12:19

μη εαυτους εκδικουντες, αγαπητοι, αλλα δοτε
τοπον τη οργη, γεγραπται γαρ· Εμοι
εκδικησις, εγω ανταποδωσω, λεγει κυριος.

εκδικεω avenge, punish
αγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"God's people are loved by God and must not imagine themselves bereft of his care and hence needing to take matters into their own hands." Wright.

δοτε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδωμι
τοπος, ου m place

οργη, ης f wrath, anger

I.e. God's wrath.

"In the context of Rome, the advice may not seem to have been very necessary for politically powerless Christian churches, but the growing and increasingly desperate activity of the Zealots in Palestine was warning enough of how an oppressed people or persecuted minority might turn to acts of revenge, and the Christian congregations would not need reminding of how vulnerable they were to hostile pressures." Dunn.

γεγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Cf. Deut 32:35 also Heb 10:30.

εμοι Pronoun, dat s εγω

εκδικησις, εως f retribution, rendering of
justice

ανταποδωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s

ανταποδιδωμι repay, return

Romans 12:20

αλλα εαν πεινα ο εχθρος σου, ψωμιζε αυτον·
εαν διψα, ποτιζε αυτον· τουτο γαρ ποιων
ανθρακας πυρος σωρευσεις επι την κεφαλην
αυτου.

εαν if

πειναω be hungry

εχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

ψωμιζω feed, give food to

διψαω be thirsty, thirst for

ποτιζω give to drink, water

Cf. Lk 6:27-30.

ἀνθραξ, ακος m charcoal (ἀ. πυρος
burning coals)

πυρ, ος n fire

σωρευω heap up

κεφαλη, ης f head

This verse is a quotation from Prov 25:21,22. There is some debate over the meaning of these words. It *could* be a picture of divine judgment, i.e. kindness will result in further judgment on these people by God. However, it is more likely that, in context, the meaning is that they might be convicted of their wrong behaviour and perhaps repent and turn to God – a burning shame leading to repentance (so Cranfield).

In countering the suggestion that the burning coals signify judgment, Dunn comments, "Such a negative tone (do good to your enemy so that his punishment will be all the more severe) fits ill with the context: the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount breathes through these verses (cf. Dodd, Schmidt) with a consistent call to open-handed goodness and generous response unmotivated by malice – vv 14, 17, 19, 21. In particular the ἀλλά sets v 20 in some contrast to the idea of leaving the enemy to God's judgment; to read the contrast as 'Leave your enemy to God, but try to increase his guilt by your acts of kindness' strikes a jarring note. And it hardly fits comfortably either with the positive thrust of v 20a–b (cf. 2 Kgs 6:22) or with the final call to 'overcome evil by good'... As already noted, therefore, the ἀλλά is best taken as calling for a positive response to hostility (by meeting it with acts of kindness) and not simply as a passive response (leave it to God)... Here too the Targum of Prov 25:21–22 is probably important since it adds: '... on his head and God will hand him over to you' or 'will make him your friend' (Str-B, 3:302), that is, 'you will win him' in a missionary sense... Without being able to specify the meaning precisely therefore we probably have sufficient reason to conclude that Paul would have intended the Proverbs citation to bear a positive meaning: that is, as explicating and underlining the importance of meeting an enemy with hospitality and kindness."

Wright adds, "The 'coals of fire' are almost certainly intended as the burning shame of remorse for having treated someone badly... The point is then that treating enemies kindly is not only appropriate behaviour in its own right, refusing the vengeance that would usurp God's prerogative; it may also have the effect of turning their hearts."

Romans 12:21

μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

νικῶ Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 s νικῶ
conquer, overcome

κακος v.17

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

This is the way in which God himself has proceeded against his enemies. "The present tense indicates a call for dedicated persistence." Dunn.

"To be consumed with vengeful thoughts, or to be led into putting such thoughts into practice, is to keep evil in circulation, whereas the way to overthrow evil, rather than perpetuating it, is to take its force and give back goodness instead. As with the commands of verses 14 and 17, we may question whether someone in Paul's tradition of Torah-based zeal could have come to this position had it not been for the example and teaching of the Messiah himself." Wright.

Romans 13:1-7

Paul's argument in these verses may have been prompted by specific difficulties in the Roman church or he may have sought to lay down guiding principles for a church at the centre of the Roman world and its government. At the time when Paul was writing there was increasing unease within Judaism at the Roman occupation of Judea, unease which would eventually lead to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This may also have been reflected in tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians regarding attitudes to the power of Rome.

In context, these verses come between a section calling Christians not to resist evil or take revenge, but to leave vengeance to God, and verses which call the Christian to live by the rule of love. In Romans 13:1-7 Paul argues that God's exercise of vengeance upon the wrongdoer is, at least in part, exercised through the powers of earthly government: "One of the underlying theses that binds 12:14-21 and 13:1-7 together is therefore this: justice is served not by private vengeance but by individuals trusting the authorities to keep wickedness in check." Wright.

Dunn comments, "Paul's recognition of the need to function within the realities of this age is underlined by his heavy use of the language and categories of Hellenistic administration... Parallels with other first-century Christian writings (particularly 1 Pet 2:13–17) indicate that this policy of political prudence was widespread among the earliest Christian congregations."

Wright continues, "But did Paul not believe, and hint at several points in Romans itself, that the gospel and the rule of Jesus the Messiah, the world's true Lord, subverted the gospel and rule of Caesar, whose cult was growing fast in precisely the cities (Corinth, Ephesus, and so on) where he spent most of his time? Yes; and this is perhaps part of the point. If the gospel of Jesus, God's Son, the King who will rule the nations (1:3-4; 15:12) does indeed reveal God's justice and salvation, which put to shame the similar claims of Caesar (1:16-17; Phil 2:5-11; 3:19-21); if it is true that those who accept this gospel will themselves exercise a royal reign (5:17); and if Paul suspects that his audience in Rome are getting this message – then it is all the more important to make clear that this does not mean a holy anarchy in the present, an overrealised eschatology in which the rule of Christ has already abolished all earthly governments and magistrates. Precisely because Paul is holding out for the day when all creation will be renewed (8:1-27), when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus (Phil 2:10-11), it is vital that the excitable little groups of Christians should not take the law into their own hands in advance. In particular (and with events in Palestine in mind), it is important that his readers do not take his covert polemic against the imperial ideology as a coded call to a Christian version of the so-called fourth philosophy. This is where Paul's probable awareness of the riots under Claudius, and the reputation that both Jews and Christians will have gained in Rome because of them, must come into play. God does not intend that Christians should become agents of anarchy, which would replace the tyranny of the officially powerful with the tyranny of the unofficially powerful. The ultimate overthrow of pagan power comes by other means, and Paul has outlined in Romans 5 and 8 what those means are. Rome could cope with ordinary revolutions. Rome could not cope, as history bears witness, with a community owing allegiance to the crucified and risen Messiah as the world's true Lord."

"In fact, reading Romans 13 against the backdrop of the extravagant claims made within the burgeoning imperial cult highlights one point in particular. According to Paul (and the Jewish tradition in which he stands) the rulers are not themselves divine; they are set up by the one God, and they owe this God allegiance. Romans 13 constitutes a severe demotion of arrogant and self-divinising rulers. It is an undermining of totalitarianism, not a reinforcement of it. By implication, if the rulers themselves are given the task of judging wicked people within their sphere of authority, they themselves will be judged by God who set them up... Government and magistrates may be more or less good or bad; but – and this is Paul's basic point – government qua government is intended by God and should in principle command submission from Christian and non-Christian alike...

"This does not mean, as Paul's own example bears out, that one must be politically and socially quiescent until the great renewal of all things... Preaching and living the gospel must always be announcing and following Jesus, rather than Caesar, as the true Lord. But the eschatological balance must be kept. The church must live as a sign of the coming complete kingdom of Jesus Christ; but since that kingdom is characterised by 'righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,' it cannot be inaugurated in the present by chaos, violence and hatred (cf. 14:17). The methods of the Messiah himself (12:14-21) must be used in living out his kingdom within the present world, passing away though it may be."

Romans 13:1

Πᾶσα ψυχή ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις
ὑποτασσέσθω, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ
θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὗσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναί εἰσιν.

ψυχή, ης f living being, person

πάσα ψυχή is a Hebrew idiom which may not have been understood by some Western scribes who omit the reference to ψυχή.

"In the old age of Adam, states and kingdoms are part of the social corporeality of humankind, and given the character of the old age, that includes ruler and ruled (contrast the different model of Mark 10:42–44). So long as believers yet belong to that age (as chaps. 6–8 made clear) they must live in terms of its political composition." Dunn.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, power

Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, argues that Paul refers to invisible angelic powers that stand behind civil government. This view is now generally rejected. Dunn comments, "There is nothing therefore in the usage to support the suggestion that ἐξουσίαις here mean also angelic powers behind and acting through the political authorities." Cf. 1 Peter 2:13.

ὑπερῶ govern, rule, have power over
 ὑποτασσέσθω Verb, pres midd/pass imperat,
 3 s ὑποτασσω; pass. submit to, obey

Dunn says that this verb is the natural accompaniment to ἐξουσία and ὑπερῶ "whatever the authority in question – whether of husband (Eph 5:22 v.l.; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1, 5 – a patriarchal society being of course assumed), of parents (Luke 2:51), of masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18; *Did.* 4.11; *Barn.* 19.7), or of secular authorities (1 Chron 29:24; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13; *1 Clem* 61.1; and here)... Given its prominence in these Christian texts, we may deduce that such counsel to disciplined acceptance of the realities of social status and of what that entailed for the social inferior was a regular part of early Christian parenesis (cf. particularly Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 419–37); and though social relationships are different today, it may well be the case that such submission is an inevitable or inescapable outworking of the Christian grace of humility (...cf. particularly Phil 2:3)." Similarly Wright says, "This is not a specific commendation of the Roman Empire as against the ruling systems of other times and places; it is a general point about civic authority."

οἶμαι Verb, pres ptc, f nom s εἶμι
 τεταγμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom pl
 τασσω appoint, designate

Cf. Prov 8:15-16; Dan 4:25,35; 5:21.

"The implication ... is of an authority ordered by God, (1) subject to the limits of that ordering (cf. Matt 8:9//Luke 7:8; Acts 15:2; 22:10; *1 Clem* 20.2; 61.1–2), and (2) commensurate to the submission called for... The corollary, that those who abuse their God-given authority or call for greater submission than God has ordered will come under the judgment of God, is spelled out explicitly in the same passages (especially Wisd Sol 6:4–5; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 82.4–9), with Nebuchadnezzar a fearful warning (Dan 4:13–17, 23–25; 5:20–21); see also 4 Macc 12.11. The further corollary that a subject's submission is determined by the same God-ordained limits naturally follows (though of course Paul is hardly concerned to draw it out here) and allows a fair amount of reworking of this counsel in the light of changed political systems and conditions." Dunn.

Romans 13:2

ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
 ἀντιτασσομαι oppose, resist
 διαταγή, ης f decree, ordinance
 ἀνθέστηκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s
 ἀνθίστημι resist, oppose
 ἀνθεστηκότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl
 ἀνθίστημι

"The perfect participle indicates a determined and established policy: 'those who have set themselves to resist.' The words are directed more against anarchy than single-issue protest." Dunn.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον himself, themselves
 κριμα, τος n judgement, condemnation
 λήμψονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl
 λαμβανω

Includes the twofold thought of the punishment dispensed by the governing authorities and also the Divine judgement.

Romans 13:3

οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ. θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν; τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἕξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς·

ἄρχων, οντος m ruler, official
 φόβος, ου m fear
 ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful
 κακος, η, ον evil, wrong, harm

"Whatever the abuses perpetrated on the system by corrupt rulers, this statement of principle would be widely accepted." Dunn.

θελω wish, will

φοβέομαι trans fear, be afraid
 ποίει Verb, pres act Indic 3s & imperat 2s
 ποιέω
 ἔπαινος, ου m praise, commendation,
 approval

"ἔπαινος, 'praise, approval, applause,' is a characteristic goal of Greek wisdom and philosophy and includes particularly the idea of public commendation... In 2:29 Paul displayed the same typically Jewish distrust of human praise (cf. 1 Cor 4:5), a clear reminder that the scope of his remarks here is limited and directed to a particular context (Phil 4:8 makes a similar appeal to a consensus instinct for what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, and praiseworthy). Here again 1 Pet 2:14 walks in close company with our passage." Dunn.

Romans 13:4

θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν, ἔκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι.

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper,
 minister

εἰκὴ adv. in vain, for nothing
 μάχαιρα, ης f sword, war, violent death
 φορεῶ wear, hold the power of
 ἐκδικος, ου m avenger, one who punishes
 ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger
 πράσσω practice, do

The *sword* here is not merely a reference to the death penalty but encompasses judicial power and punishment generally.

The powers of the civil authorities are a reflection (albeit sometimes a very distorted reflection) of the power of God himself, the Supreme Governor of all creation.

Wright comments, "This is the point at which the authority *must* do what the private individual *may not* do (12:14-21) – a point regularly missed in many popular-level discussions of the judicial role of civic authority."

Romans 13:5

διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν,

διο therefore, for this reason
 ἀναγκη, ης f necessity
 ὑποτασσῶ v.1

Some Western MSS simplify the construction by reading ὑποτασσεσθε (p⁴⁶ D G it ...)

μονον adv only, alone
 συνειδησις, εως f conscience

Subjection to civil power should not be motivated simply by fear of punishment, but also from a recognition of what is right and good and as part of the Christian's subjection to God.

Romans 13:6

διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε, λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσιν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες.

φορος, ου m tax, tribute
 τελεῶ carry out; pay (taxes)
 λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister
 προσκαρτερεῶ devote oneself to

Romans 13:7

ἀπόδοτε πᾶσι τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν.

ἀποδιδῶμι render, give back, repay
 ὀφειλη, ης f debt, what is due
 τέλος, ους n here = tax, revenue

It is suggested that φορος is tax or tribute, direct taxation, and that τέλος is levy or custom, indirect taxation. Tacitus tells us that there was considerable resistance in the middle 50s to paying indirect taxes, culminating in the tax revolt of AD 58.

φοβος, ου m fear
 τιμη, ης f honour, respect

Cf. Matt 22:21. Wright comments, "This last point shows once more, not least in relation to Paul's own practice in Acts, what is and is not meant. Paul was always ready to honour the office even while criticising the present holder."

Romans 13:8

Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε, εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν· ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν.

μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
 ὀφειλω owe, be bound or obligated

Paul plays on the idea of debt (cf. v.7) while returning to the theme of 12:9-21 – the ways in which believers should show sincere love.

ἄλληλων, οισ, ους one another
 ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

"This is a debt, owed to everyone, that can never be discharged." Wright.

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another

Christian love has its focus upon 'the other' not on oneself.

πληρῶω fill, fulfill, accomplish

Through love, the character and purpose of God are made known.

Romans 13:9

τὸ γάρ· Οὐ μοιχεύσεις, Οὐ φονεύσεις, Οὐ κλέψεις, Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἕτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, ἐν τῷ· Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

μοιχευω commit adultery
 φονευω murder, put to death
 κλεπτω steal
 ἐπιθυμew desire, lust after, covet

Under the influence of Ex 20:15-17 and Dt 5:19-21 several textual witnesses insert οὐ ψευδομαρτυρησεις. Several other variants omit elements from the list or reorder its content.

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction
 ἀνακεφαλαιοω sum up, bring together
 πλησιον neighbour, fellow man.
 σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

Love is not a substitute for detailed obedience to the law of God, it is the dynamic which motivates and enables such obedience. Cf. Matt 22:36-40.

Romans 13:10

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πληρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη.

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
 ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform
 πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness, fulfilment

"Paul sketches a brief but telling picture of how the Torah is fulfilled in that love of neighbour which will bring admiration, rather than blasphemy, from the watching world (cf. 2:16-17). Here, in other words, are the 'true Jews' (see 2:28-29), those who are bringing God's light and love to the world." Wright.

Romans 13:11

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰδότες τὸν καιρόν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι, νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν.

και τουτο introduces the summarising nature of what follows. NIV translates 'and do this.' τουτο refers to the command to love.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
 know, understand
 καιρος, ου m time, season

The term καιρος is used here with eschatological implications. "Eschatology, an understanding of the times in which we live, should govern our conduct." Moo. We need to know what the time is: it's time to wake up.

Wright comments, "This is a familiar image in early Christian writing, again quite possibly going back to Jesus himself; and Paul has developed it elsewhere (1 Thess 5:1-11; see also Matt 24:42-44; 26:45; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-46; 21:36; Eph 5:8-16; the idea of staying awake to be about one's Christian task is also evident in Eph 6:18). This idea flows consistently from the early Christian belief that with the resurrection of Jesus God's promised new age has dawned, but that full day was yet to come (see above all 1 Cor 15:20-28). Christians therefore live in the interval between the early signs of dawn and the sunrise itself, and their behaviour must be appropriate for the day, not the night."

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment, instant, period of time
 ἤδη adv now, already
 ὕπνος, ου m sleep
 ἐγειρω raise
 ἐγγύτερον adv nearer (comparative of the adverb ἐγγυς)
 σωτηρια, ας f salvation
 ἢ or, than
 ὅτε conj when, at which time
 πιστευω believe (in), have faith (in)

This last phrase could be translated in either of the following ways:

- i) 'Now is our salvation nearer than ...'
- ii) 'Now is salvation nearer to us than ...'

Barrett prefers the second.

Wright comments that though what Paul says here is, in one sense, obvious, "in another [it] needs saying as a reminder that though to us the passage of time seems to move without much change we should not forget that the great future moment is steadily coming closer."

Romans 13:12

ἡ νύξ προέκοπεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποβαλώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτούς, ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός.

Paul weaves together two traditions: one regarding light and darkness and one concerning the 'day,' cf. 1 Thess 5:1-10.

νύξ, νυκτος f night
 προκοπτω advance, progress

Day is used in an eschatological sense, cf. 1 Cor 3:13; 1 Thess 5:4; Heb 10:25; 2 Peter 1:19.

ἤγγικεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐγγίζω
 approach, draw near

The nearness is that of prophetic perspective rather than chronological calculation.

ἀποθωμεθα Verb, aor midd subj, 1 pl
ἀποτιθημι throw off, be done with, take
off (clothes)

σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil
ἐνδύσωμεθα Verb, aor midd subj, 1 pl ἐνδύω
dress; midd put on, wear
ὄπλον, ου n weapon, tool

Calvin suggests 'weapons' are mentioned here because "we are to carry on a warfare for the Lord."

φως, φωτος n light

"The day of Christ, though not yet come, is nevertheless throwing its light backwards upon the present; in that light believers must now live." Murray.

Romans 13:13

ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ
κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελείαις,
μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ,

εὐσχημονως properly, respectably
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live
κωμος, ου m orgy, revelry

Cf. Gal 5:19.

μεθη, ης f drunkenness
κοιτη, ης f bed; sexual impurity
ἀσελγεια, ας f sensuality, vice
ἔρις, ιδος f strife, rivalry
ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

"There are many churches where the first four sins are unheard of but the last two run riot." Wright.

Romans 13:14

ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,
καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιεῖσθε εἰς
ἐπιθυμίας.

ἐνδύσασθε Verb, aor midd imperat, 2 pl
ἐνδύω v.12

Some commentators (e.g. Selwyn) see a primitive catechetical code lying behind these sections in the NT which speak of 'putting off' and 'putting on' (cf. 1 Peter 2:1f; Jas 1:21; Col 3:8-12; Eph 4:22-25; Heb 12:1; 1 Peter 4:1; 1 Thess 5:8; Gal 3:27).

Compare Gal 3:27 where Paul says that the Christian *has* put on Christ in baptism. Those who have thus put on Christ must continue to be clothed in him by living in conformity with his mind and will.

"The assumption must be that he is urging them, as a regular spiritual discipline, to invoke the presence and power of Jesus as Lord of all things to be their defence against all evil, not least the evil toward which they might be lured by their own 'flesh.'" Wright.

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, human nature

προνοια, ας f provision, foresight
ποιεῖσθε Verb, pres midd imperat, 2 pl ποιεω
ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion

The 'flesh' will present its desires powerfully enough; there is no need to go half way to meet it. "There must be no loophole, no secret areas where licence is permitted, where the 'desires' of the 'flesh' are tolerated, let alone encouraged (see 7:4-6)." Wright.

Romans 14

Paul seems to be aware of disputes among the Christians at Rome. It is difficult to be certain about the situation that Paul is addressing (Moo lists six different views concerning the identity of the 'strong' and the 'weak') but most scholars think that the disputes related to observance of the Jewish law. Moo concludes, "The weak were those – mainly Jewish Christians – who could not bring themselves to abandon the requirements of the law they had observed all their lives. They could not, as Christians, simply ignore the food laws, Sabbath observance and so on. The strong, by contrast, felt no need to observe these laws. Most of them were undoubtedly Gentile Christians, although a few, like Paul himself (see the 'we' in 15:1), were Jewish Christians. The weak condemned the strong for cavalierly dismissing God's laws, while the strong pooh-poohed the weak, looking down on them for clinging to the old ways when the new had come. Paul sides with the strong on the basic issues involved, but his main concern is to get each group to stop criticising the other and to accept each other in a spirit of love and unity."

Romans 14:1

Τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει
προσλαμβάνεσθε, μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις
διαλογισμῶν.

ἀσθενεω be sick, be ill, be weak
πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith

"Paul does not imply that those who are 'weak in the faith' have any less grasp on the basic content of the faith (Jesus' resurrection and lordship) than the others; only that, like those who have a weak conscience in 1 Corinthians 8, they have not thought through and worked out the full implications of that faith." Wright.

προσλαμβανομαι welcome, accept, receive

"While Paul wants both groups in the church to accept each other, he is clearly most concerned about the attitude of the strong. This probably reflects the fact that the strong, mainly Gentile Christians, are the dominant group in the church." Moo.

διακρισις, εως f arguing, dispute

διαλογισμος, ου m opinion, reasoning, dispute, doubt

διακρισεις διαλογισμων disputes engendered by opinions or doubts. The NIV translation is good, 'without passing judgement on disputable matters.' Murray translates it, 'not for the purpose of subjecting the convictions and thoughts of one another to censorious scrutiny.' "They should not allow differences over 'disputable matters' to interfere with full fellowship in the body of Christ." Moo.

Romans 14:2

ὅς μὲν πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα, ὁ δὲ ἀσθενῶν λάχανα ἐσθίει.

πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

Some Christians had come to the settled conviction – a conviction rooted in faith – that there are no food taboos in the kingdom of God.

φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθίω and ἐσθω eat

λαχανον, ου n garden plant, vegetable

"If most Christians in Rome seemed happy to eat non-kosher food, or to eat meat bought in the market when it had almost certainly been originally offered in sacrifice to an idol, there were bound to be some for whom this was unthinkable." Wright.

Romans 14:3

ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτω, ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω, ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο.

ἐξουθενεω despise, treat with contempt
κρινω judge, pass judgement on, condemn

I.e. calling upon their understanding of the OT law to pass condemnation on the eater.

προσελάβετο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s
προσλαμβανομαι v.1

When we reject those whom God has accepted we make ourselves holier than God.

Romans 14:4

σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην; τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ στήκει ἢ πίπτει· σταθήσεται δέ, δυνατεῖ γὰρ ὁ κύριος στήσαι αὐτόν.

Paul elaborates the principle stated at the end of the previous verse.

σὺ τίς probably addressed primarily to the 'weak' who are passing judgment on the 'strong.' The question is, 'Who do you think you are?' "For one slave to look into the next room and pass judgment on another is simply inappropriate; it shows a failure to recognise who's who." Wright.

ἀλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another
οικετης, ου f house servant, servant

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

στηκω stand, stand firm

ἢ οἱ

πιπτω fall, fall down

σταθήσεται Verb, fut pass indic, 3 s ἰστημι
and ἱστανω pass stand, stand firm

The unusual verb δυνατεω is replaced in some MSS by the more common adjective – δυνατος γὰρ ἐστιν

στήσαι Verb, 1 aor act infin ἰστημι and ἱστανω set, establish, fix

The unusual vocabulary used here by Paul may deliberately call to mind the resurrection (cf. Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:14). "His main point is that the Lord, the master of all the household, is able to vindicate servants who eat meat and servants who do not; but the echoes, as he says this, are of the greater vindication that is promised at the last." Wright.

Romans 14:5

Ὅς μὲν κρίνει ἡμέραν παρ' ἡμέραν, ὅς δὲ κρίνει πᾶσαν ἡμέραν· ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῖ πληροφορεῖσθω·

κρίνει ἡμεραν παρ ἡμεραν 'consider one day different from another'

The "reference is probably to Jewish holy days, including various festivals and the Sabbath." Moo. Murray includes an Appendix to his commentary in which he argues that the reference is to the various ceremonial holy days of the Levitical institution *but excludes* the weekly Sabbath. His argument is exegetically unconvincing, particularly in the light of Col 2:16.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

νοῖ Noun, dat s νοος, νοος m mind,
understanding

πληροφορεῖσθω Verb, pres pass imperat, 3 s
πληροφορεω convince fully, assure fully

Romans 14:6

ὁ φρονῶν τὴν ἡμέραν κυρίῳ φρονεῖ· καὶ ὁ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ ἐσθίει, εὐχαριστεῖ γὰρ τῷ θεῷ· καὶ ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων κυρίῳ οὐκ ἐσθίει, καὶ εὐχαριστεῖ τῷ θεῷ.

φρονεω think, consider, think highly of

ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ eat, consume
 εὐχαριστέω thank, give thanks

These principles clearly apply only to matters in themselves indifferent – neither good nor bad. Yet even in such matters, the believer's conduct is not outside the scope of their discipleship, cf. 1 Cor 10:31.

Romans 14:7

Οὐδείς γὰρ ἑαυτῷ ζῆ, καὶ οὐδείς ἑαυτῷ ἀποθνήσκει·

οὐδείς, οὐδὲμα, οὐδὲν no one, nothing
 ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
 ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζῶω live, be
 alive

Cf. 2 Cor 5:15; Gal 2:19-20.

ἀποθνήσκω die, face death, be mortal

Is the reference here to literal death or to dying to self – self-denial for the sake of Christ?

Romans 14:8

ἐάν τε γὰρ ζῶμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ζῶμεν, ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκωμεν, τῷ κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκομεν. ἐάν τε οὖν ζῶμεν ἐάν τε ἀποθνήσκομεν, τοῦ κυρίου ἐσμέν.

ἐάν τε γὰρ ... ἐάν τε ... 'for if it should be that ... but if ...'

Romans 14:9

εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἔζησεν ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ.

εἰς τοῦτο for this purpose
 ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνήσκω

Some MSS read ἀνεστή rather than ἔζησεν.

νεκρος, α, ον dead

κυριεύω have power over, rule over

Through his death and resurrection, Christ has become Lord both of the dead and the living. He reigns over the death and life that mark the daily experience of the believer; he reigns over death, that last enemy, and over the resurrection life which lies beyond its reach. "This 'ruling as Lord,' clearly explains the 'belonging to the Lord' in v. 8: it is the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah that means we now belong to him, and that constitutes him indeed as the Lord of the whole world (1:3-5; 15:12). This proves more than Paul needs to prove for the immediate argument, but it points, as we shall see, to the larger issue that stands behind the entire section. The gospel announcement that Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah, is the Lord of the whole world is thus appealed to as the reason for unity across barriers of custom and taboo." Wright.

Romans 14:10

Σὺ δὲ τί κρίνεις τὸν ἀδελφόν σου; ἢ καὶ σὺ τὴν ἐξουθενεῖς τὸν ἀδελφόν σου; πάντες γὰρ παραστησόμεθα τῷ βήματι τοῦ θεοῦ,

The first question presumably addressed to the 'weak' who pass judgment on the 'strong' for not observing the Mosaic law.

ἢ οἱ

ἐξουθενέω despise, treat with contempt

The second question addressed to the 'strong' for despising the 'weak.'

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
 παραστησόμεθα Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1
 pl παριστήμι stand before
 βῆμα, τος n judicial bench, place of
 judgement

Many MSS read του Χριστου rather than του θεου, probably influenced by 2 Cor 5:10.

"Paul may be warning these Christians that their judgmental attitudes will bring judgment on themselves when they appear before God at the end of history. In the light of verses 7-9, however, it is more likely that he is teaching that every believer is ultimately answerable to God, not to other believers, for their conduct in this life." Moo.

Romans 14:11

γέγραπται γὰρ· Ζῶ ἐγώ, λέγει κύριος, ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται τῷ θεῷ.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s γραφω

Cf. Isa 45:23. The opening phrase 'As I live' is added to the quotation. "This picks up the 'lived' of v.9; in other words, the 'living again' of Jesus is the reason why he is thus installed as judge, which in turn is the reason why it would be wrong to collapse κύριος (*kurios*) here into a general reference to God, rather than retaining it, however paradoxically, as a reference to Jesus as the risen Messiah and, therefore, the judge." Wright. Cf. Phil 2:10.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

κάμψει Verb, fut act indic, 3s κάμπτω trans
 & intrans bend, bow (of the knee)

γόνυ, γονατος n knee

γλωσσα, ης f tongue, voice

ἐξομολογεῖω midd confess, acknowledge

Paul's thought moves easily from the headship of Christ in life and death to the fact that every knee must bow before the judgement seat of God. This could not be so without the implicit assumption that Jesus is Divine.

Romans 14:12

ἄρα ἕκαστος ἡμῶν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ λόγον δώσει.

ἕκαστος, η, ον v.5

ἑαυτος see v.7

λογος is here used in the sense of an account (of oneself). "There is no tension in Paul's mind between this and 8:1, where there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. He has already indicated in 2:1-16 that there will be a coming day when all will be judged; the fact that the Christian believer is assured of a favourable verdict on that day does not make it any less serious, as 1 Cor 3:10-17 indicates well enough. Part of his point is that in the light of the coming judgment we have no business judging one another ahead of the time. There may also be a hint that to condemn a fellow Christian is itself an offence for which one should be rebuked." Wright.

Wright continues by suggesting that the repeated references in this section to Jesus as Lord are intended as a declaration that Caesar is *not* lord. "The unity of Christians across traditional barriers is a sign to the principalities and powers that a greater rule than theirs has now begun (see, e.g., Gal 4:1-11; Eph 3:10). Maintaining that unity, then, is not just a matter of preventing squabbles and bad feeling in the church. It is part of the essential Christian witness to the one Lord. If the church divides along lines related to ethnic or tribal loyalty, it is still living in the world of Caesar."

Romans 14:13-23

In verses 13-23 Paul addresses the strong. His key concern is that 'strong' believers should avoid being a 'stumbling block' to the weak. Rather, they should ensure that all is done to build others up.

Romans 14:13

Μηκέτι οὖν ἀλλήλους κρίνωμεν· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κρίνατε μᾶλλον, τὸ μὴ τιθῆναι πρόσκομμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἢ σκάνδαλον.

μηκετι no longer

ἀλληλων, ος, ους one another

Paul plays on the verb κρινω. The first occurrence means 'judge' while the second means 'determine.'

μαλλον adv rather, instead, more than that
τιθῆναι Verb, pres act infin τιθημι place,
set

προσκομμα, ατος n that which causes
stumbling or offence

The imagery comes from the Old Testament (see esp. Isa 8:14 quoted in Rom 9:32).

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence

Cf. 1 Cor 8:9.

Romans 14:14

οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι' ἑαυτοῦ· εἰ μὴ τῷ λογιζομένῳ τι κοινὸν εἶναι, ἐκείνῳ κοινόν.

οἶδα know, understand

πέπεισμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s πειθω
persuade; perf act & pass have
confidence, be confident

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
κοινος, α, ον common, unclean
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"In a deft rhetorical move, Paul tries to get the strong to listen to him by conceding that they are right on the basic issue: 'No food is unclean in itself' (v.14). 'Unclean' translates κοινος (lit., common), which Jews used to describe things that, by virtue of their contact with the ordinary, secular world, were considered to be defiled." Moo.

Cf. Mark 7:18-19; Acts 10:9-23,28.

λογιζομαι reckon, count, suppose
ἐκεινος, η, ο that (one), he, she, it

All things are clean in themselves (cf. 1 Tim 4:4), but to the one who eats with an accusing conscience and without thanksgiving, such eating is sin (cf. v.23).

Romans 14:15

εἰ γὰρ διὰ βρῶμα ὁ ἀδελφός σου λυπεῖται, οὐκέτι κατὰ ἀγάπην περιπατεῖς. μὴ τῷ βρώματι σου ἐκείνον ἀπόλλυε ὑπὲρ οὗ Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν.

βρωμα, τος n food, solid food, meat
λυπεω pain, grieve, injure

The latter sense, 'injure' is the meaning here.

οὐκετι adv no longer, no more
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

ἀπόλλυε Verb, pres act imperat, 2 s

ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill, lose

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω
die

"If Christ loved the weak believer to the extent of laying down his life for his salvation, how alien to the demands of love is the refusal on the part of the strong to forego the use of a certain article of food when the religious interests of the one for whom Christ died are thereby imperilled." Murray.

Wright comments, "This powerful statement presumably means that one could risk betraying a 'weak' person into what was, for them, some form of idolatry, and that this could jeopardise their allegiance to Christ altogether, putting the 'strong' Christian at loggerheads with the Messiah himself, who has given his life for them."

Romans 14:16

μη βλασφημείσθω ὄν ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν.

βλασφημῶ speak against, speak against
God, blaspheme

Many MSS read ἡμῶν rather than ὑμῶν. Metzger writes, "Either ὑμῶν or ἡμῶν makes good sense in the context. On the whole, however, the weight of external evidence appears to favour ὑμῶν."

ἀγαθός, η, ον good, useful, fitting

'This good thing' – probably referring to Christian freedom.

"Something may be 'good' for you, but the weaker Christian may call down a curse upon it – and perhaps, the implication may be, on you as well." Wright.

Romans 14:17

οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις, ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ·

For other instances of Paul's rare use of 'the Kingdom of God' see 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1. But also note Paul's use of the verb βασιλεύω when speaking of the 'reign of grace' in Rom 5:12-21.

βρῶσις, εως f food, eating, a meal

πόσις, εως f drinking, a drink

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires

Used here of 'ethical' righteousness: living rightly; behaviour pleasing to God.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

"The strong are not wrong to think they have freedom to eat whatever they want. Rather, they are wrong for using that freedom without regard to the effect it may have on their weaker brothers and sisters – people for whom Christ died. The strong need a reordering of priorities, in which kingdom values take precedence over selfish interest and pleasure." Moo.

Wright sees a link here with the opening verses of Romans 5. He summarises Paul's thought as follows: "You must not cause your fellow Christian to suffer, possibly even to be lost altogether, by what you eat, because Rom 5:1-5 ('justified ... peace ... joy ... Holy Spirit') is the most important thing there is, and food and drink, by comparison, rate nowhere on the same scale."

Romans 14:18

ὁ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ καὶ δόκιμος τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

Note the γὰρ which links to the previous verses. The point is well picked up in the NIV.

εὐάρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing
δόκιμος, ον approved, genuine, valued

Romans 14:19

ἄρα ὄν τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν καὶ τὰ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

διώκω seek after, pursue, follow

Several good witnesses read δικαιομεν (x A B G^{tr} ...) rather than δικαιωμεν. Metzger comments, "Despite the slightly superior uncial support for δικαιωμεν, and despite the circumstance that elsewhere in Romans the phrase ἄρα ὄν is always followed by the indicative (5:18; 7:3,25; 8:12; 9:16,18, cf. 14:12), the Committee felt that, on the whole, the context here calls for the hortatory subjunctive (cf. the imperatives in vv 13 and 20)."

οἰκοδομή, ης f upbuilding, encouragement
ἀλλήλων, ος, ος one another

Cf. 1 Cor 14.

Romans 14:20

μη ἕνεκεν βρώματος κατάλυε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ. πάντα μὲν καθαρὰ, ἀλλὰ κακὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τῷ διὰ προσκόμματος ἐσθίοντι.

ἕνεκα (ἕνεκεν and εἵνεκεν) prep with gen because of, for the sake of

βρῶμα v.15

κατάλυω trans destroy, tear down

καθαρός, α, ον pure, clean, innocent

κακός, η, ον evil, wrong, harm

προσκομμα v.13

Does Paul here refer to the weak man who eats because he has been tripped up or to the strong who eats and causes offence – the offence then being the reason why it is evil to him? Moo thinks the reference is to eating by the strong "in such a way that spiritual harm comes to another believer." So also does Wright who says that this fits best with the following verse.

Romans 14:21

καλὸν τὸ μὴ φαγεῖν κρέα μηδὲ πιεῖν οἶνον
μηδὲ ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἀδελφός σου προσκόπτει ἢ
σκανδαλίζεται ἢ ἀσθενεῖ·

καλος, η, ον good, right
φαγεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐσθιω and ἐσθω

The use of the aorist seems to suggest that a particular occasion is meant rather than vows of continual abstinence.

κρέα Noun, acc pl κρεας, κρεατος n meat
μηδε ... μηδε neither ... nor
πιεῖν Verb, aor act infin πινω drink
οἶνος, ου m wine
προσκοπτω stumble, take offence, be
offended

Romans 14:22

σὺ πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις κατὰ σεαυτὸν ἔχε ἐνώπιον
τοῦ θεοῦ. μακάριος ὁ μὴ κρίνων ἑαυτὸν ἐν ᾧ
δοκιμάζει·

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself
ἐνώπιον before, in the presence of

They have this conviction in the presence of God and may not surrender it. But they are not to brandish it to the destruction of others.

μακαριος, α, ον blessed, happy
ἑαυτος, εαυτη, εαυτον v.14
δοκιμαζω test, examine, approve

The thought is that the Christian should not bring themselves into condemnation through things they approve of.

Romans 14:23

ὁ δὲ διακρινόμενος ἐὰν φάγη κατακέκριται, ὅτι
οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως· πᾶν δὲ ὃ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως
ἁμαρτία ἐστίν·

διακρινω midd/pass doubt, hesitate, be in
two minds

Cf 4:20-21 which speaks about the faith of Abraham.

φάγη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐσθιω
κατακέκριται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s
κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement
ον

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

"To doubt is not to sin; but to act on something when one has serious doubts about it is to fall under condemnation, because the action does not flow from faith." Wright.

Ending of Romans

Some MSS include the doxology of 16:25-27 at this point in the epistle. Others include the doxology both here and at the end of the epistle. Origen reports that Marcion omitted chapters 15 and 16 of Romans from his edition of Paul's epistles: this may account for the displacement of the doxology. Others suggest that Paul may have issued the letter in two forms; a shorter form may have omitted chapter 16 or even chapters 15 and 16.

Romans 15:1

Ὁφείλομεν δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ δυνατοὶ τὰ ἀσθενήματα
τῶν ἀδυνάτων βαστάζειν, καὶ μὴ ἑαυτοῖς
ἀρέσκειν·

ὀφειλω owe, ought, must

Paul identifies himself explicitly with the 'strong' group.

δυνατος, η, ον possible, strong
ἀσθενημα, τος n weakness
ἀδυνατος, ον impossible, weak

Those areas where the 'weak' are lacking in power.

βασταζω carry, bear, endure

Cf. Gal 6:2. "The strong are actively and lovingly to assume the burden that the weak are not able to carry for themselves, moderating their own conduct to identify as much as possible with them." Moo. It means far more than 'put up with.'

The language here is similar to that used of the Suffering Servant, cf. particularly Matt 8:17.

ἀρεσκω please, seek to please

Romans 15:2

ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω εἰς τὸ
ἀγαθὸν πρὸς οἰκοδομήν·

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

πλησιον neighbour, fellow man.

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

οικοδομη, ης f upbuilding, encouragement

It is this consideration which must govern our actions towards our brothers and sisters.

Wright comments, "This is, clearly, what the love spoken of in 12:3-13 and 13:8-10 looks like at street level."

Romans 15:3

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτῷ ἤρεσεν· ἀλλὰ
καθὼς γέγραπται· Οἱ ὀνειδισμοὶ τῶν
ὀνειδιζόντων σε ἐπέπεσαν ἐπ' ἐμέ·

The thought here is parallel to that in Philippians 2.

ἤρεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ἀρεσκω
γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

ὀνειδισμος, ου m reproach, insult, abuse
 ὀνειδιζω reproach, insult, abuse
 σε Pronoun, acc s συ
 ἐπιπιτω fall upon, come upon

Cf. Ps 69:6. This psalm is often quoted Messianically in the NT, cf. Matt 27:34; Jn 2:17; 15:25; Acts 1:20; Rom 11:9. The insults or reproaches mentioned in the Psalm are levelled against God. Paul assumes "that this great poem of the suffering and vindication of the righteous Israelite found its ultimate embodiment in Israel's Messiah and his crucifixion." Wright. Cf. Phil 2:6-8.

Romans 15:4

ὅσα γὰρ προεγράφη, εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν ἐγράφη, ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ διὰ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as, how much
 προεγράφη Verb, aor pass indic, 3s
 προγραφο write beforehand
 ἡμετερος, α, ον our
 διδασκαλία, ας f teaching, doctrine, instruction
 ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance
 παρακλησις, εως f encouragement, counsel
 γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture
 ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope

Wright comments on this verse, "This ... echoes 5:1-5, ascribing to Scripture what is there effected through the Spirit on the basis of God's work of justification... The Scriptures, and their multiple interpretations of the Messiah's suffering, give God's people hope; and in that context (vv. 5-6) they will be able to think the same way and to glorify God together."

Romans 15:5

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δόξη ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν,

δόξη Verb, aor act opt, 3 s διδομι
 φρονεω think, have in mind
 ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὖς one another

A unity of mind and heart, rooted in union with and conformity to Christ, leads to praise (v.6).

Romans 15:6

ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ὁμοθυμαδον adv with one mind, together

"Only when believers cease to quarrel with one another and speak with one heart and voice will they be able to praise God as they should." Moo.

Wright expresses it the other way around, saying, "The object of coming to a common mind (ὁμοθυμαδόν *homothymadon*), a word found frequently in the early chapters of Acts (e.g., 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 7:57), is thereby to come to a common worship, literally 'with one mouth.'"

εἰς, μια, ἐν one, a, an, single
 στομα, τος n mouth, utterance, voice
 δοξαζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt
 πατηρ, πατρος m father

Romans 15:7

Διὸ προσλαμβάνεσθε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελάβετο ὑμᾶς, εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Cf. 14:1.

διὸ therefore, for this reason

Paul is concluding his plea for unity in the Roman church.

προσλαμβανομαι welcome, accept, receive
 ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὖς one another

καθως probably means more here than 'in the same way;' here it probably has a causal sense.

προσελάβετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
 προσλαμβανομαι

Some MSS read ἡμας rather than ὑμας.

δοξα, ης f glory

εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ has in view the glorifying of God in praise and worship.

Wright comments, "The verse forms a typically Pauline paragraph-opening, containing the various elements that will then be developed."

Romans 15:8

λέγω γὰρ Χριστὸν διάκονον γεγενῆσθαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων,

διακονος, ου m & f servant, minister
 γεγενῆσθαι Verb, perf pas infin γινομαι
 περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those circumcised, Jews
 ἀληθεια, ας f truth

"The Messiah became a servant to the circumcision [i.e., of ethnic Israel] in order to confirm God's truthfulness [i.e., his faithfulness to his promises]." Cf. 3:4, 7. The following two clauses are "parallel and consequential" Wright.

βεβαιωω confirm, verify
 ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise

Jesus came as a servant, particularly of the Jews. He came to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, promises of which circumcision was the seal. However, these promises did not concern the Jews alone but involved also the Gentiles (v.9). "It is by bringing Israel's history to its climax that God, through the Messiah, has opened the way of mercy to all nations." Wright.

Romans 15:9

τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν·
καθὼς γέγραπται· Διὰ τοῦτο ἐξομολογήσομαί
σοι ἐν ἔθνεσι, καὶ τῷ ὀνόματί σου ψαλῶ.

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἑ. Gentiles
ἐλεος, ους n mercy, compassion
δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify

"Paul is still conscious of making his final appeal to the community. The Messiah became a servant to the circumcision – so you Gentile Christians should love and serve your Jewish brothers and sisters in the Messiah, and not look down on them; and this was in order that the Gentiles should join with God's ancient people in united praise – so you Jewish Christians should celebrate the fact that you have people of every race joining with you in the messianic community." Wright.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω
ὁμολογεω confess, declare, give thanks
ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person
ψαλῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1 s ψαλλω sing,
sing a hymn of praise, sing praises

Paul supplies a series of texts demonstrating God's purpose to bring glory to himself among all nations. These texts are from Ps 18:49; Dt 32:43; Ps 117:1; Is 11:10, i.e. the quotations are from the Law, the Prophets and the Writings – every section of the OT Scriptures.

Wright comments, "As Richard Hays has persuasively argued, the opening citation from Ps 18:49 (17:50 LXX), when read in the wider context of that psalm, is intended not simply as a messianic prophecy now fulfilled, but as a statement of the embodiment, in Jesus the Messiah, of the pattern of suffering and vindication through which (as the next verse says) God's salvation and mercy are poured out, not least 'upon God's Messiah, to David and his seed for ever' (Ps 17:51 LXX). The citation thus ties in both with the mention of mercy in the earlier part of v. 9 and with the explicitly Davidic statement in v. 12, while itself making the central point that the Messiah himself, understood as the one praying in this psalm, is standing there, surrounded by Gentiles, singing God's praises." (see R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*).

Romans 15:10

καὶ πάλιν λέγει· Εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ
λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

πάλιν again, once more
εὐφράνθητε Verb, aor pass imperat, 2 pl
εὐφραίνω pass be glad, rejoice
λαος, ου m people, a people

λαος is often used to signify the people of Israel.

Romans 15:11

καὶ πάλιν· Αἰνεῖτε, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, τὸν κύριον,
καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί.

αἰνεω praise
ἐπαινεσάτωσαν Verb, aor act imperat, 3 pl
ἐπαινεω commend, praise

The call for the whole world to join in the praise of God "was and is the challenge of Jewish monotheism." Wright.

Romans 15:12

καὶ πάλιν Ἡσαΐας λέγει· Ἔσται ἡ ρίζα τοῦ
Ἰεσσαί, καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν· ἐπ'
αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν.

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἰμι
ρίζα, ης f root, source, descendant

Cf. Rev 5:5; 22:16.

ἀνιστημι midd rise, stand up, come back
to life
ἄρχω rule, govern

Paul intends a reference to Jesus' resurrection, cf. 1:4. "The idea of a risen Messiah 'ruling the nations' is, further, packed with explosive implications, especially in a letter to Rome whose own emperor claimed to rule the nations. Paul, we may suppose, has had this verse of Isaiah in mind throughout the whole letter, waiting to produce it as the final move in his entire argument." Wright.

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect

Romans 15:13

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρῶσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεῦναι, εἰς τὸ περισσεῦναι ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου.

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope
πληρῶσαι Verb, aor act opt, 3 s πληροω fill,
make full

εἰρήνη, ἡς f peace
πιστεῦναι believe (in), have faith (in)

"The 'joy' and 'peace' he wants them to experience are two of the essential values of God's kingdom that Paul has encouraged the strong to make a priority (14:17). The Holy Spirit, by whose 'power' the Christians in Rome will be able to 'overflow with hope,' is the third of the kingdom essentials listed in 14:17. Only when Jew and Gentile at Rome rejoice together in their *common* hope will they be able to praise God as he wants to be praised – with the united hearts and voices of a *community* of believers." Moo.

"What the community needs is precisely that eschatological perspective on their present life that is supplied in 12:2 and 13:11-14: in other words ... in order to be the people they are called to be in the present, they need a constant and lively sense of God's promised and assured future." Wright.

περισσεῦναι increase, abound; cause to increase, cause to abound
δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυνάμις

Romans 15:14

Πέπεισμαι δέ, ἀδελφοί μου, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ μεστοὶ ἐστε ἀγαθωσύνης, πεπληρωμένοι πάσης γνώσεως, δυνάμενοι καὶ ἀλλήλους νοουθετεῖν.

πέπεισμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s πειθω
perf act & pass have confidence, be confident

Note the emphatic use of αὐτός –
αὐτός ἐγώ 'I myself'
αὐτοὶ ... ἐστε 'you yourselves are'

μεστος, ἡ, ον full
ἀγαθωσύνη, ἡς f goodness

πεπληρωμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
πληροω fill, make full, accomplish
γνώσις, εως f knowledge, understanding
ἀλλήλων, οἰς, οὐς one another
νοουθετεῶ instruct, teach, warn

"Paul, in other words, did not need to write to them because they were in bad shape, but because his apostolic vocation demanded that for his new phase of work they should be brought in as partners." Wright.

Romans 15:15

τολμηρότερον δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἀπὸ μέρους, ὡς ἐπαναμιμνήσκων ὑμᾶς, διὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ

τολμηροτερος, α, ον more boldly

Neuter of adjective used adverbially.

ἔγραψα is an epistolatory aorist.

μερος, οὐς n part, in part, partly
ἐπαναμιμνήσκω remind, remind again
χάρις, ἰτος f grace

Paul views his ministry as an unmerited gift from God – an act of grace.

δοθεῖσάν Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s δίδωμι

Romans 15:16

εἰς τὸ εἶναί με λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

λειτουργος, οὐ m servant, minister
ἔθνη nom & acc pl ἔθνος, οὐς n nation
ἱερουργεῶ serve as a priest

Paul pictures his ministry in terms of the making of a priestly offering. "His task has been to ensure that when the sacrificial offerings are brought before God – the sacrificial offerings that consist precisely of the Gentile world itself – they are pleasing to God because they have been made by the Holy Spirit." Wright.

εὐαγγέλιον, οὐ n good news, gospel
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι
προσφορα, ας f offering, sacrifice, gift

Cf. Is 66:20.

εὐπρόσδεκτος, ον acceptable
ἡγιασμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
ἀγιαζω sanctify, set apart as sacred to
God, consecrate

ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ stands in apposition with εὐπρόσδεκτος.

Romans 15:17

ἔχω οὖν τὴν καύχησιν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν·

καυχῆσις, εὼς f boasting, ground for boasting

"Because God is the One who has given Paul this service, he can legitimately 'glory' in it (v.17). Glorifying or boasting in something can be wrong when we are trying to take credit for our own achievement (cf. 2:17,23; 3:27; 4:2-3), but it is appropriate when it is the product of God's own work (cf. 5:2,3,11)." Moo.

τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν has priestly overtones, cf. Heb 2:17.

Romans 15:18

οὐ γὰρ τολμήσω τι λαλεῖν ὃν οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι' ἐμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἐθνῶν, λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ,

τολμαῶ dare, be brave

λαλεῶ speak, talk

κατειργάσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

κατεργάζομαι do, accomplish

Paul's point is twofold:

- i) He would not dare to boast of this if it were not Christ's work;
- ii) He would not dare glory in it if it were not a work that Christ was performing *through him*.

ὑπακοή, ης f obedience

Cf. Rom 1:5, where Paul describes his calling in terms of being used to bring the Gentiles into the obedience of faith ὑπακοὴν πίστεως.

Romans 15:19

ἐν δυνάμει σημείων καὶ τεράτων, ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος· ὥστε με ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ πεπληρωκέμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμῖς

σημεῖον, ου n miraculous sign, sign, miracle

τερας, ατος n wonder, object of wonder

"'Signs and wonders' (NIV 'miracles') is standard biblical terminology for miraculous acts that accompany and give credence to God's Word. The phrase is especially prominent in Old Testament descriptions of the Exodus (e.g., Ex 7:3,9; 11:9-10; Deut 4:34; Ps 78:43) and in the book of Acts (e.g., Acts 2:22,43; 4:30; 5:12; 14:3; 15:12). Paul perhaps uses this expression to signal his importance in salvation history. God works miracles through him because he is God's 'point man' to open up the Gentile world to the gospel." Moo.

B and one or two other sources omit θεου while many MSS read πνεύματος ἁγίου rather than πνεύματος θεου.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
κύκλῳ adv in a circle, round, round about
μέχρι until, to, to the extent, as far as
πεπληρωκέμαι Verb, perf act infin πληρῶω
v.14

"Paul has brought to the divinely ordained climax his commission to plant thriving, self-reproducing churches throughout the region he has described. He is now, therefore, in a position to move on." Moo.

Romans 15:20

οὕτως δὲ φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ἄνομάσθη Χριστός, ἵνα μὴ ἐπ' ἀλλότριον θεμέλιον οἰκοδομῶ,

οὕτως thus, in this way

φιλοτιμεομαι make it one's ambition, endeavour, aspire

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

ὅπου adv. where

ὀνομαζω name, call; pass be known

ἀλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another

θεμελιος, ου m foundation

οικοδομεω build, build up

"There is nothing wrong with building on someone else's foundations. Significant ministers like Apollos did just that (see 1 Cor 3:3-11). But this is not the job God has given Paul. He sees himself carrying out the commission given to the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 52:15, revealing the good news to people who have not been told before and who have not heard before (Rom 15:21)." Moo.

Romans 15:21

ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται· Οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄφονται, καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Cf. Isa 52:13-15.

ἀνηγγέλη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

ἀναγγελλω tell, proclaim, preach

ὄφονται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 pl ὄρω
trans see, observe, perceive

ἀκηκόασιν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl ἀκουω

συνήσουσιν Verb, fut indic, 3 pl συνιημι
understand, comprehend

Post Section Note

In the above verses we see something of Paul's view of his missionary calling and his strategy in pursuing it. Paul saw himself to have a mission to the whole inhabited earth – to the Nations (Gentiles). He is under obligation to proclaim the message to all (cf. 1:14).

Paul describes his mission as extending from Jerusalem, even though he had not preached there, since Jerusalem is the place from which the Gospel first spread. Although Paul had not preached in every town and village throughout the areas he mentions, he had preached in key centres throughout the region and had planted churches:

- i) Philippi in Macedonia – of which Illyricum was also a region (Phil 4:15);
 - ii) Thessalonica in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess 1:7f);
 - iii) Corinth in Achaia (1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1);
 - iv) Ephesus in Asia (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19).
- Having planted churches in key centres, Paul expected the Gospel to be propagated from these and so he considered these areas 'evangelised' and was keen to move on to a new areas where no-one had yet worked – such as Spain (15:24). This was Paul's missionary strategy. (On this, see particularly Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*)

In all this, Paul's driving motive was his conviction concerning the universal Lordship of Christ (Phil 2:6-11, cf. Rom 1:11). Paul's mission was to declare Christ's lordship and to call upon every knee to bow to him.

Romans 15:22

Διὸ καὶ ἐνεκοπτόμην τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

διο therefore, for this reason

It is because Paul has been 'fully proclaiming' the gospel all the way from Jerusalem to Illyricum (vv.18-19), that he has been hindered thus far from coming to Rome.

ἐνεκοπτόμην Verb, imperf pass indic, 1 s
ἐγκοπτω prevent, hinder, detain
ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι

Cf. 1:23.

Romans 15:23

νυνὶ δὲ μηκέτι τόπον ἔχων ἐν τοῖς κλίμασι τούτοις, ἐπιποθίαν δὲ ἔχων τοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ ἰκανῶν ἐτῶν,

νυνι now

Since his work in other regions is finished he is now able to come to them.

μηκετι no longer
τοπος, ου m place

κλίμα, τοσ n region, district

"His aims for the eastern Mediterranean have been fulfilled; he no longer has any room for new work. This sounds extraordinary, given the tiny numbers of Christians we must envisage compared to the population in general; but Paul thinks of himself as a church-planter, and once he has established churches in the major centres of population and culture he has to rely on them to do for themselves the work of continued evangelism in their neighbourhoods. So, with Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens possibly, and Corinth established – not without difficulties and anxieties! – he quite genuinely concludes that it is time to move on." Wright.

ἐπιποθια, ας f longing, desire
ἐτος, ους n year

Romans 15:24

ὡς ἂν πορευομαι εἰς τὴν Σπανίαν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ διαπορευόμενος θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ' ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ ἐὰν ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπλησθῶ –

πορευομαι go, proceed, travel

ὡς ἂν πορευομαι So that I might go ...

"Parts of Spain had been occupied by the Romans since about 200 BC. But the Romans had fully organised the area as a province only in Paul's lifetime. There may have been a significant Jewish community there, although the matter is debated. Obviously Paul thinks it a good place to embark on a fresh church-planting ministry." Moo.

ἐλπίζω hope, expect

διαπορευομαι go through, travel through

θεαομαι see, look at, observe

προπεμφθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin

προπεμνω send on one's way, help on one's way

Used regularly in the NT in the context of missionary support (Acts 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; 1 Cor 16:6,11; 2 Cor 1:16; Titus 3:13; 3 John 6).

ἐκει there, in that place, to that place

πρῶτον adv. first, in the first place

μερος, ους n part, piece, in part, partly

ἐμπλησθω Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s

ἐμπι(μ)πλημι and ἐμπιπλαω fill, enjoy

ὕμων πρῶτον ἀπο μερους ἐμπλησθω 'I have first enjoyed your [company] for a while'

Romans 15:25

νυνὶ δὲ πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις.

διακονεω serve, care for

Words from this root refer to the collection also in 2 Cor 8:4,19,20; 9:1,12,13.

Romans 15:26

εὐδόκησαν γὰρ Μακεδονία καὶ Ἀχαΐα
κοινωνίαν τινὰ ποιήσασθαι εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς
τῶν ἁγίων τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.

εὐδοκεω be pleased, take pleasure in
κοινωνία, ας f fellowship, sharing in,
contribution
ποιήσασθαι Verb, aor midd infin ποιεω
πτωχος, η, ον poor

Cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4 and 2 Cor 8 and 9.

Romans 15:27

εὐδόκησαν γάρ, καὶ ὀφείλεται εἰσὶν αὐτῶν· εἰ
γὰρ τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν ἐκοινώνησαν τὰ
ἔθνη, ὀφείλουσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς
λειτουργῆσαι αὐτοῖς.

ὀφειλετης, ου m debtor, one indebted
πνευματικός, η, ον spiritual, pertaining to
the spirit

κοινωνεω share, take part
ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, ους n
nation, people; τα ἔθνη Gentiles
ὀφειλω owe, ought, be bound or obligated
σαρκικός, η, ον belonging to this world
λειτουργεω serve, worship

K. F. Nickle (*The Collection: A Study in Paul's Strategy*) views this collection which Paul, along with representatives of the Gentile churches, was bringing to Jerusalem, against the background of Romans 9-11. He describes it as, "An eschatological pilgrimage of Gentile Christians to Jerusalem by which Jews were to be confronted with the undeniable reality of the divine gift of saving grace to the Gentiles and therefore they would be moved to seek Christ."

Wright does not favour this interpretation commenting rather, "For Gentiles to give money to Jewish Christians was a sign that the Gentiles regarded them as members of the same family; for Jewish Christians to accept it would be a sign that they in turn accepted the Gentiles as part of their family."

Romans 15:28

τοῦτο οὖν ἐπιτελέσας, καὶ σφραγισάμενος
αὐτοῖς τὸν καρπὸν τοῦτον, ἀπελεύσομαι δι'
ὑμῶν εἰς Σπανίαν·

ἐπιτελεω complete, accomplish
σφραγιζω seal, secure with a seal
καρπος, ου m fruit, harvest

i.e. 'When I have safely delivered to them the sum that has been raised'

"The idea of 'sealing' (σφραγιζω, affix a seal) often connotes an official affirmation of authenticity (see, e.g. Est 8:8,10; John 3:33; cf. also Paul's references to believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit in 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, must accompany the gift to Jerusalem in order to authenticate its purpose as a healing gesture." Moo.

ἀπελεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s
ἀπερχομαι

Romans 15:29

οἶδα δὲ ὅτι ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν πληρώματι
εὐλογίας Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι.

οἶδα know
πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness,
fulfilment
εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

Paul probably meant that both he and his hosts would share this fullness of blessing, cf. 1:11-12.

Some MSS, followed by the TR, read του εὐαγγελίου του Χριστοῦ rather than simply Χριστοῦ. The shorter reading has good, early support.

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s
ἐρχομαι

Romans 15:30

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ κυρίου
ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ
πνεύματος συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς
προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν,

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

'love of the Spirit' – Barrett and Moo understand this to be the love of which the Holy Spirit is the author while Murray thinks it to be a reference to the love which the Holy Spirit has for believers.

συναγωνίσασθαι Verb, aor midd dep infin
συναγωνιζομαι help, join with

The verb used suggests intensity – 'wrestle with me in prayer.'

Romans 15:31

ἵνα ῥυσθῶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀπειθούντων ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ
καὶ ἡ διακονία μου ἢ εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ
εὐπρόσδεκτος τοῖς ἁγίοις γένηται,

ῥυσθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s ῥυομαι save,
rescue

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever
διακονία, ας f ministry, service
εὐπρόσδεκτος, ον acceptable
γένηται Verb, aor subj, 3 s γινομαι

Romans 15:32

ἵνα ἐν χαρᾷ ἔλθῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν.

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire
 συναναπαύσωμαι Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1
 s συναναπαυομαι have a time of rest
 with, enjoy a refreshing visit with

This verse exhibits a number of variant readings. Some MSS read θεληματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ rather than θεληματος θεου; some omit συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν. There are then various combinations of these variants.

συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν almost as if, after the troubles he foresees in Jerusalem, his time at Rome will be a time of rest and recuperation – a time of holiday!

Romans 15:33

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν ἄμήν.

εἰρηνη, ης f peace

Chapter 15 – Postscript

"One of the most important lessons of Romans 15 might be put thus: God allowed Paul to dream of Spain in order that he might write Romans. No matter that Paul probably never reached Spain. What mattered was that he wrote this letter, which has been far more powerful and influential than any missionary visit, even by Paul himself, could ever have been. Perhaps ... half of our great plans, the dreams we dream for our churches and for our world, and even for ourselves, are dreams God allows us to dream in order that, on the way there, we may accomplish, almost without realising it, the crucial thing God intends us to do." Wright.

Chapter 16

The number of greetings in this closing chapter is extraordinary. Paul asks the Romans to greet 26 individuals, two families and three house churches. All the more extraordinary since Paul had never visited Rome. Some scholars suggest that Romans 16 was never sent to Rome but was part of another letter, perhaps one sent to Ephesus (so T. W. Manson). However, no significant MSS of Romans omit this chapter. Moo comments, "Many of these Roman Christians (like Priscilla and Aquila, v.3) had spent years in exile away from Rome, where they had opportunity to get to know Paul. Perhaps, indeed, the relatively small number of Christians Paul knows in Rome enables him to send greetings to virtually everyone he is aware of in the city."

Wright comments, "In five cases, Paul mentions, along with a name or pair of names, the Christians within the household (16:5a, 10-11, 14-15). He may or may not have wanted to mention all the individual Christians he knew in the city, but he was certainly keen to mention all the household churches he knew: we can only guess which ones might have been 'weak' and which 'strong,' but we can be reasonably sure he was careful to greet them all with equal enthusiasm. All sorts of things can be read into accidental omissions. Paul did not want to arrive at Rome and find that he had caused fresh divisions by appearing to favour one group over another."

Romans 16:1

Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὗσαν καὶ διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς,

συνιστημι recommend, commend
 ἀδελφη, ης f sister, female believer

Phoebe may have been the bearer of this letter. Probably a businesswoman who is able to travel independently.

διακονος, ου m & f servant, helper,
 deacon

Was Phoebe a deacon in the formal sense of this term? Moo thinks that the phrase διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς "makes it more likely that Phoebe holds an official position in the church there. Phoebe is probably a 'deacon,' serving the church by ministering to the financial and material needs of the believers (see esp. 1 Tim 3:8-12; cf also Phil 1:1)." So also Wright who says, "Attempts to make διάκονος something else [other than a deacon in the church] fail."

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

Cenchrea was one of the ports of Corinth.

Romans 16:2

ἵνα αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων, καὶ παραστήτε αὐτῇ ἐν ᾧ ἄν ὑμῶν χρήζη πράγματι, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ.

προσδέξησθε Verb, aor midd dep subj, 2 pl
 προσδεχομαι receive, welcome, accept
 ἀξίως adv (from ἀξίος) worthy
 παραστήτε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl παριστημι
 and παριστανω provide
 χρηζω need, have need of
 πραγμα, τος n matter, thing
 προστατις, ιδος f helper, good friend

Moo suggests that the word may have the meaning here it often bears in secular Greek, namely 'patron, benefactor.' "Phoebe was probably a wealthy businesswoman, who used her wealth to support the church and its missionaries (like Paul). Her ministry in the church and beneficence to the church's workers make her worthy of a Christian greeting and any assistance the Roman church can give her."

ἐγενήθη Verb, aor indic, 3 s γινομαι

Romans 16:3

Ἀσπάσασθε Πρίσκαν καὶ Ἀκύλαν τοὺς συνεργούς μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

ἀσπαζομαι greet

συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker

Cf. Acts 18:2,18-19,26; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19.

Romans 16:4

οἵτινες ὑπὲρ τῆς ψυχῆς μου τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν, οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἐθνῶν,

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

ψυχη, ης f self, life, 'soul'

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

τραχηλος, ου m neck

ὑπέθηκαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ὑποτιθημι risk

τὸν ἑαυτῶν τράχηλον ὑπέθηκαν 'risked their necks.'

We have no other information on this incident. It may have been at the time of the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19).

μονος, η, ον only, alone

εὐχαριστω thank, give thanks

ἔθνος, ους n nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles

Romans 16:5

καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν. ἀσπάσασθε Ἐπαίνετον τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου, ὃς ἐστὶν ἀπαρχὴ τῆς Ἀσίας εἰς Χριστόν.

οἶκος, ου m house, home

For churches which met in homes see also 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philem 2. Aquila and Priscilla must have been fairly wealthy.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

Cf. 1 Cor 16:15 where Stephanus has the same honour in Achaea.

Romans 16:6

ἀσπάσασθε Μαριάμ, ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν εἰς ὑμᾶς.

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour

Romans 16:7

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ.

Ἰουνιᾶν NIV (along with RSV, NASB, TEV and NJB) assumes that this is a contraction of the masculine name Junianus. But the Greek form could reflect the female name Junia (AV, NRSV, REB). The latter seems more likely since it is a common Greek name whereas the contracted form of Ἰουνιανος is apparently unknown. They were probably husband and wife. (Some MSS read Ἰουλιαν).

This is the subject of much controversy, particularly since it seems that they may be termed 'apostles.'

συγγενης, ους m kinsman, fellow-countryman

συναιχμαλωτος, ου m fellow-prisoner

ἐπισημος, ον well known, outstanding

Either:

i) These were apostles (cf. 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25) and well known as such; or

ii) They were well known **to** the apostles.

Moo thinks the former more likely but, along with Cranfield and Dunn, thinks that the sense is 'commissioned missionary.'

Wright also thinks the former is meant, though he draws attention to Paul's use of the term 'apostle' to mean one who is 'a witness to the resurrection' (cf. 1 Cor 9:1).

γέγοναν Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl γινομαι

Romans 16:8

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀμπλιᾶτον τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου ἐν κυρίῳ.

Romans 16:9

ἀσπάσασθε Οὐρβανὸν τὸν συνεργὸν ἡμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ καὶ Στάχυν τὸν ἀγαπητόν μου.

συνεργος, ου v.3

Romans 16:10

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀπελλιῶν τὸν δόκιμον ἐν Χριστῷ. ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου.

δοκιμος, ον approved, genuine, valued

τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου 'those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.'

"It is quite likely that Aristobulus was the grandson of Herod the Great and brother of Agrippa I. He himself was not greeted by Paul, possibly because he himself was not a Christian, but members of his family were sent warm greetings as fellow-believers." Derek Tidball, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*. "The reference is probably mainly to the slaves who work for Aristobulus." Moo.

Romans 16:11

ἀσπάσασθε Ἡρῳδίωνα τὸν συγγενῆ μου.
ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ναρκίσσου τοὺς ὄντας ἐν κυρίῳ.

"Probably a freed slave who took the name of the Herodian family he served." Moo.

συγγενῆ Noun, acc s συγγενης, ους v.7

"Similarly it was the family of Narcissus, rather than Narcissus himself, who were greeted. It is usually thought that this Narcissus was the famous and very wealthy freedman of the emperor Claudius whom Juvenal mentions and who exercised tremendous influence over Claudius. The fact that he personally was not greeted either implies that he was already dead or that he himself had not become a Christian." Tidball. Wright comments, "If this is the same man, as most assume, Christians within his household after his death would have occupied a challenging and dangerous position."

Romans 16:12

ἀσπάσασθε Τρύφαιναν καὶ Τρυφῶσαν τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ. ἀσπάσασθε Περσίδα τὴν ἀγαπητήν, ἥτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ.
κοπιαῶ v.6

Romans 16:13

ἀσπάσασθε Ῥοῦφον τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμοῦ.

ἐκλεκτος, η, ον chosen

Perhaps the same person as is mentioned in Mk 15:21 as the son of Simon, the man forced to carry Jesus' cross. Wright comments, "One of the tantalising things about this chapter is that, like watching a sequence of film clips going by too fast to take in, we catch tiny glimpses into the world of early Christianity that could be very revealing if only we could freeze the frame and ask one or two leading questions. There was clearly quite a subculture growing up, but we know very nearly nothing about it."

Romans 16:14

ἀσπάσασθε Ἀσύγκριτον, Φλέγοντα, Ἐρμῆν, Πατροβᾶν, Ἐρμᾶν καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς ἀδελφούς.

The last is probably a reference to Christians who met in Hermas's house for worship.

Romans 16:15

ἀσπάσασθε Φιλόλογον καὶ Ἰουλίαν, Νηρέα καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ὀλυμπᾶν καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς πάντας ἀγίους.

ἀδελφη, ης f sister, female believer

"Some have speculated that Philologus and Julia were husband and wife, with Nereus and his sister being their children. They, with Olympas, play host to another house church." Wright.

Romans 16:16

Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ.
Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πᾶσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, ους reciprocal pronoun one another

φιλημα, τος n kiss

Cf. 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14.

Conclusions from this list of greetings

Moo draws the following conclusions:
"**Social composition of the church** ... The historian Peter Lampe has done a thorough study of the names in Romans 16. He concludes that most of the people whom Paul mentions are Gentiles or freedmen or are descendants of slaves and freedmen (*freedman* is the term given the class of freed slaves in the Roman empire). Note too that Paul specifically mentions at least two groups of slaves: the household (servants) of Aristobulus (v.10) and those of Narcissus (v.11)... What little evidence we have suggests that most of the early Christians came from the 'lower' classes."

"Organisation of the early church. What 16:1-16 reveals about the organisation of the church is that it was apparently loose. Paul refers to at least three, and perhaps five, house churches (vv. 5,14,15 are clear; the 'households' mentioned in vv.10 and 11 may also represent house churches). The Christian community reflects the loose organisation of the Jewish community, which was apparently also broken up into many independent synagogues. It was probably the case, for instance, that certain house churches were composed of believers 'weak in faith' and others of believers 'strong in faith' (see comments on 14:1-15:13). Paul's plea for acceptance of one another, then, is seeking reconciliation among various 'churches' in Rome."

"Women in the early church. Of the twenty-seven Christians Paul greets or commends in verses 1-15, ten (more than one-third) are women. Six of them (Phoebe [vv. 1-2], Priscilla [v.3], Junias [v.7], Tryphena [v.12], Tryphosa [v.12], and Persis [v.12]) are commended for their labour 'in the Lord.' Junia is a 'commissioned missionary (ἀποστολος; see comments on v.7), and Phoebe is a benefactor and deacon of the church. What conclusions can we draw...? (1) women made up a significant part of the early Christian church...; (2) women were given the same access to God that men enjoyed (e.g., Gal 3:28; 1 Peter 3:7); and (3) women engaged in significant ministry."

And Wright concludes, "What we ... have, then, is a small, vulnerable church, needing to know and trust one another across various boundaries; a church many of whose members were not native to Rome, living most likely in immigrant communities within particular areas; a church in which men and women alike took leadership roles; a church where families and households formed the basis of worshiping communities. There is something both attractive and frightening about this picture: enormous potential, huge risks, a community both lively and vulnerable. This is the community that will now be the first to hear one of the greatest letters in the history of the world."

Romans 16:17-19

"Paul does not elsewhere launch into a warning about false teachers in the conclusion of a letter. But he does issue exhortations and warnings that may presume their presence (e.g. 1 Cor 16:13-14; 2 Cor 13:11; Col 4:17). It is a greater mystery why he waits until the very end of Romans to issue such a warning. Possibly he waits until now because the false teachers have not yet arrived on the scene, or because he only hears about the threat as he is finishing the letter." Moo.

Romans 16:17

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, σκοπεῖν τοὺς τὰς διχοστασίας καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλα παρὰ τὴν διδασχὴν ἣν ὑμεῖς ἐμάθετε ποιοῦντας, καὶ ἐκκλίνετε ἀπ' αὐτῶν·

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for)
διχοστασια, ας f division, dissension

A word found only here and in Gal 5:20.

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence, obstacle
παρα preposition with acc beside, rather than, contrary to
διδασχη, ης f teaching, what is taught
ἐμάθετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl μανθανω
learn, find out
ἐκκλίνετε Verb, pres act imperat, 2 pl
ἐκκλινω turn away, turn aside

Romans 16:18

οἱ γὰρ τοιοῦτοι τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Χριστῷ οὐ δουλεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐαυτῶν κοιλίᾳ, καὶ διὰ τῆς χρηστολογίας καὶ εὐλογίας ἐξαπατῶσι τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀκάκων.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον such, of such kind
ἐαντος v.4
κοιλια, ας f stomach

Barrett believes the reference here is not to gluttony but to a preoccupation with food laws. Murray thinks it simply means preoccupation with self-service, as does Moo who thinks the term "a synecdoche for sensual appetites generally. The false teachers are interested in their own pleasure and ease, not in helping people to know God." So Wright who thinks it refers to "their appetites in general." Cf. Phil 3:18-19.

χρηστολογια, ας f smooth talk, plausible talk
εὐλογια, ας f blessing, praise
ἐξαπαταω deceive, lead astray
ἀκακος, ον innocent, unsuspecting

Romans 16:19

ἡ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὑπακοή εἰς πάντας ἀφίκετο· ἐφ' ὑμῖν οὖν χαίρω, θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς σοφοὺς εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀκεραίους δὲ εἰς τὸ κακόν.

ὑπακοή, ης f obedience

ἀφίκετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἀφικνεομαι reach, be known to

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

θέλω wish, will

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

ἀκεραιος, ον innocent, guiltless

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

ἀκεραίους δὲ εἰς τὸ κακόν a play on the phrase τῶν ἀκακῶν at the end of the previous verse. An echo of Jesus' words recorded in Matt 10:16.

Romans 16:20

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης συντρίψει τὸν Σατανᾶν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ὑμῶν ἐν τάχει. ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

συντριβῶ break in pieces, crush, shatter, bruise

Σατανας, α the Adversary, Satan

πόδας Noun, acc pl ποδες, ποδος m foot

ταχος, ους n speed; ἐν τ. speedily, quickly, without delay, soon

Cf. Gen 3:15, and see also Lk 10:17-19 and behind that Ps 91:13. Cf. also Rev 12:10-11. "Paul elsewhere sees the new, young church vulnerable to enemy attack; it was part of his theology of new creation that the church was now, like Adam and Eve, open to fresh deceit (2 Cor 11:3). But his earlier exposition of the victory of God in Jesus Christ over the sin of Adam and all its entail (5:12-21) enables him here simply to promise that the victory promised in Genesis will be theirs, and that it will come soon." Wright.

"Paul's grace wish in verse 20b finds a parallel in every other letter he writes. It acts as a kind of bookend with the beginning of the letter, since Paul there wishes the Romans 'grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ' (1:7)." Moo.

Most MSS read Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ but the shorter reading Ἰησοῦ is supported by p⁴⁶ & B 1881 and "appears to be more primitive." Metzger. The Byzantine Text, followed by the TR, repeats 'the grace' before the doxology, i.e. as 16:24.

Romans 16:21

Ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Τιμόθεος ὁ συνεργός μου, καὶ Λούκιος καὶ Ἰάσων καὶ Σωσίπατρος οἱ συγγενεῖς μου.

συνεργος, ου see v.3

Λούκιος probably not Luke the Evangelist

Ἰάσων cf. Acts 17:5-9.

Σωσίπατρος cf. Acts 20:4.

συγγενης, ους see v.7

Romans 16:22

ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ.

ἐπιστολη, ης f letter

Paul's amanuensis "peeps for a moment out of hiding." Wright.

Romans 16:23

ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Γάϊος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας. ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Ἔραστος ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως καὶ Κούαρτος ὁ ἀδελφός.

Γάϊος cf. 1 Cor 1:14.

ξενος, ου foreigner; host

The latter sense is intended here. Gaius is Paul's host and would seem to have been owner of a house in which the church at Corinth frequently met.

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

"An inscription has been discovered in Corinth that refers to an Erastus who was an *aedile* of the city. This title may be equivalent to Paul's *oikonomos* (NIV 'director of public works'). Even if the two are not identical, Erastus may first have served as *oikonomos* before being promoted to *aedile*." Moo.

οικονομος, ου m steward, manager

πολις, εως f city, town

Romans 16:24

Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. Ἀμήν.

This verse is omitted from what are considered the best MSS. It consists of a repetition of the latter half of v. 20, with some variations.

Verses 25-27

The following verses are found moved to two other places in a variety of MSS but hardly any copies omit them altogether. The repositioning may have been to make the truncated letter (without greetings) more suitable for general church reading.

On these verses, see particularly, I. Howard Marshall, "Romans 16:25-27 – An Apt Conclusion," *Romans and The People of God*, eds. Sven K Soderlund & NT Wright, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1999, pp 170-184. The doxology echoes many of the key themes of the letter.

Romans 16:25

[Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ ὑμᾶς στηρίζαι κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν μυστηρίου χρόνοις αἰωνίοις σεσηγημένον

στηρίζω strengthen, establish, set firm

"While Paul (cf. 1:11) or others seek to establish believers in their faith, only God can ultimately do so." Moo. He is the source of all power.

κήρυγμα, τὸς n message, proclamation
ἀποκαλύψις, εὼς f revelation
μυστηρίον, οὐ n secret, mystery (of something formerly unknown but now revealed)

χρονος, οὐ m time, period of time

αἰωνιος, οὐ eternal, everlasting

σεσηγημένου Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n gen s
σιγαω keep silent, keep secret

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:6-7; Eph 1:9; 3:3-9; Col 1:26-27..

Romans 16:26

φανερωθέντος δὲ νῦν διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν κατ' ἐπιταγὴν τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη γνωρισθέντος,

φανερωθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
φανεροω make known, reveal
γραφη, ης f writing, Scripture
προφητικος, η, ον prophetic
ἐπιταγή, ης f command, authority

"The fact and timing of the revelation of this mystery lay in God's plan; it was his 'command' that put the gospel into effect." Moo.

αἰωνιος, οὐ eternal, everlasting

ὑπακοη, ης f obedience

πιστις, εὼς f faith, trust, belief

Cf 1:5.

γνωρισθέντος Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
γνωρίζω make known, disclose

"All this is designed to explain the significance of the gospel proclamation of Jesus Christ: when this gospel is announced, it enables people of every nation to see that in Jesus the veil has been drawn back on the eternal plan of the eternal God, and to respond in grateful and obedient loyalty and trust. And it is by this gospel that God is able to strengthen the young church, not least through Paul's ministry as he comes to Rome (1:11)." Wright.

Romans 16:27

μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.]

μονος, η, ον only, alone

σοφος, η, ον wise, experienced

Some MSS read αὐτῷ in place of ᾧ, some few (including B) omit either. Metzger writes "Despite the difficulty of construing the sentence when ᾧ is read, the committee felt constrained to include the word on the strength of early and diversified external evidence. The other readings have an appearance of being correctives introduced by various copyists in order to avoid anacoluthon and to complete the sentence."

δοξα, ης f glory

αιωνας Noun, acc pl αιων, αιωνος m age, eternity

"The concluding description of God (16:27) reminds us especially that he has instituted a 'wise' and wonderful plan for the redemption of his creation (cf. 11:33-36). Surely our response should echo Paul, as we give glory to him through Jesus Christ!" Moo.