

Romans – An Hebraic Perspective
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You are responsible before the Creator of the Universe to act honourably. HE is your judge. My advice is to act accordingly. He can inflict a LOT more sorrow than some shyster lawyer.

This study was originally a weekly Bible Study. Where you see a bold **O&C**, time was taken to entertain Questions and Comments from the attendees. The author feels that he is in as much need of teaching as anyone else; is open to other's opinions and really loves 'rabbit trails' that are salient to the immediate topic at hand. He thinks more is learned by discussion than by lecture.

Introduction

This work is a study of the book of Romans taught from an Hebraic perspective. This author taught through the book some 10 or so years ago, when he was a run of the mill dispensationalist and fundamentalist. He is no longer a dispensationalist, though he yet considers himself a fundamentalist.

Romans will look quite different from an Hebraic mindset than it does from that of a dispensationalist because the Hebraic mind sees life and all that pertains thereto as cyclical, while the dispensationalist, who is more influenced by Hellenistic thought, sees it as more linear. Time may be linear, but man's spiritual life is not. It always seems that Y'hovah, who is the creator of all there is, doesn't allow one of his own to progress to the next level until he succeeds in the one he's in. He gives us choices to take and when we finally take the right choice he gives us another. It seems that the choices are always whether to obey him or to disobey him, or to ask him to illuminate us as to the choice HE would have us take or go our own way. It amounts to the same thing.

Hebraic thought sees biblical history as prophecy of the end times and biblical prophecy as 'here now; not yet'; or having multiple fulfillments, usually at least 3 which are seen as relatively immediate in close time proximity to the prophecy's announcement, then at least one intermediate or penultimate fulfillment and culminating in the ultimate, complete fulfillment. One example is the abomination of desolation, which has had at least 3 partial fulfillments, but none has been complete. The ultimate fulfillment is, therefore, yet future.

1 Cor. 10:1-4, 11 (KJV)

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all *our fathers* were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [2] And were all baptized unto Moshe in the cloud and in the sea; [3] And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [4] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Moshiah (Messiah)." Vv 5-10 specify some of the events of that Exodus.

[11] "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for **our** admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

The ones who experienced the Exodus got a mere sample of our admonition. Like the pink spoon at Baskin-Robbins. Here now; Not yet.

Eccles. 1:9 (KJV)

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

Eccles. 3:15 (KJV)

"That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and Elohim requireth that which is past."

Rav Sha'ul, the apostle Paul, tells the Corinthian believers, few of whom would call themselves Jews or even Hebrew (cf. 1.2 – please note the phrase, "both theirs and ours", which speaks of the Gentiles and the Jews respectively), that THEIR fathers were with Moshe at the Red Sea, ate the manna and drank from the Rock at Rephidim, and that the Rock that followed our fathers was, metaphorically or in parable, Messiah Yeshua.

The author is a 'two-house', Hebrew Roots, Messianic believer in Yeshua, who came as Messiah, the son of Joseph, and who will return as Messiah, the son of David. The '2

messiah' thought is Hebraic. The rabbis couldn't reconcile the disparate ministries of Messiah, hence 2 Messiahs. We see that Yeshua came the first time as 'Yoseph's son' and will come later as David's son. Not 2 Messiah's, but 2 appearances. Q&C

A 'two house' Messianic is one who believes that Y'hovah has dealt with Jacob's sons Judah and Ephraim as separate kingdoms ever since Ya'acov took Ephraim, Yoseph's 2nd born son, as his own firstborn.

Genesis 48:14-19 (KJV)

"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

[15] And he blessed Joseph, and said, Elohim, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the Elohim which fed me all my life long unto this day, [16] The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. [17] And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. [18] And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. [19] And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and *his seed shall become a multitude of nations*" (melo hagoyim , a thought Paul explores in Romans – fullness of the gentiles).

Context shows that Ya'acov gave Ephraim the firstborn blessing (the right hand signifies the firstborn, as Y'hovah Yeshua is the right hand of the Father), even though Reuben was physically his first. Reuben had forfeited his right by lying with Bilhah, his father's concubine and the mother of 2 of Reuben's brothers (a relationship that would later be codified as sinful in the Torah of Moshe, though it was understood to be sinful as it happened).

In v.19, Ya'acov refers to 'a multitude of nations', which in Hebrew is *melo hagoyim*. Sha'ul refers to this phrase when he says in Rom. 11.25 – 'until the fullness of the gentiles be come in.' That phrase, 'fullness of the gentiles' would be *melo hagoyim* in Hebrew. I see this as a reference to many or most gentiles (and the 'church', Hebrew *kahal*) being descendants, whether physically or metaphorically, of Ephraim Yisrael. We stated above that Yeshua came as Messiah, Son of Yoseph and will return as Messiah, Son of David. He said himself that he was sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Yisrael" in Mat 10.6 and 15.24.

Why would he be sent to Yisrael and not Yehudah? Here's some background.

Jeremiah 3:8 (KJV)

"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby **backsliding Israel committed adultery** I had *put her away, and given her a bill of divorce*; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."

Nowhere did Y'hovah put Yehudah away or give her a bill of divorce. Yehudah was not lost to the nations, as was Israel. After the House of Israel rebelled and was carried off to Assyria, she was assimilated and lost in the nations of the world. She was given a divorce and sent out of the house. See the restrictions when a bill of divorce is given.

Deut. 24:1-4 (KJV)

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then *let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house*. [2] And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. [3] And if the latter husband hate her, and

write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; [4] **Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Y'hovah:** and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Y'hovah Elohecha giveth thee for an inheritance."

For Y'hovah Yeshua to take Ephraim (the church?) as wife after he'd divorced her, AND sent her out of the house (exiled), AND she'd married another husband (the idols of the nations/Satan), would have been an abomination against himself. That wasn't going to happen. So how could he fulfill the prophecy of Ezek. 37.15ff and reconcile Ephraim and join her to Yehuda, making them *echad*? Look at Rom.7.1-4 and tell me if you see an answer. (Wait for some replies) Hosea 1 & 2 are a picture of the relationship of Y'hovah and Ephraim. That is a taste of the 2-house idea. It is from this perspective that this study will be shared. **Q&C**

Some historical context¹

JEWS IN 1ST CENTURY ROME

By the time of Yeshua and Paul, the land of Israel (Judea and Samaria) had been part of the Roman Empire for several decades. The first emperor, Julius Caesar, granted rights to Jewish communities because their ancestral laws predated Rome. Jews had legal privileges as a *collegia* (defined by Roman law as religious & legal entities), giving them the right to assemble, have common meals and property, govern and tax themselves, and enforce their own discipline.

All of this authority was placed under the auspices of the Synagogue and its legal body, the Sanhedrin. The Jews were also given exemption from military service and emperor worship. They were the only non-pagan religious group in the Roman empire to have these rights. Under Roman law, no new religions were allowed and all other religious societies (other than Judaism) were forbidden by Caesar to have presence in the city of Rome. All of these factors led to much resentment and the formation of a social anti-Jewish sentiment among the population.

And, of course, that has found its way down the centuries to this day through Roman influences within Christianity. – Mark P.

JEWISH VERSUS ROMAN CULTURE

Anti-Jewish commentaries can be found in many of the writings of popular Roman authors of the time such as; Tacitus, Poseidonius, Apollonius Molon, Damocritus, Apion, Quintilian, Cicero, Plutarch, Philostratus and Aelius Aristeides. Most of their slurs centered around Jewish separatism, the Sabbath, dietary laws and circumcision. The Roman world was pagan and centered around the worship of many gods. Idolatry was woven into Roman life. Basic table fellowship was done with a god as guest of honor or master of ceremonies. Meat and wine were often eaten only in "religious" settings.

Roman society was also centered around "open-mindedness", community, and a Hellenistic view of life, emulating the culture and philosophies of the Greeks. In the midst

of this was a Jewish society of around 7 million (about 10 percent of the Roman population), a very noticeable minority. The Roman culture stood in great contrast to that of the Jews and their Torah, which taught; moral absolutes, separation from the (pagan) ways of Rome and belief in one Elohim (and living for Him).

The majority of Roman citizens could not comprehend the "strangeness" of the Jews. Beyond that, proselytism was considered an un-Roman act. Jews were despised by the rest of the Roman people for their peculiar religious practices and failure to worship the gods of Rome -- as every other conquered people was forced to do. The "citizen of the Pax Romana" was the antithesis of "a good Jew."

THE SYNAGOGUE

The authority given by the Romans to the Synagogue explains such occurrences as Paul being able to persecute Jewish believers (before his conversion) as mentioned in the book of Acts. (These were Messianic Jewish believers, still under the authority of the Synagogue, even as believers. They were not "Xians" as often taught, but full members of the synagogue.) The Synagogue had the right to enforce discipline on anyone who was under its authority. As Scripture points out, Paul was given the "39 lashes" by the Synagogue authorities on more than one occasion (2 Corinthians 6:3-10; Acts 21:21-26; 32).

An important point to note here is that **Paul kept himself under the authority of the Synagogue.** According to Roman law, he could have used his Roman citizenship to stop this discipline. However, according to Jewish law, he then would have forfeited his right to speak and teach in the Synagogue and possibly been barred from the Temple. As we will see in this study [The Mystery of Romans, the Jewish Context of Paul's Letter by Mark Nanos], although Paul is commonly known as "the apostle to the Gentiles," this ministry was for the benefit of Israel (Romans 11:13-14).

When the "Synagogue" is mentioned in Scripture it is important to note that this is not simply some local religious group or building. The Synagogue was a system made up of groups throughout Judea and out of the land. Each was independent but operated in concert with the others. Although there were varying views, factions and sects, there were key similarities including; Torah observance, Sabbath, circumcision, and dietary halacha (keeping the kosher laws). There was a hierarchy of authority and all ultimately answered to the Sanhedrin.

The Synagogue was also a social institution around which Jewish community life revolved. Leaders were responsible to educate children, provide lodging for travelers and bury their dead. The association of synagogues acted together like the organization and government of a city. Each member was under authority and discipline of the leaders. Their parameters of authority in relation to the Jewish Community included:

Religious education; Administration, including collection of temple tax and Roman tax; Discipline, including judgment and punishment (flogging is mentioned in the Mishnah [as well as in Paul's writing – author]).

The Jewish society in the city of Rome consisted of a number of synagogue communities.

About a dozen have been positively identified, but there were likely many more, due to smaller size of the homes of the Jews, that were mostly located in less affluent sections of Rome. Meetings were often held in the larger homes.

It is also important for this study to note that such gatherings were also considered to be held under Jewish synagogue authority as they were the only religious group allowed to do this by law. There were no "Christian house churches," as is often incorrectly taught. Not only because it would have been illegal to hold such meetings, but Christianity as a separate sect did not exist at the time of Paul's letter to Rome. Acts 15 shows that decisions regarding gentiles were being made by their Jewish leadership, who stated that the gentiles would learn more as they continued attending Synagogue (Acts 15:21). **Q&C**

GENTILES WITHIN JUDAISM

Gentiles have always had the option to follow the minimal requirements of Elohim or to become involved with the faith of Israel, and even fully convert. They were also welcome in the Synagogue, as long as they acted appropriately. There was no "corner bookstore" for them to purchase a Bible and go home and read it. The only place they could hear the Scriptures read was in the Synagogue (or the actual Temple if in Jerusalem).

Judaism had long established standards for gentile Elohim-followers who were welcome in synagogue (re: Isaiah 56:6-7). Such gentiles were regarded as "potential" Jews in different stages of development. There were minimal requirements for gentiles who were righteous without becoming Jews, and others for gentiles in process of conversion to Judaism. Cornelius, a Roman mentioned in Acts, is an example of a gentile who had taken on some of the ways of Judaism.

These standards were in a constant state of evolution and discussion within Judaism. The rules also varied between gentiles living in the land of Israel, versus those among the Jewish diaspora. As such, Acts 15:19-32, 16:1-5 and 21:25 reflects the minimum standards for gentile followers of Yeshua, living among Jews in a diaspora setting at that time. This was not a strict or stagnant definition, as these gentile believers were to continue learning and taking on more of the Torah as they went to Synagogue (Acts 15:21). This was nothing new -- Paul's view on this issue is also seen in Ephesians 2:10-12, where he tells gentiles that now they are part of the faith of Israel, including its Torah.

This is another important point - which stands in contrast to standard Christian doctrine. Although gentiles were not required to take on all the Torah as a prerequisite to salvation, the Torah has always been Elohim's guideline for all his "called out ones" to live by -- be they Jew or gentile...

THE CONGREGATION AT ROME

The congregation at Rome had a very important distinction to the other Messianic congregations mentioned in the "New Testament." It **was the only one not directly founded by one of the apostles**. It would seem that at the time of the events of Acts 2, some of the Jews who came from Rome to Jerusalem for the feast of Shavuot, became believers. They returned to their city and began a congregation. By the time of Paul's letter, the congregational makeup most likely had a gentile majority, though the

leadership probably was still in Jewish hands.

Unfortunately, *the congregation was not properly established by apostolic authority and had developed internal problems. **This is the purpose for which Paul wrote the book of Romans.*** As we will see, much of the difficulty the congregation was experiencing was caused by a great influx of gentiles. Most of these gentiles were not previously regular Synagogue attendees with an appreciation of the faith of Israel (as compared to those in Jerusalem for example). Rather, they entered their "new faith" directly from the pagan Roman world, full of its anti-Jewish prejudices, as outlined above. As new "believers," they knew very little about Elohim and His Messiah, and virtually nothing of the Torah. Beyond that, they had no respect for Jewish customs and Synagogue regulations. **Q&C**

JEWISH VIEW OF SALVATION

Judaism of the second Temple period (and prior) considered the concept of salvation more national (corporate) than exclusively personal, as modern Christianity views it. The salvation of the individual Jew was connected to the salvation of the entire people. This belief stemmed directly from the teachings of the Torah. The idea of corporate salvation of Israel is reflected in Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly in chapters 9-11.

Although Elohim, in the Torah, taught His people sanctification of the individual, He also expected them to function together (spiritually) and be accountable to one another. This was (and is still today) perceived to be a source of conflict, as it often meant having to "limit" your personal spiritual experience on account of someone else.

The concept of salvation was tied to that of restoration for Israel. It included such ideas as: *Rescue from national enemies; Restoration of national symbols; State of shalom among peoples; Inauguration of the age to come; Liberation from Rome; Restoration of the Temple; Free enjoyment of their own land; Inauguration of a new covenant between Israel and her Elohim.* Some of the Scriptures that testify to these things are: Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:9-10; 27:12; 33:22; 42:1-6; 45:14, 23; 49:5-6, 23; 51:4-5; 52:7-10; 54:3; 56:1-8; 60-66; Ezekiel 17; 20:42; 34; 36:9-12; 39:26; 47:13-48; 48:35; Daniel 7; Micah 2:12; 4; 5:10-15; 7:17; Amos 9:11-13; Zechariah 2:11; 8:20-23; 14:1-11; Zephaniah 2:9-10; Joel 3:17.

The Jews of the first century expected to be rescued from foreign dominion. (Hence the rejection of Yeshua in his day. They wanted the Son of David, but he came as the Son of Yoseph. – Mark P.) This would occur after they suffered (a purification process) for past breaches of their covenant with Elohim. (See: Deuteronomy 4:32, Isaiah 40:1-2, Jeremiah 31:27-40, Ezekiel 18; 36:24-28, and Hosea 14:2.)

Ideas regarding the Messiah did not have a consensus. The exception to this would be the Qumran community, whose literature has a highly developed sense of Messiah. Even in the Qumran literature however, one can see evolving thought about Messiah. They seem to go from a two-Messiah theory to a belief in a single Messiah as represented by Melchizedek, who resolved the "conflict" of Messiah being both King and Priest. This will be discussed later in this study. (Both turned out to be true! – Mark P.)

Perhaps the one view of Messiah shared among the groups was that His main task would be directly related to the restoration of Israel. (Hence some of the opinions expressed by the people about Yeshua, in the Gospels, and the continued rejection of Yeshua as Messiah by Jews today.)

JEWISH VIEW OF FAITH

This is an important topic when discussing faith in Jewish texts such as the book of Romans in the "New Testament." A 20th century "western" definition of faith is often used to support theologies that claim to be based on the (Hebrew) Scriptures.

For instance, within modern Christianity there is a range of belief regarding faith:

- 1) *The idea that faith is totally separate from "works" based on verses such as Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 3:28 and others (as taught by some Protestants)*
- 2) *The idea that works must be performed to "earn salvation" (i.e., penance and purgatory, as taught by some Catholics)*
- 3) *The idea that works (following some of the Torah's commandments) are somehow part of the equation, but we are "not under the Law," as we have "freedom in Moshiah" (as taught by both Protestants, Catholics and others)*

When dealing with the texts of the "New Testament," the English language word "faith" must be interpreted in the Hebrew context it was originally conceived in by the author. As such, the word "trust" may be a better one to use, as it conveys a combination of belief and action.

The Jewish view of "faith," including that of Paul, is established in ideas such as:

Faith is active and includes the "works" of following Torah. The foundational statement of faith in Judaism is the "Shema," from Deuteronomy 6:4. The term "hear" (as in "Hear O Israel ...") means to hear and respond obediently. Faith and obedience are woven together. This is clearly reflected in the words of Yeshua, Paul and James. (There is a Hebrew idiom, used throughout scripture – "Hearken unto XXX" – which means "obey XXX".)

Walking in Elohim's Torah is a sign of established faith, as founded in: Exodus 16:4; Leviticus 18:3-4; Deuteronomy 28:9; Joshua 22:5; Jeremiah 44:23; Ezekiel 5:6-7; Daniel 9:10 and Micah 4:2. We are told in James 1:23-25 to look in the perfect law (Torah) of liberty to make sure we are living correctly before Elohim.

Judaism had an established yet evolving halacha (standard) for "walking in faith" for gentiles. The "New Testament" gives us a "snapshot" of what the current practice was, as seen in: Matthew 3:8; Acts 15:19-16:4; Ephesians 2:10; James 2:19-20 and John 14:15.

The Tanakh taught that the same Torah applied for gentiles following Elohim who were living in the Land. (Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 19:33-34; 24:22; Numbers 9:14; 15:15-16, 29.) This teaching can be seen as continuing in both Acts 15:21, where it states that new gentile believers will continue Torah learning as they attend synagogue, and also in Ephesians 2:10-12, where Paul tells gentiles that before they came to faith they were not part of the commonwealth and covenant of Israel. This latter verse implies

that these gentiles now DID have a relationship to this covenant, which is based on the Torah -- both knowing and doing it -- as Paul and James both attest to:

Romans 2:13 - For not the hearers of the law are just before Elohim, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

James 1:22 - But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

The concept of obedience of faith, is one that we will see as our Romans study goes forward. **Q&C**

JEWISH VIEW OF FREEDOM

In the old movie, "The Ten Commandments" with Charlton Heston, Moshe descends Mount Sinai and sees the golden calf. He then holds the two tablets above his head and shouts to the Israelites, "There is no freedom outside the Law!"

For once, Hollywood got it right. It is a truly unfortunate situation that today many people believe that freedom **in** their "Messiah" means freedom **from** the Law. (It should be made clear before going any further, that "Law" is an inaccurate translation for "Torah," as it actually means "revelation" or "instruction" from Elohim.)

This belief ("we are not under the Law") can be traced back to the development of the early "Church" (and its anti-Semitic roots) and was amplified by later gentiles such as Martin Luther, and the other "Protestant reformers." Of course, by the time of Luther, "the Church" already had no regard for Torah. The Protestant reformation initiated the process of defining a theology that separated itself from its Catholic origins. However, this was not a return to the faith of Israel as followed by Yeshua, Paul and the rest of the Jews in the pages of the "New Testament." (There are several articles in the [YashaNet Library](#) on these topics.)

Freedom in the mind of Paul and other Jews of his time was founded in the events surrounding the giving of the Torah (Exodus 4:22-23; Exodus 7:16; Exodus 8:1). Although the Hebrews experienced a physical freedom when Elohim led them out of Egypt, their true freedom came when they received the Torah. Ask anyone what Moshe said to Pharaoh on multiple occasions, and they will probably recall him saying, "Let my people go." However, this is only half the message. As Scripture shows, what Elohim told Moshe to say was, "Let my people go, so they may serve me." They were then given the Torah to enable them to do just this.

Freedom also involves serving a higher purpose. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul speaks of having freedom to eat meat that may have been sacrificed to idols, as an idol is a meaningless thing to the believer. He cautions however, that if this action may cause another person grief, the higher principle is to defer from doing anything that may cause the other person to stumble. Hence freedom means having the ability (and responsibility) to NOT partake of certain things. This concept will be important when we study the text of the Romans letter.

Of course the ultimate example of this is Yeshua, who had the "freedom" to not die on the cross, yet did so in order to serve the higher purpose He was ordained for. **Q&C**

PAUL'S VIEW OF FAITH

To better understand the faith that Paul teaches, we need to go back to the time of the first century. Judaism was dominated by a group called the *Pharisees*, whose affairs and leadership were both supported by, and limited by, the Roman government. The first issue that must be addressed is the term "Pharisee" itself.

A modern dictionary (1) gives two definitions:

1). *A member of an ancient Jewish sect that emphasized strict interpretation and observance of the Mosaic law in both its oral and written form.*

2). *A hypocritically self-righteous person.*

Our modern western culture equates #1 above with #2. Pharisees are "the bad guys," and the beliefs they held were wrong too. After all, didn't Yeshua call them *hypocrites*, *evil*, *sons of snakes*, etc.? How do we reconcile this with the fact that twenty years into his ministry for Yeshua, Paul still identified himself as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6, 26:5). As a good Pharisee, Paul upheld and kept the Torah all of his life -- we see this throughout the book of Acts and in his letters.

When we read the "New Testament" in its proper, Hebrew context, we find that Paul, (properly named *Sha'ul*), read, understood, taught, and wrote about the Scriptures and the Messiah from a Pharisaic Hebrew mindset. Paul was personally taught by Gamaliel, who was himself a Pharisee and the head of the Sanhedrin. There is a real possibility that Paul was being prepared to take over the Sanhedrin's leadership. This would have made Paul the equivalent of "Chief Justice of the Supreme Court" of Israel.

Paul called himself a "*Hebrew of Hebrews*," a term that means he was not a Hellenistic Jew (Jews that had largely abandoned much of the Torah in order to be "more accepted" in the Greek/Roman culture they lived in). Scripture shows that none of this changed when Paul became a believer.

PAUL'S MISSION TO THE GENTILES

Paul received his "marching orders" from the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. This council was called to address the specific issue of Gentiles having to prove themselves through works of the Torah PRIOR to salvation (Acts 15:1). The Gospel was now going out to a very pagan Gentile world, and these new believers were coming directly into the faith of Israel through the Messiah.

No longer did they have to "come up through the ranks" of Judaism as Gentiles had before. This was a "new way" of doing things, but it was confirmed by Elohim (Acts 15:8). It was difficult for many Jews to embrace this "instant acceptance of Gentiles," as these

converted pagans knew nothing of Torah and they brought a lot of terrible practices with them.

Peter's comment (Acts 15:10) pointed out to those who wanted the gentiles "to become Jews first," that if Elohim had commanded perfect Torah observance as a prerequisite to faith, then they all were in jeopardy, as none of them could keep it perfectly prior to faith. Nonetheless, once these gentiles accepted Yeshua, the Council required them to begin to immediately follow certain minimal Torah commands (Acts 15:20). This was done in order to fellowship with Jewish (and also other Gentile) believers who already knew and kept Torah.

The council gave these basic Torah commands with the understanding that these gentiles would learn more of Moshe' Torah as they attended Synagogue/Temple. (This is the meaning of Acts 15:21.) If the gentiles did not follow the minimal commands of the council, they would have been thrown out of the Synagogues and not exposed to the continued reading and study of Elohim's word. **Q&C**

THE TORAH IN THE LIFE OF PAUL

In the book of Acts, Luke makes it clear that those of Israel who accepted the Messiah of Israel AND followed the Torah, were the "ecclesia" (meaning, "called out ones" and NOT "the Church") Paul did not hold a different view. Scripture shows that He himself kept Torah and spoke in favor of it:

He circumcised a man who had not yet been:

Acts 16:1-3 - *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

He took a Torah vow:

Acts 18:18 - *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head (Nazarite vow, Num.6) in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.*

He continued to follow the Levitical feast day of Unleavened Bread:

Acts 20:6 - *And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.*

He kept and encouraged others to keep Passover:

1 Cor. 5:8 - *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

He continued to follow the Levitical feast day of Shavuot (Pentecost):

Acts 20:16 - *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.*

1 Corinthians 16:8 - *But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.*

He kept Yom Kippur (this is the fast mentioned in the following verse):

Acts 27:9 - *Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,*

He proved he did not teach against Torah by taking a vow (Nazarite vow):

Acts 21:21-26 - *And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moshe, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a (Nazarite) vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing: but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. **As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.** Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself [mikvah – baptism – Mark P.] with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.*

He cited his continued Torah observance in his defense before a Roman governor:

Acts 24:14-17 - *But this I confess unto thee, that after **the way which they call heresy**, so worship I the Elohim of my fathers, **believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets**: And have hope toward Elohim, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward Elohim, and toward men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.*

And again to another Roman governor:

Acts 25.8 - *While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.*

And to a Jewish audience:

Acts 28:17 - *And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Q&C*

THE TORAH IN PAUL'S TEACHINGS

Paul taught others to keep Torah in the same way. An excellent example can be seen where he instructed Timothy to "rightly divide" the word of Elohim. This means that there is a correct way to "sort out" Scripture. What is this way? This was to be done according to Torah, as Torah (including the rest of the Tanakh), are the Scriptures Paul wrote about to Timothy, saying:

2 Timothy 3:15-17 - *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Moshiach Yeshua. All scripture is given by inspiration of Elohim, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of Elohim may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

There are several important teachings in these three verses:

- 1). Timothy had the Scriptures Paul refers to, *since he was a child*. This did NOT include the "New Testament."
 - 2). Elohim's plan of salvation in the "Old Testament" Scriptures was through faith. Elohim has not changed.
 - 3). The "Old Testament" Scriptures were what was to be used **by believers in Yeshua** for; *doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness*. How many people following Yeshua today teach about Him and what faith is, from the "Old Testament?" Paul told Timothy to do this.
 - 4). Works are inseparable from faith.
 - 5). With these "Old Testament" Scriptures, the man of Elohim is *thoroughly furnished*. The "New Testament," though it is also inspired, does not contradict anything in the Torah/Tanakh. In fact the "New Testament" books must be interpreted in light of what the Torah already teaches - not the other way around.
- Unfortunately, most people coming to faith today are first taught a church's particular theology regarding the "New Testament" (i.e., one not grounded in Torah) and then the "Old Testament" is interpreted for them according to their church's view of the "New Testament." This was not the method of the original Nazarene Messianic community.

To the first believers, the letters of the New Testament, though inspired, were not simply "more books of the Bible," to be read any way one pleased (i.e., ahead of a proper understanding of the Torah.) The epistles of Paul, James, Peter and John were viewed as containing *halachic teachings* -- explanations (often to gentiles) of how to follow Torah as a believer (or community of believers) in Messiah Yeshua.

Today, there is a "Yeshua" that is preached almost exclusively from the New Testament. Did Paul and the other disciples preach Yeshua using the New Testament? Of course not

-- all they had was the Tanakh. The Torah, which is the Word of Elohim, came first, and nothing can contradict it or it is to be rejected.

We are saved by faith alone -- but this faith, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, (both "Old" and "New" Hebrew Testaments) is a trusting relationship that is inseparable from following Elohim's word on how we are to live -- His Torah. Yeshua Himself is inseparable from the Torah, as He is its goal and fulfillment -- *the "walking Torah."* This teaching is consistent through the "New Testament" when interpreted correctly.

Paul himself says if you are a Gentile who has chosen to follow the Messiah -- you now have a relationship to the Torah of Israel - The Torah that holds *the covenants of promise*:

Ephesians 2:11-12 - *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Moshiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without Elohim in the world:*

Torah is our guide in interpreting our life's walk, as the US Constitution is to guide the Constitutional Courts in interpreting laws passed by Congress. If any action does not line up with the guide, we need to take steps to make it do so. Nothing can interpret the guide, lest it become useless as such. **Q&C**

Roman Anti-Semitism and Development of the "Church"

In order to properly understand the book of Romans, modern prejudices must be understood and addressed. Understanding "why" certain teachings are incorrect is helped by knowing "what" their roots are, and "where" they came from.

As previously mentioned, first century Rome had its "problems" with its Jewish province in Judea-Samaria. There were a number of skirmishes and several wars fought in the first and second centuries. With the war that ended in 70 AD, much of the Torah-based, Jerusalem-centered Messianic community was killed or scattered.

Two important events occurred around this time:

- 1). James (actually named Jacob/Ya'acov) the brother of Yeshua died.
- 2). The Temple was destroyed.

This combination of events caused a greater division between the Jerusalem Jews who believed in Yeshua and those who did not. Yeshua's brother, Ya'acov, was actually very instrumental in holding the believing and non-believing Jewish communities together. This fracture in the Jewish community is significant as it pushed those Jews who believed in Yeshua (and also the gentiles who were coming to faith in Yeshua within Judaism), further away from the rest of Judaism.

This division gave gentiles who had no regard for the Jewishness of their "faith" (coming right out of the pagan Roman culture), a louder voice in community affairs and interpretation of Scripture. Anti-Jewish polemic can be found as early as the teachings of Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch at the end of the first century. Ignatius spoke out against gentile "Xians" having anything to do with Jewish forms of worship and that Jews becoming "Xians" should stop living as Jews, saying that it was *"absurd to speak of Yeshua Moshiah with the tongue and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end."*

With the war of 132 AD, Jerusalem was literally "plowed under," by the Romans and renamed *Aelia Capitolina*. Shrines to the Roman gods, Jupiter and Venus, were erected. What little was left of the community of Jewish believers in Yeshua was wiped out and soon replaced with a very Roman non-Jewish (highly pagan) "church." Rome went on to wipe out most of Judea, destroying 985 towns and killing over a half million Jewish men. Even more died later from starvation, disease and fire.

Rome went on to pass harsh laws banning worship on the Sabbath, the Jewish (Biblical) feasts, public Jewish rituals, and reading of Torah. (This is part of the reason Sunday worship replaced following the Friday to Saturday evening Sabbath.) Jews, including those who followed Yeshua, weren't allowed within 150 miles of the city. The lineage of Jewish successors to Yeshua and Ya'acov ended and a string of gentile "popes" soon followed.

THE EARLY CHURCH AND JUDAISM

The leadership of this new gentile "church" was quick to embrace the Roman government's position regarding Jews and was overtly hostile to anything Jewish, including the Torah. Numerous false doctrines were established as early as the second century. Among these were the teachings that "the Law" was actually given as a punishment to the Jews, that Jerusalem had been destroyed and taken from the Jews due to their sin, and that the "Church" had replaced Israel as Elohim's people.

For instance, as early as the second century, we have Justin Martyr saying:

We too, would observe your circumcision of the flesh, your Sabbath days, and in a word, all your festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, namely, because of your sins and the hardness of heart. The custom of circumcising the flesh, handed down from Abraham, was given to you as a distinguishing mark, to set you off from other nations and from us Xians. The purpose of this was that you and only you might suffer the afflictions that are now justly yours; that only your land be desolated, and your cities ruined by fire, that the fruits of your land be eaten by strangers before your very eyes; that not one of you be permitted to enter your city of Jerusalem. Your circumcision of the flesh is the only mark by which you can certainly be distinguished from other men...as I stated before it was by reason of your sins and the sins of your fathers that, among other precepts, Elohim imposed upon you the observance of the Sabbath as a mark.

In the third century, we have the following opinion from Origen of Alexandria:

We may thus assert in utter confidence that the Jews will not return to their earlier situation, for they have committed the most abominable of crimes, in forming this conspiracy against the Savior of the human race...hence the city where Yeshua suffered was necessarily destroyed, the Jewish nation was driven from its country, and another people was called by Elohim to the blessed election.

The attitude of these two "Church fathers" was not an anomaly. The whole of Roman society around the time of Yeshua and Paul was extremely anti-Jewish. One reason being that many Roman families had lost sons in the Jewish wars. Roman intellectuals of the day wrote much derogatory material about the Jews living among them.

Roman society was pagan and centered around the worship of many gods. In the midst of this was a Jewish society of around 7 million, (about 10 percent of the Roman population), a very noticeable minority. Jews were despised for their peculiar religious practices and failure to worship the gods of Rome as every other conquered people was forced to do. Once the Jewish leadership had been removed, changes were immediately put into effect with little opposition.

It is critical to the study of Romans, to know that these new "gentile believers" came out of this background and had no regard for anything Jewish. As we will see, most of Paul's letter is addressed to these people as they were not living as gentile believers in Yeshua should have been. Q&C

CHURCH COUNCILS AND JEWISH REGULATIONS

Continued anti-Jewish laws passed by the Roman government, assured that there would be "no going back." Constantine, (the 4th century emperor of Rome, who remained a pagan sun worshipper unto his deathbed), claimed to have had "a vision" that led him to "legalize Christianity." This initiated a process that would eventually make paganized Christianity the religion of the Empire.

Now, if you were a Jew, and wanted to "believe in the Messiah," you had to publicly renounce all things Jewish and become "a Christian." Any Gentile who joined with the Jews in their worship would be breaking the law and punished. As early as the fifth century, laws were passed preventing Jews from holding public offices and forbidding the building of new Synagogues.

The church councils of the fourth century formulated the doctrines and creeds that Christianity holds to this day. These councils were made up of gentiles from the same anti-Semitic background as those of the previous two hundred years. Jewish believers who held regard for Torah were barred from attending these meetings, and their positions on the meaning of Scripture with regard to Torah were "overruled." One of the earliest councils ruled that anyone found eating with Jews would be prevented from taking communion so that he would "learn to amend," and that marriage to a Jew would result in excommunication.

The remaining believers, who held fast to the Torah observant doctrines of the original community, were mocked and considered at best "weak" in their faith, if they were not, in

fact, heretics.

For example, we have Epiphanius, in the fourth century, stating:

"They [the Nazarenes] have no different ideas, but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims it and in the Jewish fashion-- except for their belief in Messiah... but since they are still fettered by the Law -- circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest-- they are not in accord with Xians."

By the end of the 4th century, anything resembling a "pro-Torah" view of "the faith" had become non-existent in what was now called "Christianity." The Councils of Antioch (341CE) and Laodicea (360CE) prohibited Xians from participating in Jewish rituals. As one modern historian puts it, this was all done to show that Jewish tradition was, *"inherently evil, obsolete and irrelevant for practical Christian life."*

Faith in Yeshua had gone from being 100 percent Jewish to 100 percent anti-Jewish in less than 300 years.

All of this history is the foundation of the Christian Church. Persecution of Jews throughout history; the Crusades, the Inquisitions, numerous mass expulsions throughout history, and of course the Holocaust, are all the direct result of the Church's anti-Semitic doctrines.

The "Protestant Reformation" of the 16th century did nothing to change Christianity's anti-Jewish foundation. The "reformers," such as Luther and Calvin, were as anti-Semitic, if not more so, as their predecessors a millennium before them. Martin Luther's writings were a favorite of Adolph Hitler, who acquired many of his ideas on how to deal with Jews from him.

The concerns of the "reformers" were solely with what they felt was corruption and abuse of power in the Christian/Catholic church. They had no desire to return to the Torah-based Judaism of Yeshua and the apostles.

An understanding of the following is imperative:

The anti-Semitic ideologies and anti-Torah theologies of the early Church leaders and later Protestant "reformers," established the foundation for all Christian opinion, Catholic and Protestant, to this very day. All interpretation of Scripture coming from Christian teachers, authors or institutions, including every Christian Bible translation available and all of their footnotes, every Christian Bible commentary book, study course, Sunday sermon and seminary's teaching curriculum and movies, has been filtered through the doctrines of these men and reinforced through hundreds of years of Church teaching.

If a person is willing to accept the facts of history, and the idea that what they have been taught in their church may not be the correct interpretation of Scripture, then they have a chance to understand what Paul, the Torah-observant Pharisee, was saying in the book of Romans.

End of quoted background info. Q&C

What was the 1st C. Hebraic meaning of the term ‘Circumcision’?

The Messianic ‘beit din’ (house of judgment) meant exactly what scripture means by it, especially the Torah. Torah NOWHERE makes it mandatory for a gentile proselyte to be circumcised (CC’d) in order to be accepted as a member of the commonwealth of Yisrael. In fact, the only requirement in the Sinai covenant for CC is to CC a male child on the 8th day. They did NOT do this during the wilderness wandering. The whole wilderness generation had to be CC’d before they could take the land (Joshua 5).

Circumcision in the Torah – The only commands to adult CC in Torah (other than the command to Avraham when Y’hovah separated him from all other people AFTER Avi believed Y’hovah that Yitzhak would be born at the appointed time next year) is before the taking of Canaan and in reference to having a CC’d heart. Let’s look at all the books of Moshe references that deal with CC AFTER the giving of the Torah from Sinai. Lev.12.3, Deut.10.16, 30.6. That’s it. Only three references to CC in Moshe’s writings AFTER the Commandments were given. Do you see that Deut. speaks entirely of circumcising the heart. This is what Y’hovah has always wanted. The fleshly CC was a **personal witness** to the spiritual reality of a CC’d heart.

So, when the council was meeting in Yerushalayim (Acts.15), what did the ‘Pharisees who believed’ mean by ‘they must needs be circumcised?’ Circumcision was the last act of the gentile proselyte’s conversion to Judaism. When a gentile wanted to become Jewish, the rabbis were to dissuade him, if they could. If he persisted, they were to lay heavy study and service on him, as a means of further dissuading him and seeing if he was sincere in his desire to be Jewish. After literally YEARS of study and rote memorization of Torah, both oral and Written, and after passing an intense examination by a team of rabbis, he could then mikvah (baptize) and be CC’d. He was now a full member of the Jewish faith – and still lost, unless Ruach used his study to bring about true faith. Does this shed some light on Yeshua’s rebuke to the Pharisees in Mat.23.15 and 4?

Mat.23.15, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. V.4. For **they** bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay **them** on men's shoulders; but **they themselves** will not move them with one of their fingers.

The believing Pharisees wanted the new gentile converts to the Way to become full converts to Judaism first. And as we saw before, to be CC’d ‘after the manner of Moshe’ had nothing to do with what Torah said about it, for all the gentiles being discussed were over 8 days old. So, ‘after the manner of Moshe’ must mean something different than what the church has always taught. It must mean the traditions of the Pharisees, the ‘oral Torah’ of Moshe the Pharisees prescribed and not the written Torah. After all of that introduction, let’s begin our look at the text of Romans. Q&C

Romans 1

The salutation and felicitations (vv.1-7) – What is this ‘gospel of Elohim’, which was promised afore by His prophets in the scriptures? That’s not a rhetorical question – I’d like at least one answer. What is the gospel of Elohim? (Wait for a couple of answers) Is this different from what Sha’ul calls ‘my gospel’ (in Rom.2.16, 16.25, 2Tim.2.8), or the everlasting gospel in Rev.14.6, or the gospel of the Kingdom (Mat.4.3), or the gospel that was preached to Avraham (Gal.3.8 quoting Gen.12 and 15), or the gospel that was preached to Israel in the wilderness (Heb.3.17-4.2)?

*I think*² that I can’t be contradicted scripturally that the gospel, the best news that could ever be received, is that we, who are the enemies of and at enmity with Y’hovah Elohenu, CAN have true peace with him through the ‘finished work’ of Yeshua haMoshiach. **1Cor.15.3-6** is not the actual good news, but **the delivery vehicle** that makes peace with Y’hovah Elohenu possible, **the aforementioned ‘finished work’**. Think about it. If Yeshua’s physical work is finished, he won’t be back to rule his Kingdom, will he? Spiritually, it’s a ‘done deal’, but physically, there is LOT of work left for him to do.

Y’hovah’s plan, his perfect will, at creation was that he would spend eternity with Man in perfect unity – *echad* (Hebrew, meaning one or united). He had only one test, and that relatively simple, that Adam NOT eat of ONE tree that existed in the midst of the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. *I think* it was the tree right next to that tree that Y’hovah WANTED us to eat from, the tree of life. The first thing Adam ate (at least the first thing he is recorded as having eaten) was the fruit of the tree of knowledge. So, his first willful act was disobedience to Y’hovah’s instructions (Torah). Had he OBEYED and eaten the fruit of the Tree of Life (Torah observance – only ONE instruction) he would have lived in the garden forever and procreated and filled the stars and their planets with righteous descendants. In the New Creation, *I think* that is exactly what will occur. And THAT is the real good news – that Y’hovah’s perfect will SHALL be fulfilled and we will live for eternity as Y’hovah Yeshua’s *echad* Bride. **Q&C?**

Vv3-4 begin with the word ‘concerning’ from the Grk. *peri* (Strong’s 4012), which has been made a prefix in English meaning ‘around’, but is more literally translated ‘through’, as in ‘thoroughly furnished’. It means not just around, but throughout, or that which is in and around. I think that Paul is saying that he is writing to the Romans to fully reveal Yeshua as the Moshiach and as Y’hovah the Son of Elohim. Remember that there had been no apostolic witness to the Romans, other than the few who had been at Yerushalayim for the ‘former rain’ outpouring of Ruach upon the Shavuoth (Pentecost) assembly at the Temple. Those few had taken the gospel, as best they could, to Rome and had had quite a bit of success in showing that Yeshua was Moshiach to the *kahal/ekklesia* (the Hebrew and Greek words translate exactly the same), the called out assembly. Sha’ul wants to go there to more perfectly impart the knowledge of the gospel (v.11) and of Y’hovah Elohenu, its author and executor.

Yeshua was/is the seed of David according to the flesh, but the Seed of Elohim according to the Spirit. His resurrection declares that he is the Seed of Elohim. How? Where? Ps.2.7 says, “‘I will declare the decree’, Y’hovah hath said unto me, ‘Thou art my Son; This day have I begotten thee.’” What power does Yeshua have, in context of Ps.2? He has all the power he needs from Avinu to carry out everything that follows. Yeshua does not exercise his power (which he has intrinsically as Y’hovah from eternity past) without the permission of his Father and then only by His Spirit (Phil.2.4-7). Yeshua is and has always been in subjection to his Abba. In his flesh he was in submission through Ruach.

V.5 speaks of the grace and the faith that Sha’ul had by the same Spirit that empowered Yeshua. That grace and faith are to be shown to all nations. As Yeshua is submitted to Abba, so is Sha’ul submitted to Yeshua and empowered by his Spirit to show forth his (Yeshua’s) grace and faith.

V.6 says ‘among whom’. To whom does this refer? ‘Among whom’ means there are more than one they are among, so we need to find the antecedent (3rd person plural noun), which is found in v.2 – prophets. We are the called of Yeshua ‘among’ the prophets. Pretty cool, huh? We would not usually consider ourselves to be in such august company as the prophets of the scriptures, but we are. We are ‘called saints’ (v.7) of Y’hovah, just as they are. We ought to act like we believe that, oughtn’t we? IOW, we ought to obey Y’hovah. **Q&C**

Vv.8-17 – In vv.8-10 Shaul tells the Roman believers that he is earnestly desirous to see them and mentions them in his prayers on his every remembrance of them. Here is another thing we ought to be doing, don’t you think? We ought to make mention in prayer of everyone we know as Y’hovah brings them to our minds. Sha’ul rejoices in the fact that the whole world knows of their faith in Yeshua. Their faith is spoken of throughout the world.

Their Nazarene kahal was the only one of ‘that way’ NOT founded by an apostle, so their faith was pretty amazing to other believers. This is one reason Sha’ul is so earnestly desirous of coming to them to ensure their proper direction and course in Torah (v.12 – mutual faith). It had long been his purpose to go there to nurture their faith, but Y’hovah’s time was not yet.

Sha’ul speaks in vv.15-17 about his 2 step mission, which can be seen everywhere he preaches the ‘gospel of Messiah’ of which he is not ashamed. The 2 steps are, 1) to the Jew first, and 2) also to the Greek. His mission is to reunite the Jews and the gentiles in Messiah, but first he wants his brethren to hear the gospel, for the scriptures from which he is preaching it were given through the Hebrew prophets. Therefore, he goes to the synagogue in every city he visits and preaches Messiah from the Tanakh to persuade the Jews to the truth of Messiah’s deliverance from sin and spiritual death by his physical death, burial and resurrection. The wall of enmity was broken down and he had a burden to take the good news to his Jewish brethren first. **Q&C**

Sha'ul and 'faith'

When Sha'ul says, "the just shall live by faith", what does he mean? Does he mean, "give mental assent to the truth and you will live"? Or does he mean "you'll show your faith by your just manner of life?", which happens to be in total agreement with Jas. 2.22, and what Sha'ul says outright in Rom.2.13. How does Torah say to live? A summary is given in Deut.30. In v.6 Y'hovah promises to CC our hearts so that we will love him with all our hearts and all our souls, "that thou mayest live." He goes on to say that we will "do all his commandments" (v.8). THEN he says he will bless us **IF** we'll hearken to his voice, which he then describes as obeying his commands and statutes which are written in Torah, **IF** we'll turn to Y'hovah Elohenu with all our hearts and souls. Looks to me like Y'hovah describes 'life' as obedience to his Torah. Summarizing, faith = 1) a CCd heart that has Y'hovah's commandments written upon it, it 2) hearkens to his voice (which is the Torah written upon the heart), and 3) lives according to that Word written upon it.

Some say that 'keeping Torah is impossible', and the church is fond of saying that one must keep Torah perfectly if he is to follow Torah. Neither is true. In Dt.30.11-14 he says,

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. 12 It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Torah is NOT impossible to keep for we have the Spirit of Elohim to empower us to keep it, and it isn't impossible to know for it is right here with us, in our hearts. That's the purpose of the 'new' covenant in Jer.31.31-34. There isn't anything 'new' about it, save the medium upon which it is written – our hearts of flesh, versus tables of stone. Looks like Y'hovah spoke of the 'new covenant' long before Jeremiah 'revealed' it.

He tells us explicitly what 'life' is in vv.15ff.

15 See, I have set before thee this day **life and good**... 16 In that I command thee this day to love Y'hovah Elohecha, to **walk in his ways**, and to **keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments**, that thou mayest live and multiply: and Y'hovah Elohecha shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life**, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love Y'hovah Elohecha, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life...

Y'hovah is our life, and to live is to obey his Word. We are commanded to choose life. The obedience can only be done if we are in him and submitted to his Spirit. When we do NOT obey, we sin (1Jn.3.4 –sin is the transgression of Torah). When we sin, we have an advocate (1Jn.2.1) with Abba. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us

our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn.1.9). Confession **requires** turning from our sin and towards obedience to his word. If you have not repented of your sin and agreed with Elohim that it WAS sin, you can ask all you like and it will not be forgiven or cleansed. **Q&C**

V.16 speaks of the gospel as 'power of Elohim unto salvation'. This reminds us of 1Cor.1.18 and 24,

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of Elohim... 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Moshiah the power of Elohim, and the wisdom of Elohim.

So the gospel, delivered by the finished work of Yeshua on the tree is 'the power of Elohim. That gospel is revealed 'from faith to faith.' That means that one who has the faith of Yeshua must reveal that faith to another. For Rom.10.13-15 says,

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of Y'hovah shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace (w/Y'hovah), and bring glad tidings of good things!

That concludes the introduction to the letter. The next section goes through 4.25, and reveals how Y'hovah will judge both Jews and gentiles and that both are justified by faith and not their own works. He will use some literary styles and mystical language that could cause the casual reader to misinterpret him. This misinterpretation can cause, and has caused, all manner of false traditions and ideas about Sha'ul's message. We'll see this throughout the letter, as we come upon them. **Q&C**

The first literary device Sha'ul uses is an 'apostrophe,' a device by which he addresses a larger audience than the one to whom he writes. In vv.18-32, he is addressing the 'gentile world' in general, not necessarily the gentiles in Rome only, though they are supposed to understand it as well. This will be more general truth used to show that there is a general revelation and that NOONE has any excuse before the Shophet (Judge) of the Universe.

Vv.18-20 - When it says that the wrath of Elohim is revealed from heaven, what do you suppose it means? Ps.19.1-4 say,

1 The heavens declare the glory of Elohim; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

The creation reveals the gospel to all mankind. Y'hovah put his message in the sky for all to see, if they wish to see it and he deigns to reveal it to them. The entire plan of Y'hovah is there to see in the names of the constellations and stars. For example, the constellation

Leo is the representation of a lion. Now, the outlines of those stars don't and never did look like a lion, but in every corner of the earth, that constellation represents a lion. Why? Because Elohim revealed that message to Adam, who passed it on to his progeny, who passed it on to their progeny, who passed.... You get the idea. When the languages were confused at Babel, the message went to the 4 corners of the earth in all the various languages. The memory of the message is imbedded in the species, and revealed in every language under heaven. Perhaps a part of the sin in Babel was in their counterfeiting Y'hovah's message of the gospel into the false gospel of astrology. Satan is NOT creative in the ultimate sense – he just uses what is created and twists its meaning to his own use.

That which may be known of Elohim is manifest in men. IOW, we can look at our selves and see the manifestation of Elohim. How? We are tripartite, have three parts; body, soul and spirit. Y'hovah is also; Father, Son, Spirit. In fact everything in creation is tripartite. In fact, all of visible creation is of three parts - Time, Space and Matter. Each of those has 3 states; Time is past, present and future, Space is length, height and depth, Matter is gas, liquid, solid (there is one theoretical state of matter that is ionized gas, called plasma, which some scientists consider a fourth state. I don't know enough about it to speak to it. Here's a link to an article about plasma as the possible 4th state of matter at NASA's website: http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/Academy/UNIVERSE/FOURTH_MATTER.HTML). Therefore, the triune nature of Elohim is witnessed by the visible creation. Because all this is true, Elohim is righteous to hold those men in wrath who hold the truth in unrighteousness. **Q&C**

Vv.21-27 – V.21 begins the logical argument supporting a 3-part regression. Those men who knew of the existence of Elohim by his witness in their own selves, as well as the rest of his creation, refused to exalt him AS Elohim nor give him thanks. KJV's 'thankful' is from the greek noun *eucharitos*, which means good favor or gift. Thanks is a good gift we return to Elohim for his gracious favor to us. When they knew that Elohim existed and turned their backs on him, the progression of cursing began.

There are pro/regressions of this type all through scripture. One that comes to mind is in Num.26, where we are told that IF we will obey his voice, THEN he will send the rain in his season. THEN the crops will grow. THEN the animals will flourish. THEN we will increase in number and influence. THEN we will overcome our adversaries. THEN ... BUT, when we would turn our backs on him and go our own way and we failed to obey his voice, THEN he would remove the blessings in the same way, and I think in the opposite order. *I think* this is the state of the USA today. We are seeing drought in one area of the country and flooding in another with wildfires in a third. NO area of the USA is seeing anything like a normal weather pattern, and that is where Y'hovah Eloheanu says he will send his judgment. Do you suppose he's trying to get our attention? I do!

The end of v.21 says that when they refused to exalt their creator, they became wise in their own imaginations - to use a vernacular expression, 'they became legends in their own minds' – and their heart was darkened because of it. When it says their heart was darkened, it means that they were unable to understand the things of Elohim. I think

darken = harden here. It may not be so much unable to see as it is refusing to see the truth. Do you see the number used in that verse? 'Their' 'heart' was darkened. Numerous people have one heart among them.

Being that they are legends in their own minds, they profess themselves wise and prove they are fools. People who have to constantly TELL you how wise or how smart they are are not usually the quickest on the uptake, if you catch my drift. When they became fools what did they do? They changed the glory of the incorruptible Elohim into the glory of the creature; i.e., they made El a part of nature, not its creator. This = Darwin's evolution, c.1854. The progression so far is: they refused to acknowledge that Elohim is the creator, thus making themselves gods and demoting their creator to the rank of creature in their darkened heart and mind. And a creature cannot create the creation of which he is part.

With Elohim nothing more than another creature of no more value or power than any other creature, they could disregard his Word. He's just another creature, so who cares what he has to say? So, they took his incorruptible truth and changed it into a lie. This is the bible revision of the 1870's, with the Revised Version of 1881 being its pride and joy. There have been literally 100's of translations since, with NONE standing up to the KJV for accuracy of translation OR ease of understanding. The progression so far is: Men fail to acknowledge Elohim, thus making themselves gods who demote their creator to their own ranks as just another creature, who doesn't need to be listened to and so they corrupted his Word.

With his Word nothing more than the words of a human poet, we don't need to read them for our instructions in life, or to find truth, so all that stuff about sin must be just that – stuff. So they don't have to heed his warnings about proper order of things and so they changed what he calls 'sin' into 'virtue', what he declares to be 'lies' into 'truth'. So why should we worry about those curses he pronounces on deviant and perverted lifestyles? Who is he to tell ME how to live my life? So men stop marrying women and begin marrying other men, women stop looking for husbands and start chasing down a wife. And what is the curse for such a sin? Look at Judges 19 and 20 for the outcome of this lifestyle and a look at America's future and Deut.28 for the answer to the question. The diseases of the nations will be upon them. **Q&C**

Vv.28-32 - Judges 19.22-25 says this:

22 ¶ Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.

24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.

25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

Sounds like Lot, doesn't it? This shows where society will trend if there is no fear of Elohim in the land. Did you notice that it was in the night that those 'sons of Belial' – a circumlocution for Sodomite, *I think* – came out in gangs to prey upon those who were unfortunate enough to have to spend the night in the street? I infer from this that they had respectable day jobs (which they must have generally slept through) and probably decried the actions of those 'low-lives' who would do such to poor unsuspecting travelers. "Tsk, tsk! Isn't it terrible what the world is coming to?" They certainly wouldn't want anyone to think THEY had been involved in such sordid activities, would they? If we refuse to do what Y'hovah requires of us, in other words – if we sin habitually, we will tailspin toward this kind of lifestyle. As we sin, we become inured to the thrill of getting away with the 'lesser' sins and graduate to ever more wicked sin until we become 'sons of Belial', "worthless and lawless persons"³.

Vv.29-31 gives a partial list of the kind of people these become. These people are those who go their own way, like the people in Judges 19-20. Now be honest with yourself and think how many of those have referred to you in the past? And how many might even apply right now. Have you repented? Have you asked Y'hovah to forgive you? If so, be assured that you are forgiven and now start going His Way.

Do you remember that those who followed Yeshua were called 'the Way' in the 1st century CE (Acts 19.9, 23, 24.2)? Now look at the OT examples of 'the way of Y'hovah'; Gen.18.19, Jud.2.22, 2Ki.21.22, Prov.10.29, Isa.40.3, Jer.5.4-5, Ez.28.25&29, and 'out of the way'; Ex.32.8, Dt.9.12 &16, 11.28, 13.5, 27.18, Jud.2.17, Job.31.7-8, Prov.21.16, Isa.30.8-15. It sure looks to me like 'the way of Y'hovah' = obedience, and 'out of the way' = disobedience or despite for Y'hovah's way. Yeshua said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments (Jn.14.15)."

So, those who were 'in the way' in Acts were obedient to Y'hovah Yeshua's commandments. Which are those? (wait for an answer) Look at Jas.4.12, "There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy..." Who do you suppose that is? Can't be Moshe, for he saved noone and can destroy nothing. It can only be Y'hovah Yeshua, who has ALWAYS been the Abba/human interface, from Gan Eden to today and until the New Creation, when Abba will tabernacle with men.

V.32 – Those who go 'out of the way' are those who, unless they repent, will go further and further down the regressive spiral into spiritual oblivion, "Who knowing the judgment of Elohim, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." **Q&C**

Romans 2

Remember the last few verses of Romans 1 as we start looking at ch.2. One of the most important rules of scripture interpretation is this: “When you see a wherefore or a therefore, look to see what it’s there for.” Wherefore means ‘for which reason or why’, while therefore means ‘for THIS reason or consequently’. Wherefore explains why it happened to them, therefore explains what will result if we don’t pay attention. Ch.2 begins with the word ‘therefore’, so Sha’ul wants us to be mindful of what he’s just said and not take him out of context. Part of the context is to whom he is writing – in this case he is writing to a synagogue in Rome that started out as a Jewish dominated kahal or congregation, but had in recent years become more and more gentile populated. This means that the paganism of Rome was beginning to be seen in the synagogue, and that was the purpose of ch.1.18-32. In other words, in this 2nd apostrophe of the letter, Sha’ul is mainly writing to the gentiles of the Roman kahal, who were bringing their pagan practices into it. An apostrophe is a rhetorical device by which he addresses a larger or different audience than the one to whom he is generally writing.

vv.1-4 - The last paragraph of ch.1 begins at v.24, which begins with a wherefore that refers to vv.18-23. Y’hovah had given them (the pagan Greeks) up to their own lusts because they had refused to acknowledge that he was their Maker and Master and we (gentiles) need to be mindful of that, remembering to not sin like they had and to ‘therefore’ bring the wrath of Y’hovah down on us. In all actuality, ch.1 was a set up for ch.2. Sha’ul gave them 1.18-32 to set them up for this warning. He’s saying, “You all agree that these guys deserved their judgment, but you refuse to see that you are guilty, too, and deserve at LEAST what they got.” ‘Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself’ refers, *I think*, to the 9th commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” The condemnation for bearing false witness is to get the same punishment that would be received if the accused were found guilty.

Deut.19.18-21 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, *if* the witness *be* a false witness, *and* hath testified falsely against his brother; 19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. 20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. 21 And thine eye shall not pity; *but* life *shall go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

So be sure to be guiltless before you condemn someone, or bring accusation, or gossip about someone. If you are not innocent, you will possibly receive greater condemnation than the accused because you knew the requirements and the judgments and did it anyway (Jms.3 – all of it). That this is the subject of v.1 is attested to in v.2, where we are assured of the true testimony of Y’hovah against those wicked men of 1.18-32.

Think about v.3 for a minute. A Mark paraphrase of that verse in context is; “What makes you think that you can judge someone else when you are guilty of the same thing? Do you really think that you won’t receive the same punishment you want exacted on him?”

Don't count on it, Bozo." Remember that the judgment of Elohim has been given in Deut.19.

V.4 should wake us all up, too. The word 'despise' does not mean to hate, but to think of no value or to consider worthless. Do you think that Y'hovah's goodness is because you deserve to not be condemned? His goodness and forbearance towards us (the fact that he doesn't 'lower the boom' as soon as we sin) is to the end that we repent of our wickedness and turn to go HIS way and not our own. Now we who are sitting here, including myself, need to apply this to ourselves. We are getting a warning that if we despise his goodness to usward, we will go down the road of those he spoke about in 1.18-32. We are guilty before Y'hovah due to our own sin. The Torah was given to us to be a true witness against us in Y'hovah's court, which (Torah) is right here in our own hearts. We need to examine our own lives to be sure that what we are doing is not sin. And sin is transgression of the Torah. To despise his goodness and forbearance is to presume that he will not judge us righteously, as it says in

8 No man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither power in the day of death: and no discharge in war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. 9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. 10 And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this also vanity. 11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. [Ecc.8.8-11]. **Q&C**

Vv.5-11 tell us that Y'hovah will judge all men righteously. Look at these verses closely. They do NOT say that if you just believe scripture to be true you are saved. It says that if you really BELIEVE it, you will act like it. If the works don't follow the belief, then the belief is not unto salvation. V.5 says that if you despise (think of no value or not to be feared) the wrath of Elohim you will partake of it. V.6 says that we will ALL be judged according to our works, not that to which we've mentally assented, i.e.; 'believe' in the subjective human sense of the term. V.7 says that we who are obeying Y'hovah will see eternal life, while v.8 says that those who are disobedient will see his 'indignation and wrath.' This says NOTHING about what we've agreed is true, but what we've DONE about what we've acknowledged to be truth. This is because,

Proverbs 23 **1** When thou sittest to eat with a ruler (to partake of government largesse), consider diligently what *is* before thee: **2** And put a knife to thy throat, if thou *be* a man given to appetite. **3** Be not desirous of his dainties: for they *are* deceitful meat. **4** Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. **5** Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven (especially to those who are 'given to appetite'). **6** Eat thou not the bread of an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: **7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he:** Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee. **8** The morsel thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words (you'll be sorry you took what you didn't earn – especially the favor of the rich or powerful).

Prov.23.7 means this – Don't listen to a man's words to see what's in his heart. Look at the result of his actions. He may say, "Eat my good food", but mean, "I want to poison you." We know a man's character by the fruit of his deeds, not the words of his mouth. Likewise, the salvation of a man is known by his fruits, not his words. If he SAYS he's

saved, but is an habitual sinner, you can rest assured that he is NOT saved. And this is righteous judgment, because this is the test that Y'hovah is going to use. He will judge us by our works, not our words.

Rom.2.9 says that judgment begins with the Jews 1st. This is because they have had the oracles of Elohim revealed to them and they shared them with us. And they do so every time we open the pages of scripture, for all the authors were Hebrews (w/the possible exception of Job and Luke). There is scripture that says the teacher is due a double portion (1Tim.5.17). This is true of both honor and judgment (Jms.3.1). V.10 says that blessings also begin with the Jews and afterward the gentiles. This is the way prophecy tells us it will play out in the end, also. 1st comes the time of Jacob's trouble, in which all Israel will be tried and the faithful will call on the Name of Y'hovah; then comes the wrath of Elohim on all who oppose him, in which time all the faithful gentiles will also call on him. All who trust Y'hovah will be saved to repopulate the earth in the Millennium. All opposed will perish, and be kept in the grave until the time of final judgment. **Q&C**

Rom.2.12-16 - This is a very misunderstood passage in the 'church's' perspective, mainly because they do not read it in context. Vv.13-15 are a parenthetical explaining v.12. V.16 is the end of the sentence begun in v.12. The parenthetical can be removed and not do harm to the sentence – it's there as further explanation. Here it is without the parentheses:

12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (... 14, ... 15, ...) 16 In the day when Elohim shall judge the secrets of men by Yeshua haMoshiach according to my gospel.

All sinners will be judged according to Torah, for sin is the transgression of Torah in 1Jn.3.4. Notice that those who sin without Torah (lawless, grk. *anomos*) are not judged by it, they PERISH in their Torahlessness (grk, *anomos*), but those who sin IN Torah are judged BY Torah. Can a person be judged by Torah and NOT perish? You betcha! What is it that Y'hovah will judge by Messiah Yeshua?

What are the 'secrets of men'? 'Secrets' is from the Greek word '*kruptos*', the root of the English word 'cryptic' – secret, hidden, occult. In other words, he will judge us over what we've kept hidden, or what we have NOT repented of and confessed. The secret (pun intended) to being judged in Torah but not condemned by Torah is to use Torah lawfully, i.e.; use it to show us where we've sinned and then repent of it and confess it to Y'hovah (1Jn.1.9, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness).

To be judged by Torah is to be 'under Torah', to be subject to it's curse. Messiah became the curse of Torah for us (Gal.3.13). When one is in Messiah, he is no longer subject to its curse and is thus no longer 'under the Law' (6.14, Gal.3.23).

The parenthesis of 13-15 shows us the 'doers of Torah' are justified, whether they knew they were doing Torah or not. And those who hear Torah and don't do it are condemned by it, regardless what they thought to the contrary (Jas.1.22, "...deceiving your own selves."). **Q&C**

Rom.2.17-29 – This is the 3rd ‘apostrophe’ of the letter, a rhetorical device by which he addresses a larger or different audience than the one to whom he writes primarily, in this case specifically the Jews of Rome. In vv.4-16 he’d addressed any believer who reads the letter – his general audience, both Jew and Greek.

Again, this is a passage that is badly misunderstood by the church due to a lack of historical and cultural context. Remember what the word circumcision meant to the Jews, and especially the rabbis. Circumcision was the last act of a proselyte before he became a full member of the synagogue and Temple. Remember also that the Pharisees’ argument in Acts 15 was NOT that the gentiles just have their foreskins trimmed, but that they go through all the stuff that proselytes were made to do, *then* be circumcised and only THEN be admitted into ‘The Way’. If you keep this in mind, this scripture will NOT be so cryptic.

Sha’ul says in vv.17-20 that the Jews who are the leaders of the synagogue acknowledge the law as their guide and are thoroughly versed in it and believe it. V.17 says they ‘rest in the law’ and they ‘boast of Elohim’. These are of the same faction as the ‘Pharisees which believed’ in Acts 15. They think that their position as teachers of Torah secures their place in the Kingdom. But the law that they are resting in is the oral tradition, not the written Word, as can be inferred from v.20. They have ‘the ‘form’ of knowledge and truth of Torah’, ‘having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ 2Tim.3.5. Oral Torah has a form of godliness, indeed often IS godly (when it supports and agrees with Torah), but it is mere commentary, like Matthew Henry or Barnes’ Notes, a useful tool to help understand Y’hovah’s truth.

These very well know Y’hovah’s will and approve it, having Torah as their basis for belief. The word translated ‘approve’ is the greek word *dokimadzo*, which means to test and prove – to make current after it is assayed, as in silver and gold. It means they have tried the will of Y’hovah, found it of worthy and use it like they use currency. They learned Y’hovah’s will through his Word and are certain that they can lead those who are spiritually blind (in darkness), able to teach the foolish (won’t acknowledge Y’hovah (Ps.14.1, 53.1, Prov.18.2, 24.7, Ecc.2.14) and babes (spiritual infants, pre-teens – ruled by emotions rather than intellect). What are they thinking? All 4 types; the blind, the ones in the dark, the fools and the babes; are the same by different names. All of those designations are Hebrew idioms for wanting the truth on their own terms. These teachers think that they will be able to lead these people to the way of Elohim. But their lives show that they are no different from those they aspire to lead. Vv.21-23 say in a Mark paraphrase, ‘You want to teach, but who has taught you? You teach the 10 words very well by the words of your lips, but do the words of your life agree?’ This is something we all, myself included, need to keep in mind at all times. Our words should match our works, and vice versa. **Q&C**

Vv.23-24 - It was the Jewish leadership’s job to bring the proselytes along in the truth of Torah. When they taught one thing with their lips and another with their lives, they brought reproach on Y’hovah’s Name. Notice that there is a period at the end of v.24.

The thought is not continued into v.25 – that is a new sentence altogether. So, Paul is NOT saying, “It is written,” and then v.25ff. He is saying that the situation in v.24 is written about in scripture (Lev.24.10-23). One of the mixt multitude blasphemed Y’hovah’s Name. He was held while Moshe got Y’hovah’s counsel and then he was taken w/o the camp and stoned to death (for the purpose of removing his genes – and this sin - from the pool). Paul is saying that these men are worthy of the same punishment, were it not for the forbearance of Y’hovah (as discussed above). They need to repent and start going Yah’s Way themselves.

Vv.25-29 – Remember the real meaning of circumcision is not just the snip, but the whole process leading up to it, as discussed earlier and as Shaul discusses in these verses. True circumcision is not that of the flesh, but of the heart. Y’hovah has always wanted our hearts to be circumcised, which means set apart unto him and to obey him. As physical CC was what set Israel apart from the world, so CC of the heart is what set’s us apart from the world. It is an attitude of desire, even lust, for Y’hovah to make his heart my own - to make me *echad* with him.

In v.25, Shaul says that the physical CC **without** the works of Torah is to be unCC’d in heart, while v.26 says that being physically unCC’d **with** works of Torah is to be CC’d in heart. V.27 says that gentiles who were never ‘snipped’, but who obey Y’hovah will judge those who have been ‘snipped’, but go their own way.

Vv.28-29 - There are physical Jews who do not know the ways of Y’hovah, while there are physical non-Jews who do know his ways. Therefore, there are physical sons of Abraham and there are nonphysical sons of Abraham who are CC’d in heart, just as there are both who are not. Those with CC’d hearts are true Israel. Those without, aren’t. **Q&C**

Romans 3

Remember what the word circumcision meant to the Jews, and especially the rabbis. Circumcision was the last act of a proselyte before he became a full member of the synagogue and Temple. Remember also that the argument in Acts 15 was NOT that the gentiles just have their foreskins trimmed, but that they go through all the stuff that proselytes were made to do and then be circumcised and only THEN be admitted into 'The Way'. If you keep this in mind, this scripture will NOT be so cryptic.

Vv.1-4 - While we look at v.1 remember that there are words added by the KJV translators to 'clarify' or 'facilitate understanding' for the reader who is not so well versed in the scriptures or the ancient languages. For the most part they do a pretty good job of that. Once in a while we see some preconceptions or pet doctrines that are shored up by these additions. As an example I submit Col.2.17, where the translators added the words 'is' and 'days' without any real reason for the additions, in fact they kind of hampers the flow of the reading and thought. Here's Col.2.16-17, the entire sentence; [16](#) "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: [17](#) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Moshiach."

This passage is speaking of the Colossian gentile believers who are starting to obey Torah and forsaking their pagan ways. Their old pagan 'pastors' and 'priests' are giving them a hard time about their Torah observances of the sabbath, **the** new moon, festivals of Y'hovah, and eating and drinking clean foods. Paul is telling them that it is not up to the pagans to judge them, 'but the body of Messiah.' The Greek word that is translated as "but" is *de*, which most frequently means 'as opposed to'; it is a conjunction of opposition or difference. IOW, the body of Messiah, the Messianic 'Beit Din', is who should judge whether their actions are in accordance with scripture (as they had done in Acts 15) not the pagans and paganism they'd abandoned. The rendering, 'the body is of Moshiach' doesn't even fit, and the wording is awkward. "Let no man judge you... but the Body of Messiah". A 'shadow' is an outline of that which is 'shaded', like an 'ensample' or an inkling of good things to come. The translators want us to think that it is the body of Messiah that is casting the shadow, when the text says that the things casting the shadow are the promises of Y'hovah for the New Creation, as is shown in prophecies of Tanakh in most of the prophets. But the sentence says, "Which **are** a shadow of things to come;" not which **were** a shadow. Messiah had already come. If it was HIS shadow that the new moons, feasts, sabbath and clean food instructions had FOREshadowed, does it not follow that Sha'ul would have used the past tense? The shadows are STILL foreshadowing something, like Messiah's return at the end of the age when we shall truly enter into his rest.

Back to Rom.3.1 – There are couple of 'wordplays' in this verse. The word 'advantage' is from grk. *perissos* – beyond or superabundance, and the word 'circumcision' is from grk. *peritome* – to cut around. The word 'profit' is from grk. *opheleia* which literally means

‘advantage’. So the translators decided that ‘superabundance’ in clause A = advantage, while ‘advantage’ in clause B = profit. So let’s look at the change when we go ‘literal’. “What exceeding abundance does the Jew have? And what advantage is CC?”

Vv.2-4 – “Much every way!” And the reason is that we have the Word of Y’hovah through Israel. Every human author (except Job and Luke?) was an Israelite. Just because some Jews don’t believe, does that mean the faith of Y’hovah (Torah) is useless. No way, dude! Elohim will always be the source of truth, haSatan the source of lies, and man the one who decides which to believe and to act upon. Even though Israel did not remain true to Y’hovah, Y’hovah remains true to Yisrael. **Q&C**

Vv.5-8 - What does ‘commend’ mean? In English, it means “to present as worthy of notice”⁴ But the greek word, *sunestao*, here literally means to ‘stand with’ or ‘together’. The greek word says that the righteousness of Elohim stands in us together with our unrighteousness so that he is not unrighteous to chastise us when we sin. I think this chastisement begins with our own knowledge of and our remorse over our sin as soon as we commit it. If we repent and confess it to him, he is righteous and just to forgive us. If we don’t repent, he will bring ever increasing and stronger chastisements until we do. His chastisement is always to the end of encouraging us to turn from our own ways and return us to his way.

But that is not what he is saying in vv.7&8. He is saying that he has taught the truth of Elohim to both Jews and Greeks, but the Pharisees are accusing him of the sin of teaching Jews to ignore Torah and not instructing the gentile proselytes in it. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we saw in our brief study of Acts 15. The Jews are persecuting him for rightly teaching the truth of Elohim. Cf. 8.

²⁸ “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love Elohim, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

The difference between these verses is that in ch.3.8 Paul speaks as a man, who is slanderously reported as purposely working iniquity to watch Elohim work it out for his good, while in ch.8 he speaks according to the Ruach, that Y’hovah is making the circumstances that confront us to work out for our good. The first is presumption and sin that Sha’ul is being accused of; the second is faith and life that Sha’ul is really after despite the accusations against him.

Vv.9-18 – Remember that the central theme of scripture is the ‘Shema’ in Deut.6.4, “Shema, Yisrael, Y’hovah Elohenu Y’hovah echad.” “Hear O Israel, Y’hovah is our Elohim, Y’hovah is one.” The Shema is the gospel in a nutshell. As Y’hovah is one (Is.44.6 [w/Rev.1.8&11. 21.6, 22.13], 45.18&21), so should we be (Rom.15.6, 1Cor.1.10, Gal.3.28, Eph.1.10, 2.11-18), both with each other and also with him. The ultimate outcome of the gospel in us is to become one with Y’hovah, to have *Shalom* - true peace

with him. (That was ‘plan A’ with Adam.) We need to keep this in mind throughout Romans.

Paul, a Jew, is saying that even though it is through the Jews that we have the truth of Y’hovah, Jews are not better than Greeks, either intrinsically or morally. He then proves by using scripture that this is true. In vv.10-18 he quotes midrashically (not a direct quote, but one that hits the point he is making – a common Pharisaic practice) Ps.14.

1 “The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no Elohim*. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, **there is none that doeth good**. 2 Y’hovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, **to see if there were any that did understand, and seek Elohim**. 3 **They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**”

He then quotes, again midrashically, Ps.5.

9 “For *there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue*”

and

140. 3 “**They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips**. Selah.”

Do you see how Sha’ul juxtaposes one portion of a verse from one psalm with another portion of a verse from another psalm and quotes them as if they are one? This is standard Hebraic midrashic teaching style, one that is used repeatedly, both in scripture and in Talmud. He continues in the same vein in v.14, where he quotes Ps.10.

7 “**His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity**”

and juxtaposes it with Is.59.

7 “**Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths**. 8 **The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace,**”

and Ps.36.1,

1 “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, **that there is no fear of Elohim before his eyes.**”

I think he’s made his point that we are all one in that there is nothing intrinsically good about mankind, and that we are incapable of even seeking to do good. “There is none righteous; no, not one.” But Elohim’s plan is for us to be one with each other and with him.

Rom.3.12 quotes v.1 above, which says, “A FOOL has said in his heart, There is no Elohim”. So when he says in the same verse, “there is none that doeth good”, to whom is he referring? If you said, “The fool who says there is no Elohim”, you would be correct. It has nothing to do with faithful Torah observance, but with the state of the children of men. Every ‘they’ in Ps.14.1-3 refers to ‘the fool’ of v.1.

The fear of Elohim is the beginning of wisdom. Fear of Elohim is 1) abject terror of what he can and is justified in doing to us, which engenders 2) awe at his majesty and wondrous works in our behalf, which leads us to 3) keeping his ways as he reveals them to us. **Q&C**

Vv.19-20 - Who is ‘under the law’? And what law is he under? Let’s look at the context first, to see if we can answer these questions. The verse says that every mouth is stopped and the entire world is guilty before Elohim. I think we can safely say that the whole world is ‘under the law’. Everyone is under its jurisdiction and must answer to it, even if

he hasn't been made intellectually aware of its existence, as we saw in ch.1. When he becomes aware of the Torah of Y'hovah, he knows both his sin and that he is a sinner, and that he cannot be justified by doing works of Torah.

But I don't think that's all that's here. I think Paul may be talking about 2 different laws, the Torah of Y'hovah and the oral torah of the Jews. I think this is the only way to rectify the contradiction of 3.20 and 2.13 (as well as Jas.1.22). We know that there are no real contradictions in scripture, so when we see one we need to ask Abba to show us the reconciliation. The '2 law' explanation is all I can figure. Let me substitute what I think are the 2 laws where they fit:

19 "Now we know that what things soever Torah saith, it saith to them who are under the (oral) law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before Elohim. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the (oral) law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by Torah *is* the knowledge of sin"

and Jas.1.

22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

The traditions of the fathers (oral Torah, both Yehudi and Xian) had become (and still is) as binding or more so upon the Jews and *ger toshav* as was the revealed Word of Y'hovah. Paul found himself at odds with the Pharisees because he was exposing the truth to the people. **Q&C**

Vv.21-26 – This is one sentence with at least 7 clauses. Some folks have said that the guy who punctuated the KJV must have been riding a mule with one leg shorter than the others on a very uneven road, but I think that is not true. The punctuation is important. The colon separates two different ideas that could stand alone, the second (and/or third) illustrating the first: the semicolon conjoins 2 clauses, the second adding to the first: while the comma separates phrases that say the same thing in different words.

Elohim's righteousness is not subject to any law because he decreed the law. Since he created it, he is not subject to it. That is NOT to say that he didn't abide by it when he walked among us in the flesh, but that, as Spirit and the Creator of all, he cannot be subject to anything. His flesh HAD to learn to abide by Torah (Heb.5.8), to justify us thereby.

Y'hovah's righteousness is manifested (made plain) in the Torah and the prophets (and the writings). His Word witnesses to his righteousness, which is by the faith OF Yeshua, not faith IN Yeshua. Our own faith is useless in our justification. Only Yeshua's faith has efficacy for us. What does that mean? What is Yeshua's faith? Does faith mean what I believe? Or is it tied up in what I **do** about what I believe?

Hebraically speaking, faith is action, not thought. James' epistle is chock full of examples of faith being the action that comes from our strong convictions, as opposed to just saying or thinking rightly. Yeshua showed his faith by doing the will of his father in heaven. In Ps.40.7-10, Messiah says,

"7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, 8 **I delight to do thy will, Elohai: yea, thy Torah within my heart.** 9 I have **preached** righteousness in the great congregation: lo, **I have not refrained my lips**, Y'hovah, thou knowest. 10 **I have not hid** thy righteousness within my heart; I have **declared** thy faithfulness and thy salvation: **I have not concealed** thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

Messiah's faith is one that works. So should ours be.

That is not to say that what you believe is not important, for if you act on wrong doctrine it will not be a source of eternal blessing or reward to you and it may be sin. It is whom you believe and trust that decides if you have eternal life. The difference in v.22 is the difference between Jew and Greek. It is Y'hovah's will to destroy that difference and make us and himself 'echad', as he is one.

V.23 is possibly the best-known and most quoted verse of the Brit HaDashah. It is one of those verses that is cut and dried, no possibility of misconstruction. And it is not a new teaching; it's been around for at least 1000 years before Sha'ul. Cf. 1Ki.8.46a, Ecc.7.20, Is.64.6. All men are sinners. The glory of Elohim can't be theirs – they can't even approach to it. We all fall short. And it illustrates v.22, as a colon separates it. But v.24 is the other side of the seesaw from v.23. "All have sinned; ... being freely justified through the redemption..." The redemption is the payment in full of the sin debt we all owed. The next colon illustrates Yeshua's orders and the plan of Elohim to reconcile us to himself. In fact the word 'propitiation' is from the greek *hilasterion* that is from the word *hilastos*, which means 'conciliate.' The propitiation is for those who will trust Yeshua for salvation, those who are reconciled through trust in his finished work.

The comma in v.25 sets apart two phrases that say the same thing. "Whom Elohim hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his (Elohim Avinu's) righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of Elohim;" Elohim set forth Yeshua as our propitiation through faith in his blood and through the forbearance of Elohim. The righteousness declared is Elohim's in remitting our past sins. He has set him (Yeshua) forth in v.25 to DECLARE his (Elohim Avinu's) righteousness in v.26, so that Avinu can be the justifier of all who believe in Yeshua. Avinu justifies those who believe in Yeshua by making Yeshua our propitiation or conciliation to Avinu through faith in his blood, which contextually equates to his death.

Where is boasting? Are the Jews intrinsically better than the gentiles? No. They have had the advantage of having Tanakh, which has made them better OFF, but not intrinsically better. Cause for boasting ain't in us, if you'll but remember Eph.2.8-9. We are justified by faith alone, not by our works of some man made oral law, whether Jewish or Xian. And we show our justification by our works of Y'hovah's Torah, for Elohim is the justifier of both Jews and gentiles by faith without deeds of the oral law, whether Xian or Jewish. We do not make Torah void: we establish it. **Q&C**

Romans 4

To recap the book briefly, Sha'ul has made these basic points so far; 1) There is no 'cheap grace', 'sloppy agape' or 'easy believe-ism', where one can just claim to 'believe' apart from works of faith, 2) There is no 'earning' salvation based on works of law done without faith, and 3) There is no 'automatic salvation' based on being born a physical son of Avraham any more than 'automatic damnation' to those born gentiles. After all, Avraham was born a gentile and became the 1st 'Hebrew' by crossing over the Euphrates to follow the directions of the Y'hovah who is One.

Vv.1-8 - Paul goes to the first patriarch of the Hebrew family by way of illustration and to make his case. He will reiterate the basic themes of obedience as well as the Shema, or unity of Jew and gentile in Messiah. Faith in Messiah is likened to the faith of Avraham, who obeyed Y'hovah without hesitation and thereby demonstrated his faith.

To the Jew, there is no higher authority to reference than Avraham. He was the Tzadik of tsadikim: the most righteous man in their history (even though he was a scoundrel, like the rest of us). If Avraham was not justified by works of the oral law, as the Pharisees (rabbis) taught, noone could be.

So, what did Avraham find was efficacious in his justification? The context is about the faith that justifies us at the end of Ch.3. He has made reference to CC in the matter of justification before. As we saw way back in ch.2, it is the CC of the heart that justifies a man before Y'hovah, not the trimming of the flesh. In other words, one need not be a Jew to be justified before Elohim. Sha'ul refers again to that spiritual truth in this chapter. Neither does a man need to be a Jew to be the descendant of Avraham according to the flesh. Please remember that Sha'ul is writing to the kahal at Rome: Jews and gentiles alike. At the moment he is referring to the whole body and he says that Avraham is 'our father, as pertaining to the flesh.' Both the Jews in the leadership of the Roman kahal AND the gentiles there were Avraham's physical children.

Avraham had found that his own works were useless in his justification before a righteous Elohim. He may have been holy, which means set apart to Y'hovah and really has nothing to do with righteousness or standing before him, but he was nowhere near righteous enough to be justified before him. So Y'hovah looked at his heart and saw that he had a positive volition to take Y'hovah at his word and obey him, and Y'hovah accounted that faith as righteousness (Gen.15.6). The only 'work' that we have in our justification is our decision, or 'positive volition', to trust Y'hovah despite circumstances. In Avi's case, circumstances = he is 75, his wife is barren and 65 (in Gen.17, he is 99 and Sarai is 89), but he believes Y'hovah can perform that which he has promised – a son from his old and barren wife and descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens. Even the Talmud agrees on this:

"Everything is in the hand of heaven, except the fear of heaven"⁵

In other words, Y'hovah doesn't make us fear him. THAT is our positive volition. We must choose to believe that he is and care about what he requires. THEN he graciously gives us the faith to the end of our justification.

When a man works for his justification, the standing he is after is one that is earned. He feels that he's earned his justification before Y'hovah and that Y'hovah therefore OWES him his reward. But Y'hovah's standard is JU-U-U-ST a BIT higher than ours, so the person trying to earn his reward is going to be sorely disappointed. The one who TRUSTS Y'hovah to do what he's promised will have his righteousness gifted to him, as Avraham's was to him. Please think about this question before answering it: Does the fact that our works do not justify us before Y'hovah negate our need to obey him? Did Avraham NOT obey Y'hovah immediately after he received his righteousness by faith? Read Gen.15 (and 17) and then answer the questions above.

Conversely, the fact of Avraham's obedient work doesn't negate the faith that motivated the work. It's the same with us. David says (Ps.32.1-2) righteousness is by imputation, not work; it is a gift, not wages earned [3.23]. **Q&C**

Vv.9-12 - Starting in v.9 Paul goes back to the discussion of the CC, or those who have been CCd vice those who have not. He is going to show that the CC has nothing to do with blessedness, the blessedness spoken of by David. Blessedness is the result of the righteousness of Yeshua, which is offered to the CCd and unCCd alike. This blessedness is the same as that in Ps.1, and particularly in Ps.32, which Sha'ul has just quoted. Blessed is 'happy' from the Hebrew '*esher*' meaning 'How happy!' *Esher* is from the root '*ashar*' - to make straight, level and right. This blessedness that is a result of our being made straight, level and right is attributed, which means ascribed to, pronounced to be or considered as belonging to. It is not an attribute that is intrinsic, but one that is given to us. When something is 'considered' to belong to someone, it means that it is not intrinsically his, but that he has the benefit of it just the same. Our '*makarismos*' or '*esher*' is not our own, but is given to us by our Saviour. We have the full benefit of this blessedness as a gift from Yeshua haMoshiach.

Avraham received his blessedness before he was CCd, **while he was yet a gentile**, because he believed Y'hovah – he took Y'hovah at his Word. Is that not how we received our blessedness as well? What has always been the condition under which one was saved? Sha'ul is discussing it right here. Salvation is by the grace of Y'hovah to them who believe and trust him to keep his Word. I can think of no one who has ever been saved in any other way, can you? Thought not.

So, what is CC for? Look at v.11. It is a SIGN (and a personal one, at that – I will not be showing mine off to anyone anytime soon) of the righteousness that Y'hovah ascribes to us due to the faith we've demonstrated. Remember that faith is not just mental assent, but also the actions that arise from that mental assent (Jas.1.22). CC is the sign that Avraham is the father of all who trust Y'hovah to perform that which he's promised, both the CCd and the unCC'd. Avraham was a point of conjunction for those who had been CCd and

those who had not, for he was justified as unCC'd, and later became CCd. Shades of Acts 15, eh?

If we understand this fact, Eph.3.3-9 becomes abundantly clear.

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me **the mystery** [*sod* interpretation]; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Moshiach) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 **That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Moshiach by the gospel:** 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of Elohim given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Moshiach; 9 And to make all *men* see what **is the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in Elohim, who created all things by Yeshua haMoshiach: **Q&C**

Vv.13-15 - Just as Torah is not nullified through faith (3.31), so faith is not nullified through Torah. Y'hovah promised Avraham that he and his seed would inherit the earth before he gave him the 'sign' of CC - 10 *years* before, to be exact. It was that promise that Avi trusted. Y'hovah had not revealed the mechanism by which he'd deliver the blessing, but the mechanism didn't mean anything to Avi. Y'hovah said it and that was enough for him, regardless what Bill and Gloria Gaither believe. The promise didn't come from oral law; it came by faith in the Word of Y'hovah long before it was written down (so I suppose *could* be called 'oral Torah', but not in the same vein as the meanderings of the rabbis).

V.14 has an interesting translation variant. The TR greek says, "*ei gar hoi ek nomou klayronomoi, kekenotai hey pistis, kai katergayntai hey epangelia*" – literally, "For if they **out of law share laws by lot** (like the land was divvied under Joshua), make empty the faith, and make useless the promise". I think this is actually speaking of cherry-picking bits of the Torah (share laws by lot = throwing the dice) and thereby making both faith and promise useless and vain. This is exactly what the rabbis did with their man-made rules that took precedence in their religion over the revealed Torah of Y'hovah. V.15 shows why they did this. If they didn't remind themselves of all their sins, but decided to only pay attention to **SOME** of the Torah, they would not think of all their sin or the wrath of Elohim to which they would thus be subject. Remember that the rabbis were superior to Elohim in their traditional religion. Even Elohim had to defer to the rabbinic decrees. Here is what Pesikta Rabbati §3 says: "A person must not say, 'I will not keep the commandment of the elders because they are not from the Torah.' The Almighty says to such a person, 'NO, My son! Rather all that they decree upon you, observe! As it is written, 'According to the instruction which they teach you' (Dt.17.11, wrenched from its context – READ Dt.17.8-12). **Even I (= Y'hovah) must obey their decree**, as it is written, 'You will decree and he will fulfill it.' (Job 22.28, a reference to 'name it - claim it' in Tanakh)""⁶ So they picked and chose which **Toroth** (laws) they would obey and which they would not. Then they added hundreds of other laws to keep the people so far from Torah that they couldn't get close enough to it to break it. This is what Paul is dealing with, and why it can be utterly confusing for us. 2 **Toroth** – one oral and one written: one to be obeyed fully and the other to be partially discarded.

Is Paul saying in v.15 that one who has never known Torah is off the hook? If he is, he completely negates the entire letter up to now. He has already made it plain that justification is not by 'easy believe-ism', nor by rote works, nor by physical birthright. He is speaking in reference to the previous verses. Without Torah there is no knowledge of sin and there can therefore BE no righteousness, for there can be no knowledge of righteousness, either. Therefore, without Torah, there is no standard for righteousness and no basis for ANY justification. Lack of a standard does NOT produce freedom or liberty: it produces anarchy. We see this in government, when it despises the Constitution which spells out the just powers it has been endowed with by its Creator – the people and the States. **Q&C**

Vv.16- end - Does this verse remind you of another passage in say ... Ephesians 2? It does me. Except Sha'ul doesn't elaborate so much here. He even uses the same words, 'by grace' and 'of (or through) faith' to convey the same concept – that all are justified in the same way, whether by legal descent or spiritual descent, by the faith of Avraham. This verse points, as do others, to the Shema; all are echad in Moshiach, as Y'hovah Eloheinu is echad. Paul is showing us that righteousness by the faith of Yeshua is accessible to both Jew and gentile, and that this concept predates Moshe and even the patriarchs. The Brit HaDashah and the Jewish midrashic writings agree on this:

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ... **28** There is **neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female**: for ye are all one in Moshiach Yeshua. **29** And if ye be Moshiach's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal.3.2, 28-29)

Tana DeBei Eliahu Rabba 9, "I bring heaven and earth to bear witness, that any human, **Jew or Gentile, man or woman, freeman or slave**, according to his deeds he can be worthy of Ruach haKodesh (the Holy Spirit)"⁷

Sha'ul is relying on his knowledge of the Shema and its implications to our faith to make the point that ALL ARE ONE in Messiah Yeshua.

Avraham was promised to be the father of MANY nations, not just Israel. And Paul says in v.17 that Avraham is the father of both the Jews and the gentiles in the Roman kahal. We are all the children of Avi 'before Him whom he believed, Elohim, who quickeneth the dead (both physically and spiritually) and calleth those things that be not as though they were.' He calls us who are NOT the physical seed of Avraham heirs with them according to the promise of Y'hovah TO the physical seed. **Q&C**

"Who against hope believed in hope?" [v.18] Whazzat? What is 'hope' in scripture? Hope is a firm trust in the promises of Y'hovah. In Heb.11.1 it says that "faith is the substance of things hoped for". To hope (v.i.) is "to place confidence in; to trust with confident expectation of good."⁸ Hope (n) is an intangible on which we can hang our future. The key to this phrase, though, is in the word 'against', which is from the Greek word *para*, which, in the root, means alongside. So Avraham leans up against hope, places his trust in the substance of that which is promised to him. Even though he could not see the promise with his eyes, he could see it in his spirit, and that was his confidence.

If we keep that in mind, the rest of the chapter is pretty easy to see. His hope made it possible for him to believe Y'hovah when he said that a 100 year-old man and his barren, 90 year-old, babe of a wife (Abimelech wanted her for his harem) would bring forth a son (Gen.18.10). He didn't 'stagger' at Y'hovah's promise, but was strong in the faith of Y'hovah, that he would perform his promise. And his faith and hope never faltered, for some 30 years later, he was able to bind Yitzhak on the altar and take up the knife to offer him, knowing that the same Y'hovah who could quicken the womb and loins of 2 people as good as dead could also quicken their promised seed, even though he was dead. Avi's faith was not judged 'not weak' because he did 'good works' or because he believed in some doctrines 'just right', but because he looked passed the circumstances of his life and knew that Y'hovah could work around them, or in spite of them, and trusted Y'hovah and obeyed him without hesitation.

For this reason we have James saying that works of Torah as a result of faith is an essential proof of salvation:

James 1. **22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. **23** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: **24** For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. **25** But whoso looketh into the perfect Torah of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

James 2. **12** So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Torah of liberty.

Paul says the same thing in Eph.2.10:

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua unto good works (of Torah), which Elohim hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Vv.22-25 - All of this brings us back around to v.3, that righteousness is imputed due to faith, and that faith is proven by our works. As Avraham was justified because he believed that he could be 'raised from the dead' metaphorically by his trust in Y'hovah's promise, so we can be raised from the dead both spiritually and physically by our trust in Y'hovah's promise. Both Avraham's 'time of life' was restored, Yitzhak was restored to him and Yeshua was literally raised from the dead by the same power. Our hope in that power of Y'hovah to deliver us through the shed blood of Yeshua and by his resurrection from death is the faith by which Y'hovah imputes righteousness to us, thereby justifying us. **Q&C**

Romans 5

Vv.1-11 are transitional between the first 4 chapters, where Paul explained how we are saved by grace through faith, and the NEXT 4 chapters, where he explains how we should react to that salvation by grace through faith, i.e.; righteous behaviour.

Vv.1-2 - Remember the context leading up to this 'therefore' is 4.19-25. Avraham, being (along with Sarah) well past the time of life and being a realist as well, believed Elohim when He said that Avi would have seed as the stars of the heavens and the sand of the sea. In the natural, this was impossible, but with Y'hovah **all** things are possible. Avi glorified Y'hovah for his promise and took steps to see it happen. Avraham had something to **do** in order for Y'hovah to work the miracle – he had to go in to his wife. If Avi had NOT gone in, Y'hovah COULD not have worked the miracle as he'd planned it. He COULD have done the asexual conception thing, though the virgin birth had to be performed on a woman who was actually a virgin, and I think it is safe to assume that Sarah was NOT a virgin anymore. So Avraham worked out his faith (Phil.2.13) by lying with Sarah. His faith was accounted to him for righteousness; he was justified by his faith. And we are told this in Torah; not for Avraham's sake; for he had lived it, was buried with his fathers by the time it was written down and the writing would, therefore, do him no good. It was written for OUR admonition (1Cor.10.11), to remind us that Y'hovah is a miracle working Elohim, and that He will work miracles for us, IF we'll trust him enough to put ourselves in the way of those miracles, as Avraham did.

So what is the benefit of our justification by faith? We have Shalom with Elohim. I truly believe that that is the gospel in a nutshell – “You can have Peace with Elohim, and that peace can permeate your life.” All the theology in the world can't destroy that simple truth. Theologians have tried, but they have not succeeded for those who are faithful to his Word. Lots of false theology has been perpetrated on the churches and synagogues, which have acceded to the whims and traditions of men in opposition to the Word. Those who are willing to discard theology that doesn't pass the scripture test are rewarded with this Shalom.

Hope is a confident expectation of something that has been promised, but cannot be seen, “the highest degree of well founded expectation of good”.⁹ We are in hope of the glory of Elohim. Are we then going to have Elohim's glory in our resurrected bodies? Seems so! In 1Jn.3 we see this:

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of Elohim: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of Elohim, and **it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is. **3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

This is the hope of his glory, of which we all SHALL partake. Q&C

But that hope isn't the only thing in which we glory. Vv. 3-5 - says we also glory in tribulation, because without trouble we are nothing, our character can't develop without struggles. A people that has all its daily needs provided at no cost becomes slave to the

provider, no matter the perception of the people. In America we think we are free, but we are slaves to the extent that we take the largesse dished out by the government. Tribulation in our lives helps to develop each of us into the image of Messiah, who is the express image of Y'hovah Avinu (Heb.1.3).

It is often noted that the wicked seem to live sumptuously, while the righteous live in squalor. I am of the opinion that no mere human is either entirely wicked, or entirely good. *I think* that the wicked who live sumptuously are receiving their rewards for their good deeds in this life, as they will suffer only destruction in the afterlife. The righteous, likewise, suffer the retributive consequences for their sins in this life, for they have all eternity to enjoy their rewards for good done in Messiah. Cf. Ps.73

Our promise from Y'hovah is not to be rich and live high, as prosperity preachers say. There is no promise to change our circumstances when we come to Messiah. Our promise is that we will have a change of heart, and a willingness to obey Y'hovah from our hearts. We change how we view and respond to our circumstances. And that is not of ourselves any more than our faith is. The Spirit that indwells us is the one who brings the change of attitude and response in his ministry of transforming us into the image of Abba's dear son. He guides our study of and teaches us to apply Torah to our lives. He engrains his Word into our brains and hearts so that we can live it out in our daily walk with him.

The trouble we have in this life develops our patience to endure and enhances our ability to wait on His timing. When we have the patience to wait for his timing, we experience the truth that "all things work together for our good who love him and are the called according to His purpose." [8.28] And that experience feeds the hope we spoke of before - the patient endurance and expectant knowledge that what he has promised he is also willing and able to perform and that he SHALL DO in us. **Q&C**

In vv. 6, 8, and 10 we see 3 different references to our human condition without Messiah, each one prefaced by a time reference; 6) when we were yet w/o strength, 8) while we were yet sinners, and 10) when we were enemies. Y'hovah provided our redemption even though we were his enemies, sinners who had not the Ruach of Y'hovah to strengthen and guide us. Y'hovah Yeshua is the strong right arm of Elohim, and he takes me by my right hand (Ps.73.23, "thou hast holden me by my right hand") walking with me, not allowing me to exercise my own strength (right arm), but leaving HIS right arm ready for battle.

V.11 says that we have received the atonement. This was never the case n time until Yeshua made his offering on the tree. The blood of bulls, IOW, and goats never atoned for anything.

Heb.9.11-14 - **11** But Moshiah being come an (Melchizedek) high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. **13** For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: **14** How much more shall the blood of Moshiah, who through the eternal Ruach offered himself without spot to Elohim, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

We have established from Paul's writing in the first 4 chapters that all are sinners and all fail to meet Elohim's righteous requirements to have Shalom with him. We have also established that Elohim never wanted sacrifice from us, but a CCd heart, and that everyone who was ever justified was such by grace through faith. I, therefore, conclude (and I could be wrong, though I **SERIOUSLY DOUBT** it) that the sacrifice of the bulls and goats NEVER covered anyone's sins or actually purified anything. Israel's rabbis may have THOUGHT that the blood of the animals was efficacious (notice the word 'if' in Heb.9.13), but they were justified by the grace of Y'hovah through the faith of Yeshua, and the sacrifice was something that was a reminder of what the cost both would be, is and was to Elohim (depending on your vantage point in time), and of what we deserved because of our sins against Y'hovah Elohenu. The sacrifices were 'object lessons' pointing to our 'just desserts', which Y'hovah Elohenu took on himself in the flesh of Yeshua. **Q&C**

Rom.5.12-21 - V.12 begins with the word 'wherefore', so what is it there for? It tells us that Sha'ul is about to explain what we need to understand in light of what's just been said. There is a parenthetical there from v.13-17. A parenthetical expounds on a concept discussed, but can be left out of the sentence and the sentence will still make sense. A Mark paraphrase of v.12 juxtaposed with v.18 (removing the parenthetical) is this: "As Adam sinned and introduced death to all his descendants thereby, so by the sinless life and atonement of Yeshua all may be justified and received unto life eternal."

The parenthetical is addressed in vv.20-21. Paul is NOT saying that there was no sin before Moshe received Torah. There was PLENTY of sin before Sinai. He says that the Torah made us aware of the sin we'd been guilty of. It made us aware of our need for a deliverer from our bondage to death by sin. And Yeshua provided that deliverance.

In v.13 the word 'imputed' needs to be understood. The Greek word is *ellogeo*, a compound of *en*, which means in, and *logos*, which in this context means reckon. It is saying that we do not reckon ourselves to have broken a law if there is no law to break. Now, the Torah of liberty was known before it was given at Sinai, but men did not know that it applied generally to them all. It is the only objective standard for righteousness, for it is the Word of Y'hovah. The imputation in v.13 deals with OUR perception of the Torah's application to us and is not the same as the imputation in 4.6, for that is Y'hovah's imputation, not ours. In ch.4 Y'hovah imputes righteousness to us, but here WE are imputing guilt to ourselves based on our knowledge of Torah.

In v.14 we see the truth of what's just been stated since, whether we imputed the guilt to ourselves or not and whether we sinned the same sin as Adam or not, the wages of our sin still reigned from Adam to Moshe.

The KJV's wording of vv.15 and 16 is a little foreign to us. He's saying that Yeshua's atonement is not like Adam's sin, because Yeshua obeyed Elohim and can therefore offer redemption to all men. His obedience covers his entire Torah-submissive life, and not just his wilderness temptation and his death on the tree (Phil.2.8). Vv.17-19 explain things that were already touched on above.

Vv.20-21 – ‘that the offence might abound’ is talking about our awareness and recognition of the offence we have brought against Y’hovah. But his grace is super-abundantly above our ability to offend him. Because that grace is MUCH more weighty than our sin, we have eternal life through the atonement of Yeshua.

One of the difficulties with (mainstream) Xianity is that it does not present a definition of sin. References are made to "disobeying Elohim," or "going against the will of Elohim," but what that means is very much left up to people to decide. Xianity's various denominations pick and choose what commandments from the "Old Testament" they believe are "applicable" (to their particular doctrines), while they all maintain the teaching that believers are "not under the law."¹⁰

Q&C

Fulfilling Torah Ministries

Romans 6

In chapters 6-8, Paul is developing the obedient response we have in gratitude to Y'hovah for his gracious favour to us. He'll show us that our justification comes by Yeshua's faith, freely given to us, and that the desire for obedience follows that justification like spring follows winter. It is in our obedience that Yeshua sanctifies us, sets us apart unto his (and our) Abba. It is our positive volition to obey Y'hovah's commands that allows him to justify us freely. Obedience to Y'hovah's commands as a sign to ourselves and others of our justification is very well understood by the Jewish believers in Rome, but is quite foreign to the gentiles, who were coming to faith in Messiah directly from the pagan world. It is primarily the Gentiles to whom he is writing in Ch.6.

Paul's concept of gentiles learning "obedience of faith," (first mentioned in Chapter 1:5) is found throughout the letter of Romans (5:2,19; 6:16,19; 10:16-18; 12:1,2; 15:18,19; 16:15-20,26) and is in line with the ruling of the Jerusalem Council concerning gentiles (as described in Acts 15)¹¹.

So, since we know the superabundance of Y'hovah's grace towards us, do we then continue to sin so he can MORE superabundantly bless us with his grace? Do we now live as close to the sin that so easily besets us as we can so that Y'hovah can provide the grace we need to overcome it? WhatayaNutz? (That was a Mark paraphrase, in case you didn't know.) We are not free to sin; we are free to be servants of righteousness. We are 'dead' to sin, why would we continue living in sin? We should be obeying the righteousness found in scripture more naturally every day, as we get to know him better and want to be like him. In ch.7 we are going to see that 'dead to sin' concept developed. Vv.1-2 say in no uncertain terms that we are to follow Torah, for there was no other definition of sin than transgression of Torah. The operative words in v.2 are 'live therein'. And Elohim forbid that we should 'live in' sin, as a natural lifestyle.

Is Paul referring to physical baptism in vv.3-4? While the immersion in H₂O is a type of what happens spiritually to every believer upon his justification, I think it is the spiritual aspect that Paul is addressing here. He shows that we pictured our death in baptism, and also our resurrection as a new man. Our life is 'new' and our responsibilities are, as well. Even as *gerim tzadik*, righteous gentiles, we are now under the law of liberty. We are no longer under the law of sin and death (hereinafter LoS&D). Before we were slaves to sin and death, but NOW we are servants of righteousness in newness of life. We are no longer subject to sin, but free to obey. Sin's shackles have been removed and the perfect Torah of Liberty is now our guide to follow.

We were planted in the likeness of his death, but shall also be 'raised in his likeness' in resurrection, for our 'old man' has been crucified and buried and the 'new man' has risen with Messiah to life,

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the Y'hovah Elohecha, that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which Y'hovah sware unto thy fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzhak, and to Ya'acov, to give them. (Dt.30.19-20).

Love of Y'hovah in Dt.30.20a is defined in the 2 following phrases; obey him and cleave

to him.

How many times does he repeat himself here? In vv. 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 he says we need to; 4) walk in newness of life, 6) not serve sin, 7) freed from sin, 11) dead to sin, 12) let not sin reign in our bodies, 13) neither yield our bodies as servants to unrighteousness – all are just different wordings for the same thing – free to obey Torah. Where would the new gentile converts be able to go to find how to walk in newness of life? Where else, but TNK (Torah, Nevi'im, Kethuvim – the OT)?

2Tim.3.14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yeshua. 16 All scripture given by inspiration of Elohim, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of Elohim may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

OH! That's the same thing, isn't it? **Q&C**

Concerning death and resurrection, there are at least 3 different ways to see what Shaul is saying here, much like there are three ways to see our salvation; 1) we are already dead and raised in Messiah when we believe (like justification), 2) it is a matter of present growth into the likeness of Messiah (like sanctification), and 3) It is a future fulfillment of a promise from Y'hovah (like glorification).

There are also different ways to see that we are 'dead to sin';

1) Judicially, where Y'hovah decides to take our sin on himself through Yeshua;

1 If ye then be risen with Moshiach, seek those things which are above, where Moshiach sitteth on the right hand of Elohim. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Moshiach in Elohim. (Col.3.1-3),

2) in baptism we ratify his decision and accept his seal upon us,

3) Morally, we have the ability to die to sin daily and live unto him in obedience;

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Moshiach Yeshua our Master, I die daily... 34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of Elohim: I speak to your shame. (1Cor.15.31, 34),

4) eschatologically, we will one day die physically and then be raised in a new body, or we'll just be changed into an incorruptible body that will never sin again.¹² We should stay as far as we can from our besetting sin and live as close as we can to Yeshua, as Timothy had learned to do. **Q&C**

Vv.6-13 - If we are crucified with Messiah, if we are dead to sin, we no longer sin by compunction, but by choice. We who belong to Yeshua are able to NOT sin. This is the newness of life in v.5, where we can choose to obey – positive volition to not sin and to choose life thereby, and not death; blessing and not cursing (Dt.28.1-14, 30.19-20). We are able to not sin, but that doesn't mean it's easy. It's simple, but it ain't easy. We just need to obey – simple!

However, there is this little problem we have called the flesh that we dwell in. As Eliyahu found out in the cave in Horeb after the defeat of the prophets of Ba'al on Mt. Carmel (arguably, the high point of his spiritual life on earth), the flesh is ever present with us, and it H O L L E R S in our ears and minds to have its way, while the Ruach of Elohim speaks to us in a still, small voice. We need to ignore the gesticulations of the flesh and

concentrate on hearing the voice of Y'hovah. And the easiest way to do that is to read and study his Word, to make it as much a part of us as is our flesh. The knowledge of what we need to do is simple – obey. The actual DOING of it is not so easy. It takes WORK, often in the face of a lousy attitude toward that work. Study is NOT a lot of fun sometimes, but it is often at those times that the revelation we get is the best. Obedience is often inconvenient, and Elohim knows that in America convenience is our way of life, but we need to do it, just the same. I can imagine standing before the Bima of Y'hovah Yeshua and answering his questions: “Why did you sin THIS time?” And my answer, “It was convenient.” And then he shows me the actual event of his crucifixion and the stripes he received for my ‘convenience’. I don’t think I’ll be proud that day. But I praise him that there is now no condemnation (8.1) for me, as I walk after the Ruach in newness of life.

‘He died unto sin once’ – His one death on the tree satisfied all the sin debt of the whole world. This one death covered the Passover deliverance from exile/death, the Yom Kippur atonement, all the various sin, trespass and other freewill offerings. For this reason, when we offer anything to Y'hovah in payment for sin or sins, we are trampling under foot the blood of Messiah (Heb.10.28, *I think* some of the priests who believed [Acts.6.7] were considering going back to offering the Temple blood sacrifices and THAT was the whole purpose of the book of Hebrews; to STOP them). We offer our bodies as living sacrifices – we obey his commands, not in payment for sins, but in loving obedience because he wants us to and he gives us the ability through his indwelling Ruach.

We are to reckon ourselves dead to sin in Messiah and alive to the Spirit in him, also. If we are dead in him, we will also live in him. We will walk AS HE WALKED (1Jn.2.6), which was in obedience to his own Word. Again, to do this, it will take “study to show ourselves approved, workmen that need not be ashamed” before him.

When Shaul says, ‘Let not sin reign in your members’ he is telling us that we are able to NOT sin. To not ‘yield your members (parts of your body) as instruments of unrighteousness’ is to avoid situations and places that make it easier for you to walk after your flesh. To yield your members as instruments of righteousness is – you guessed it – obedience to his Torah, as alive from the dead. **Q&C**

Vv.14-23 - The verse begins with the word ‘for’, which means that what follows is to be seen in light of what’s just been said. We are to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto Elohim. In THAT light, we are to read v.14. It has been the practice of the church to quote numbered sound bites out of context and then beat each other over the skull with them. That has been the practice with not this whole verse, but only the last phrase, ‘for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ Let’s remember first of all that Paul has referred to at least 2 laws so far in Romans, Torah and oral law. **In 2.13 he says that the doers of the law are justified, but in 3.20 he says that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. Huh??? There HAVE to be 2 laws in play.** Using scripture to interpret scripture we go to James 1.22, 25

22 "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves... 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law (Torah) of liberty, and continueth, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

The law that Sha'ul is speaking of in v.14 must therefore be the oral law of the Scribes and Pharisees. We are given the Torah by the grace of Y'hovah, so we'll know when we are about to sin and may avoid it, not let it reign in our mortal bodies. If we are under grace, we will not live a sinful lifestyle, but will yield to righteousness. If we yield our bodies as instruments of righteousness to Elohim, sin will not have dominion over us. We have his gracious provision that is profitable to us

'for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction (the actual meaning of Torah) in righteousness', that we may be 'perfect' (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works (obedience to Y'hovah's commands), 2Tim.3.17-18.

For Paul to mean, "We no longer have to obey Torah" when he said "We are not under the law" would be heresy for a Jewish rabbi like Paul. It would also contradict such scriptures as Ro.3.31, 7.12, 14a, 22, 25, 8.4 and 7. His 'suggestion' in 3.5-8, 6.1-2, and 15 is not license to do as we please and disregard Y'hovah's instructions, but the means to faithfully follow his Torah from a sincere heart. To be 'under the law' is to have an uncircumcised heart, for that person is 'under' the condemnation of Torah. The Torah has two aspects, a 'dual nature': 1) life for those who obey (the law of life) and 2) death for those who do not (LoS&D, the law of sin and death - De.30). We who walk after the Spirit (8.1) are not under the Torah's condemnation. We will focus on that concept in Ch. 8. Let's keep that oral law of the S&P in mind as we look at the rest of the chapter, shall we?

So, should we take advantage of the fact that we have the gracious provision of Y'hovah and just go ahead and sin to our heart's content? WhatayaNutz? This is the 3rd time that Sha'ul has used a midrashic device to point out the ridiculous nature of the arguments used against him. Well, since we're under grace and don't need to do all that the S&P have been telling us, we may as well just go ahead and sin willy-nilly. He has heard it before, and knows it's going to be used again and again. We still get this from CCers and legalist Xians.

To whom do you yield yourself to obey, sin unto death or Torah unto righteousness and life (there's that 'dual' nature of Torah, again). When we submit to a lifestyle of sin, we choose death. Please notice that in v.17 Sha'ul says that the gentiles WERE servants of sin, but now they are not because they have believed from the heart the doctrine he'd delivered to them. This made them free from sin and unto righteousness. They are now free to NOT sin by the grace of Elohim. He then exhorts them to live like they had always lived, except to change their focus. Instead of yielding to uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, they should yield to righteousness unto holiness. Iniquity = *anomia* = lawlessness/Torahlessness. Are we to yield ourselves to *anomia*, Torahlessness? WhatayaNutz? When we served sin we were free from Torah while being under its condemnation. What profit was there in it? Did we see any fruit from serving sin? The only thing we got from our service to sin was the death that we chose by that service. But NOW, we have been freed from sin by the grace of Elohim, and been made able to NOT sin, but to live righteously in Messiah. NOW we can see the fruit of a righteous life, we can live separated unto Y'hovah and have an end of everlasting life. We choose life when

we choose to obey (Dt.28.1-14, 30.19). We had chosen our wages before, now we've been given a gift by Elohim of eternal life through the finished work of Yeshua on the tree. **Q&C**

Fulfilling Torah Ministries

Romans 7

Rom.7.1-4 – Paul primarily addresses Jews who know Torah – brethren who have a deep understanding of it, in ch.7. Let's look at the passage in Deut.24.1-4, which this passage is addressing as 'the law' to which we are dead in Moshiach:

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give in her hand, and send her out of his house. **2** And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's. **3** And the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her his wife; **4** Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that abomination before Y'hovah: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Y'hovah Elohecha giveth thee an inheritance.

Let's also remember what Yeshua said about divorce in Mat.19,

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? **4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made at the beginning made them male and female, **5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? **6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore Elohim hath joined together, let not man put asunder. **7** They say unto him, Why did Moshe then **command** to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? **8** He saith unto them, **Moshe** because of the hardness of your hearts **suffered you** to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. **9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

In my humble (a-chem) opinion, Yeshua is telling the Pharisees that Moshe **ALLOWED** them to divorce due to their own hard hearts, but that that was *never* Y'hovah's plan. His plan was 1 man + 1 woman for life. In Y'hovah's plan, again IMHO (which is based mainly on THIS Matt. passage) there is no valid reason for ending a consummated marriage. Divorce for fornication was in the event of one spouse being unfaithful during the betrothal period that lasted for as long as the groom's father decided (assuming he's still alive), as Yoseph may have thought of Miriam in Matt.1,

18 Now the birth of Yeshua haMoshiach was on this wise: When as his mother Miriam was espoused to Yoseph, before they came together (they had entered the Ketubah and were lawfully married, but not the Nesu'in and so had not yet consummated the marriage), she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. **19** Then Yoseph her husband, being a *tsadik*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

He was within his rights to have her stoned, but would not, I think due to his love for her. There is no biblical justification for divorce after the marriage is solemnized, affirmed and consummated, IMHO, based on Yeshua's words in Mat.19.

Y'hovah treated Ephraim in the same manner as Yoseph had Miriam. The difference was that Ephraim had committed whoredoms before the marriage to Y'hovah had been solemnized and consummated. He therefore gave her the bill of divorcement in,

6 Y'hovah (Yeshua) said also unto me in the days of YoshiYahu the king, Hast thou seen which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree [pagan 'high places' to Molech/Ashera), and there hath played the harlot. **7** And I said after she had done all these, Turn thou [*shuv*] unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw. **8** And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer.3.6-8)

He's talking about both houses of Jacob playing the harlot, but only Ephraim/Israel being divorced. Judah's harlotry was not as complete as was Israel's, *I think*. According to

Deut.24, Y'hovah could not remarry Ephraim/Israel. She had gone after another and consummated THAT arrangement. He could NOT marry her.

In Dt.24, we see that the man who was allowed to divorce his wife could not marry her again after she'd been another man's. Paul here explains that that law, therefore, also binds her for as long as he is alive. When he dies, she is free of that law, and so is he. Remember the Rav Sha'ul has already told us that we are free from the law because we are 'dead to' it in Moshiach. Of course, a dead man is not going to marry anyone. But a man who has died and risen from death is a new creation [2Cor.5.17, Gal.6.15], a new man who CAN marry that woman (that's us – Ephraim) who CAN marry him in accordance with Deut.24. Isn't it interesting how Y'hovah makes seemingly insurmountable problems, only to surmount them?

So, we are now free to marry whom we will by the death and resurrection of Yeshua from the dead. We WERE married to our flesh/OSN/evil inclination until Yeshua nailed the LoS&D in his flesh to the tree and it (LoS&D) died, metaphorically/spiritually, in our flesh. NOW, we can 'marry our spirits' to whomever we choose to obey. Choose life by and in Yeshua. **Q&C**

Vv.5-6 - From v.5 on, ch.7 is talking about our perceptions and what they make us do. He uses nouns in a metaphorical sense, more than literal. For instance, in v.8 he says 'sin was dead', he is not speaking literally, but trying to draw us a picture. Rav Sha'ul often uses metaphor to make a spiritual point.

Remember that the Torah's purpose *before* we were justified was to convince us that we were sinners (5.20-21, note) in need of a Saviour. Its ultimate purpose was to give life (Lev.18.5, Dt.28.15-20, Pro.3.18, 4.4, 13, Ezek.20.11). This verse points us back to what we were delivered from. What does it mean, 'when we were in the flesh'? Does that include both Jews and Gentiles? It includes both and it means before our justification. Torah's purpose was to convince us that we could never keep it well enough to be justified by our works of Torah. We needed Y'hovah's Spirit before we stood any chance of keeping Torah. It says 'the motions of sins ... bring forth fruit unto death.' It does NOT say that Torah brings forth death, but that the motions of sins do. 'Motions' is from Grk.3804 *pathema*, hardship or pain. *I think* that the 'hardship or pain of sins' = our feeble attempts to keep from sin in our own strength. It isn't just hard – it's IMPOSSIBLE. It is these 'motions of sins that bring forth fruit unto death' that illustrates the LoS&D.

We are delivered from the LoS&D because that which held us is dead. What held us was not Torah, but our flesh/OSN/evil inclination, remembering the context of Ch.6,

2 Elohim forbid. [WhaddayaNUTZ?!] How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Yeshua Moshieniu were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Moshiaich was raised up from the dead by the glory of Avinu, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Do you see how that parallels 7.6? It isn't the Torah we are delivered from, but the law of divorce (which is the working of sin and death), since our husband died the death we deserved, and we are identified with him in mikvah/baptism.

Likewise as Messiah died physically, WE died spiritually in our justification by Yeshua's faith and work. Now that we are dead to our idolatrous affair with the flesh, we are free to serve our new husband according to his instructions. We can now go his way by the power of his Ruach (Spirit) in us, and are delivered from LoS&D that reigned in our flesh, being dead to them (both the LoS&D and the flesh). We are free to serve the Spirit of Torah **by** the Spirit of Torah, and freed from the condemnation of trying to follow by grasping at the letter of the Torah in our own strength. **Q&C**

Vv.7-12 - Is Torah sin? WhatayaNutz? No way, man! It lets me know when I HAVE sinned. If not for Torah, I would not have known I was a sinner in need of a Saviour. Paul uses his own experience for the rest of the chapter. He speaks of covetousness. I believe this is a clue as to his 'thorn in the flesh' (2Cor.12.7). I think his sin may be his attitude of superiority as a Jew over the gentiles. Jews have had a covetable position before Y'hovah. They were his chosen vessel to bring Torah and the prophets to the world, to bring Moshiach into the world. To covet is not just to lust for what we don't have, but also to want to hold onto what we DO have – to make our possessions idols. Now, we gentiles are 'fellow – heirs' and members of the Commonwealth of Israel. He may yet have coveted the lofty position he once had as a Jew. This is still a problem for the Jews. It is ALSO a problem for Xians, who see themselves as superior to the Jews. We are NOT superior. As it was with the Jews BEFORE Yeshua, so it is with us now and as a group we covet our position.

The only way we can know that it is wrong to covet is to be told so. Do we not teach our children to 'share' their stuff with others? Do our children not say, "It's MINE!"? Before we knew it was a sin to covet, it was still in us to covet. Only by Torah telling us it's wrong to covet do we know that covetousness is sin. The Torah is not sin, it just points out our sin to us. It makes us know that we are sinners (cf.5.20-21, note). Sin took advantage of me before I knew Torah.

In v.8, the word 'wrought' is from Grk. *katargazomai*, meaning to work fully. We just saw that the full work of Torah before we are justified is to point out our sin and to condemn us of it. The word 'concupiscence' is from Grk. *epithumia* meaning 'overheat' or 'overarching passion'. It is SIN that works my lust, NOT Torah. Sin USED Torah to awaken my awareness of sin's lusts, and my inability to overcome that sin. Sin's purpose in using Torah was to make me surrender, to not eschew sin, realizing that 'That's just me and there's nothing I can do about it.' Torah's **purpose** is to give life. Sin's **purpose** is to make me agree to my own death. (Sounds like our courts in America, but that's another book.) It's not that sin was dead in me before Torah, but that I was totally unaware that sin existed. The word 'without' is from Grk. *khoreece*, meaning 'apart from' or 'outside of'. IOW, I was apart from Torah and knew nothing of sin.

The word 'dead' in v.8 is from the greek word *nekros*, which is either literally or figuratively, a corpse. A corpse is a hollow shell, no spirit in it. So sin was empty to me before I knew Torah. In v.5, the word 'death' is from the greek word *thanatos*, 'an

adjective used as a noun' meaning death. Its base is *thnesko*, a verb meaning 'to cause to die'. The Torah's purpose is to make me aware, 'alive to' my spiritually dead condition, and that sin is no longer dead to me.

V.9 says that I lived before Torah came and pointed out my sin. When once I knew that sin existed, I saw that I was a dead man – without hope of righteousness before Y'hovah. I could be 'blameless', but not righteous. And blameless ain't enough. SINLESS is the standard. When I understood that sin existed, and it was in me, I saw that Torah, which Y'hovah meant for LIFE in v.10, merely pointed out my sin and the wages that I deserved. Before I was justified, Torah did not give me life, but showed me my ultimate death. Sin revived from death in my unregenerate mind. So Torah awakened my awareness of sin.

Vv.10-13 – In my unregenerate condition, Torah, which is life, I perceived (meaning in Greek of the word translated 'found') or understood to be, unto death. At this point I knew my undesirable condition. Sin then took advantage through Torah, and totally seduced me into sin. THEN it used the same Torah to convince me of my sin and kill me, metaphorically in my own mind. Sha'ul did not physically die when he became aware of his sin. Everything he's written about up to here is metaphorical or spiritual, not literal. But in v.12, he makes a bold and literal statement of truth. Wherefore (for this reason), because all that came before is true, the Word of Elohim is holy, and his commandments are holy, just and good. BECAUSE Torah awoke me to my sinful condition, it is holy, just and good. Without sin reviving in me - and my lack of awareness of my sin, I would never have known my want for a remedy. Torah did not become death, but SIN used it to convince me of my spiritual condition. THEN it worked me over using the instructions of Elohim to prove what a mess I was, to bring discouragement and despair – it made me aware that I was EXCEEDING sinful. **Q&C**

Vv.14-25 - Torah is spiritual. That it is spiritual, in itself, doesn't make it good [that's gnostic/Platonic thinking], it just doesn't do anything for my flesh. Just as I was born, I am carnal, out to aggrandize my flesh, or natural human nature, and am a slave to my inclination towards evil. I see this slavery to sin by the fact that I want to do what Torah instructs me to do (that is, obey the positive commandments and thereby feed my good inclination), but I find it MUCH easier to do what it forbids (that is, I perform that which is forbidden in the negative commandments and thereby feed my evil inclination). This conflict within myself shows me that Torah is good, and that my flesh is dominated by sin. Paul shows us that there is a difference in the believer between himself and the sin that dwells in his flesh. What I therefore hate in myself is what I end up doing naturally, and I thereby show in my life that I know that Y'hovah's Torah is good, but that I am not able to perform it in my flesh because sin dominates my flesh. That evil inclination which dominates my flesh is tempered, or modified, by the Spirit of Yeshua dwelling in me. The 'body of death' is tempered, or softened, by his 'imperishable body' (1Cor.15.40-49) through my mikvah (baptism) into his death and resurrection. I know that performance of Torah is good and good for me, but, while walking in my flesh, I am absolutely unable to do it.

Y'hovah wants my volitional compliance out of love for him, not out of rote grasping after the letter of the Torah. V.21 shows us that there is another law besides Torah at work in us. V.23 reiterates that it is there. THIS is the LoS&D. It is in each of us, and it works against the Torah that's trying to muscle its way in where there is no vacuum to fill (kind of like Xians trying to get into the political arena they'd previously abandoned – Satan immediately filled the vacuum they left, and hasn't left any vacuum for them to fill, so they have to try to 'muscle in'. Good luck to them – they will NEED it). Now, Satan may be gone from my inward man, but there is still the flesh to deal with. In my mind and spirit I want to do what's right and righteous before Y'hovah because I 'delight in Torah in my inward man'. But the law in my flesh, which is the LoS&D, impedes my way, forces itself on me and I surrender to it. The law of my mind is my will to do what Y'hovah would have me do. The law in my members is the law of sin that dominates my flesh. Now, if I WANT to do one thing and end up doing another, it isn't ME that's doing it, but sin that dominates my flesh. 2Cor.10 says,

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare not carnal, but mighty through Elohim to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Elohim, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Moshiach;

So I see that there is a bent in me towards sin. I want to do what Torah commands, but I do what it forbids. My mind wants to do right, but my flesh leads me to do what is sinful. My flesh is so incredibly sinful I would despair, except for the promises of Y'hovah to deliver me from the body of death and give me a new body wherein dwells righteousness. Please understand that Sha'ul does NOT say, 'Who shall deliver me from Torah.' It is the body of sin and death in his flesh that he needs to be delivered from. And he glorifies and esteems Elohim who will do it.

We who are Y'hovah's and who are after his heart still have to deal with the evil inclination, what the church calls the sin nature, and we will until our physical death or our translation into his kingdom. But Y'hovah has promised that HE will perform it in us if we will willingly submit to his Spirit in the Name of Yeshua. **HE** will deliver us from this body of sin and death.

But that's not all. **Q&C**

Romans 8

Chapter 8 has Sha'ul laying the foundation for the teaching in the rest of the book. Please keep that in mind.

Vv.1-2 – Before we had Messiah, Torah condemned us. That was not its intent, but our sinful flesh, or evil inclination, made what was intended for our good and for life into our death sentence. Our flesh, in its weakness, wouldn't allow us to keep Torah. But Messiah condemned our sin, nailing it to his tree (Col.2.14). Not only will he deliver us from this body of sin and death, he will also not condemn us for having the battle if we choose to follow him. In fact, the very fact that we have the battle raging in our members is good evidence that we are after his heart and want to obey. Therefore, no condemnation attaches to us, if we are Messiah's and we walk NOT after the flesh (a sinful lifestyle), but after Ruach haKodesh.

What does it mean to 'walk' after the Spirit? Walking is a conscious choice (volition) and effort. We can walk or not walk, and we decide when and where we walk. Walking after the Spirit means that we do not pursue things that build up our evil inclination, or the OSN¹³, (negative commandments) – we pursue things that build up our good inclination, or the NN, (positive commandments). What are some of the things that build up our evil inclination? Sha'ul tells us in Col.3

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**: **6** For which things' sake the wrath of Elohim cometh on the children of disobedience: **7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.** **8** But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. **9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Do you see that walking in something is to live in that thing? To walk after the flesh is to live to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Col.3.5 tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Remember what Paul found to be covetousness in ch.7? He had an inordinate desire to hold the enviable position he'd had in the Pharisee's brand of Judaism, which can be likened to fundamentalist Xianity today. By that I mean strict adherence to a Xian 'fence' around Torah, which is jokingly referred to in the ditty, "I don't drink and I don't chew, and I don't go with girls who do." While those may be disgusting habits, they are NOT sinful in themselves. However, the fundamentalist may be made to feel guilty of sin by his fundy buddies if he indulges in them in EXACTLY the same way a Jew might be made guilty by his Jewish brethren if he doesn't have separate refrigerators, utensils and plates for his meat and dairy foods.

Do you see the parallel to Pharisaism? To take a Torah principle and to build up a fence around it to protect oneself from getting close enough to be able to break the actual commandment? In fundy circles the argument is, "My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, so I will not do anything to 'defile' that temple." Then we apply OUR conception of what is defiling to the commandment of Y'hovah, adding to it our own tradition. In

this example, we take the commandment in Eph.5.18, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,” and make the intake of anything alcoholic sinful. That seems an awful lot like the principle behind the Pharisees tradition of washing the hands up to the elbow before eating anything (Mat.15.2, Mk.7.3). The practice is not sinful, and is in fact helpful, but to make it a sin in our minds (NOT in Y’hovah’s mind) to not comply is going beyond our authority. When we (or they) do this, we add to Torah, making ourselves gods and engaging in idolatry thereby. If you don’t drink, that’s OK. If you DO drink, don’t get drunk. THAT is the command. If you wash, that’s OK. If you DON’T wash you may get ill, but you haven’t sinned. Always remember that if we build a fence to keep ourselves far enough from Torah to be unable to break it, we are also making it impossible to get close enough to obey it. Fences around Y’hovah’s commands are NOT good, no matter the builder or his intent in building them.

OK, so we have an idea of what it is to walk after the flesh. To do either what is forbidden in Torah, or to add our own traditions to Torah is to walk after the flesh. If you are after Y’hovah’s heart, you will find it harder to adhere to your traditions than to his Torah, anyway.

What is it to walk after the Spirit of life? Obedience to Y’hovah through our positive volition and submission to him is walking after Ruach HaKodesh, who will **never** lead us into sin. Remember that Torah has 2 aspects (Dt.30.19), life/blessing and death/cursing. Obedience works in us unto life and blessings. Disobedience works in us unto cursing and death. The Spirit of Life wants us to choose life (positive volition). When we do, he frees us from the LoS&D through Yeshua so that we **can** do his will and walk in his Word (Ps.40.8). So walk after the Spirit like Yeshua did. Follow Torah like Yeshua did.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of Elohim perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. (1Jn.2.3-7)

That’s TNK, Torah, Nevi’im, Ketuvim – the “OT”. **Q&C**

Vv.3-6 - Do you see what was weak? Not the Torah, but our flesh. When we walk after the flesh, we are weak towards Elohim. But Yeshua was sent by our Father to condemn sin in the flesh. And why did Yeshua condemn sin in the flesh? So that the righteousness of Torah could be fulfilled in us when we walk after Ruach HaKodesh. When we walk in the flesh, our sin is condemned. But when we walk after Ruach, we fulfill Torah in righteousness. Now, to understand **that**, this is important – When we walk in the flesh, we actually are worshipping the things of the flesh. Things of the flesh doesn’t mean those things that are not spiritual but are necessary to our existence, such as our employment or business that has not taken on the place of an idol to us. We need to do those things to the best of our ability, but not worship them (as many do). When we are walking after the Spirit, we are doing those things to the glory of Avinu in Yeshua’s Name and are therefore ‘Fulfilling Torah’. See vv.5&6 and the reference to the duality of the Torah in Dt.30.19? To be carnally minded (the Greek literally says, ‘the minding of the flesh’ – thinking about fleshly lusts, and fleshly lusts are NOT all sexual) or to walk after the flesh is death, but to be spiritually minded (Grk., ‘the minding of the Spirit’ –

thinking about Torah) or to walk after the Spirit is life and peace. It is absolutely nonsensical, in light of this, to think that Torah has been done away or annulled. Torah is still doing what it was designed to do, providing knowledge of Y'hovah's requirements to be eligible for either his blessing and the life that accompanies it, or his curse and the death that accompanies it. Torah is still the guideline and standard against which we will be judged, if we are in the flesh. It is also the guideline by which we know the Way we should follow. In fact, since Yeshua is the Word of Elohim made flesh, Torah (Tanakh + B'rit HaDashah) IS the Way.

Yeshua said in Jn.14.6, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Yeshua was the living Word of Y'hovah made flesh (Jn.1.1-2, 14). Now, follow this logic – Torah is the Way of Elohim (Ps.1.6, 18.30, **119.1** {says it outright}, 14, 27, 30, 32, 33, 139.24, Pro.2.8, 20, **6.23**, 10.17. That should suffice for now, and I don't want to bore you. These just scratch the surface showing that Torah is the Way of Y'hovah). Torah is the Truth of Elohim (Jn.17.17, Ps.25.10, **31.5**, 33.4, **85.10-11**, 119.30, 43, **142**, **151**, Prov.8.7, 23.23, Is.25.1, 38.18-19, Mal.2.6. That should suffice to show that Torah/Tanakh is the Truth of Y'hovah). Torah is also Life from Elohim (Prov.3.2, 18 – all of Prov.3.11ff deals with the Torah, as it is spoken of as wisdom and understanding, Pro.4.13, 6.23, 8.35, 10.17, 11.30, 21.21, De.30.15, 19, Jer.21.8, **Ps.133.3** – there are lots more references to show that Torah/Tanakh is the Life of Y'hovah). Yeshua said in metaphoric language that he is the Word of Y'hovah. HE is the LIVING Torah. He walked in Torah. We need to follow him, not any man-made traditions, whether from rabbis, priests or pastors; or from kings, legislators or judges. We need to use Yeshua's life as our standard. Whether it is the example of what he did when he walked the earth in the flesh, or what he revealed through the prophets, he is the Torah that we should follow. **Q&C**

Vv.7-11 - Sha'ul switches gears a bit here. He lets us know that if we are after the flesh we CAN'T fulfill Torah. It is not possible for that which is carnal to fulfill anything spiritual. The carnal mind immerses itself in things of the flesh, while the spiritual mind is immersed – mikvah'd - in the things of the Spirit. What is after the flesh can't serve Elohim and will never please him. We find many who go through the motions, wallowing in the praise and honor of men to their own glory (is that a picture of a false baptism, or what). Sometimes they wallow in self-praise and self-honor to the glory of self-worship. Hoshea describes them and their end, if they fail to repent, in 10.1-2.

¹ Israel *is* an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

² Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

Y'hovah Yeshua waits for these to repent (turn towards him) and confess their sins to Abba, that their heart not be divided, but that they follow him in spirit and truth. And don't think this doesn't apply to us just because it says Israel. If we are Messiah's, we ARE Israel (Eph.2.11ff, Rom.11) and sons of Avraham (Gal.3.16).

The good news is that if we are living in the Spirit of Elohim we are not living after the flesh. V.9 is kind of interesting. It says 'ye', which is the plural nominative 2nd person, are not in the flesh if the Spirit of Elohim dwells in 'you', which is the plural 2nd person

objective. And v.9 also says that if ‘any man’ (3rd person singular nominative) does NOT have the Spirit of Messiah, ‘he’ (3rd, nom., singular) is NOT Messiah’s. It looks as if the Spirit of Abba indwells us as a body and the Spirit of Yeshua indwells us individually. Now, I do not think that Yeshua’s spirit is different from Abba’s. I think this is the same Spirit being applied in different circumstances. We are to individually walk after the Spirit of Yeshua, in humble obedience to the leading of Abba that we have in his Word and which our eyes have seen in the walk of Yeshua (1Jn.2.6b, “...walk, even as he walked”). Corporately, we are to be watchmen (Eze.17.3), not only of that which is trying to invade from without, but also of that which is trying to corrupt from within. We are to sound the warning and make the body aware of the threat.

If Yeshua’s Spirit is alive in you personally, you are to count your flesh ‘dead’ and your spirit quickened by Messiah’s Spirit so that you can “Fulfill Torah”, showing forth His life in your righteous lifestyle. If your kahal, your congregation or church, is filled with the Spirit of Abba, it will also manifest the righteousness of Abba’s Word. It is possible that one or more individuals who are in the flesh can weaken the power of your kahal’s witness. This is why we need to be watchmen, for ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump’ – or, to paraphrase the Osmonds, ‘One bad apple **can** spoil the whole bunch, girl.’”

In other words, it is up to us individually to point out obvious sin to individuals in our fellowship. This will not make us popular. But it will preserve the power of Elohim’s Spirit in our kahal. If our congregation is filled with Abba’s Spirit, it will deal with the sin in its midst according to Mat.18. If not, that will be a perfect barometer of its true spiritual condition and show us that it’s time for us to find a new congregation. Tolerance of sin is death to the body (cf. Dt.30 – the whole chapter, keeping in mind that ALL Israel is in exile, including YOU).

V.11 says that Ruach haKodesh indwells our congregation and fellowship. It says, ‘If the Spirit of him who raised up Yeshua from the dead dwell in *you*’. That is KJV-speak for 2nd person plural objective case. If this was a personal reference it would have said ‘in thee’, which is 2nd person singular objective. People make the ‘thee’s and thou’s’ a big issue because they are not our common usage. But they clarify passages that are unclear in the newer versions. But the 2nd ½ of the verse contains a promise for us, that **if** Ruach lives in our kahal corporately, we will all be likewise raised from the dead. The wording of this verse makes it clear that we will be raised both corporately AND individually (‘your’, 2nd plural adjective modifying ‘bodies’, a plural reference to many individual’s bodies). This shows us *midrashically* that the Spirit of Abba and of Yeshua is One and the same Spirit. If each person in the fellowship is following Yeshua, minding the things of the Spirit, the Spirit of Avinu will energize and quicken our congregation to his use. Individuals empowered to his use are good. Congregations are better. The synergistic effect of many people working together toward a desired end makes the productive output greater than the aggregate input. **Q&C**

Vv.12-17 - Because we have been raised from the dead in Moshiach, we are no longer in debt to the flesh, slaves to what it demands (the borrower is servant to the lender). We are now debtors to the Spirit by whom we have life from the dead. We mortify the deeds of

the flesh through Ruach's power and are then free to walk in Torah. It's really that simple.

But simple is not necessarily easy. As long as we are in the flesh, we will be tried by it. As I've said before, the flesh literally SCREAMS at us to do what it wants, while the Spirit of Elohim speaks in a 'still, small voice'. [1Ki.19.12] Ruach leads, but does not force, us to walk in Torah. The flesh tries to drown out the gentle leading of the Spirit of Elohim with its loud and frantic gesticulations. We need to be sensitive to Ruach's prompting. He'll let us know when we're about to sin. THAT is when we need to heed and obey him, regardless the personal cost to us, whether economically, physically or emotionally. It may cost us a relationship with friends or family. It may mean leaving a congregation that we love. We NEED to do what Ruach prompts us to do. We NEED to follow Yeshua, and walk as he walked. We don't need to do these things to gain or to maintain our salvation. We need to do them so that we can grow spiritually as Y'hovah Yeshua would have us to grow.

NOT obeying Ruach will retard our spiritual growth. As we walk after Y'hovah's Spirit, we become more mature and thereby less fearful of what Satan will send against us. We will be more aware of the TRUTH that we are adopted into Y'hovah's family and heirs according to his promise, a part of the seed of Avraham grafted into the root of Yeshua (11.16-24) and members of the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph.2.11-22). V.16 says that Y'hovah's Spirit witnesses to OUR spirit that we are all the above. And v.17 says we are joint-heirs with Moshiach of all the promises **IF** we suffer with him.

What is this? Suffer with him? Did I sign on for that? If we are led by the Spirit we have signed on for it. It means we will see the need in our kahal and we will help as we are able. And it means that Y'hovah will make us able, for he never gives us a burden that he doesn't also give us the resources to meet it. In other words, if we are unwilling to be the provision of a perceived need in the body of Moshiach, we shouldn't pray for Y'hovah to meet it. He will often say, "You see the need. You have the supply. Meet it." Then if you don't meet that need, it is sin to you

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. 17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin. (**James 4.16-17**).

Hard words, but true. When we meet these needs we do Y'hovah's work and rewards will accrue to our account. **Q&C**

Vv.18-23 - Our suffering with the saints of Y'hovah is of no consequence when compared to the rewards received in Moshiach's Kingdom. Not only that, but it doesn't compare to the glory Y'hovah will receive in the very doing of the mitzvah. Y'hovah is revealed to others in our lives when we do these things. And then his kingdom is advanced by the envy of others to have the kind of life that would do such a thing for Y'hovah. Y'hovah's glory is revealed in us now AND will be revealed more fully in the Kingdom. All of Creation has been yearning for Y'hovah's revelation as King and Redeemer. We reveal him in our own groaning and travailing with and for his creation. The following is from the Romans study at Yashanet.com:

The phrase "earnest expectation," [v.19 - Mark] is rare in Greek and traces itself back to the Hebrew root "ta'arog," used only in Psalm 42.1, (My soul **pants** for thee, O Elohim), and in Joel 1:20, relating to the coming day of Y'hovah. (See also 1 Corinthians 1:7, Hebrews 9:28.)

Paul is setting up his argument in the next section (chapters 9-11) of the letter where he will discuss how Israel's success will bring about the "revealing of the sons of Elohim," for which creation is longing. This will bring in riches beyond measure. Paul will show that Israel has not fallen - she is divided.

Arog (Strong's H6165) means to long for. The creature is anything and everything created by the Creator, so all creation is longing for the revelation of ... US! WOAHH! Is that right? You betcha. When we are revealed in the glory and majesty of Moshiach at his coming, all creation will have its Shabbat and Israel will be physically reunited. Physical reality will, as usual, follow the spiritual reality, as water '*mikvah*' follows the spiritual. All creation was effected by Adam's fall through no fault of its own. It can't WAIT for Moshiach to make all things like new again.

V.20 speaks of this earnest expectation as 'hope'. When the sons of Elohim are revealed, the creation will have the same deliverance, *from* the bondage of corruption *to* liberty of life. The creation will produce as originally intended by Y'hovah, before the fall of Adam. But we also earnestly desire the coming of Moshiach Yeshua, for it means our adoption and the redemption of our body. Sha'ul says 'our (plural) body (singular)'. The body of Moshiach will be raised all at once. The Spirit of Elohim that is in us is but a taste of what will be then. The 1st fruits of the harvest is only a small portion of the whole. As the creation groans and travails for the revelation of the sons of Elohim, so we groan within ourselves. So also does the Spirit groan for our revelation and the redemption of creation (v.26). The redemption of OUR body = bringing the 2 houses of Ya'acov. **Q&C**

Vv.24-26 - We are saved by hope? I thought we were saved by grace through faith! What is hope, but the earnest expectation of something promised but unseen? Hope is a noun, it is something we can experience or get hold of, either physically or metaphorically. We have a promise from Y'hovah Yeshua that he will raise us from the dead into a body like his, immortal and incorruptible. Have we seen it? Have we touched it? Then it must be hoped for. Faith is the 'substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' We cannot hope for something we have in our hands. We can only hope for what has been promised. When we HAVE a thing, we no longer hope for it. So we hope for that which has been promised, but has yet not been delivered. I don't know how patiently YOU are awaiting the redemption of the body and the resurrection of the dead, but I look at the wickedness of this world and its influence over ME, and I can't wait! I am impatient for the promise to be fulfilled. THAT is earnest expectation and longing or groaning for the adoption to be complete.

But, do you know what? Ruach helps our infirmity, our longing for the completion of our redemption, by interceding with Avinu on our behalf with groanings so deep that they can't even be spoken. In other words, if you think YOU can't wait for your resurrection and adoption as Avinu's sons, Yeshua's and Avinu's Ruach longs even more so.

Vv.27-28 - I think the mind of the Spirit in v.27 is speaking of the spiritually minded man (v.6), or the one who is walking after the Spirit of Elohim. The Spirit searches our hearts and makes intercession for us in keeping with the will of Elohim. I don't know if you see

it this way, but this is saying that even when we are NOT praying in the will of Elohim, the Spirit of Elohim is. Our prayers are not answered the way we think they should be because WE are petitioning Y'hovah outside of his will. But Ruach prays IN the will of Y'hovah and THAT prayer IS answered perfectly. And so, all things work together for good to us who love Y'hovah and who are the called according to his purpose because Y'hovah's will is being performed in us, whether we like it or not. Our circumstances may seem tumultuous and terrible, but Ruach in us is interceding for us so that it will all work to our ultimate good and to his glory. **Q&C**

Vv.29-30 - Here's a 'hard saying' of Sha'ul, like Peter talks about in **2Pe.3.16**. But I think the reason is that we use numbered sound bites instead of looking at the context, like Peter says, wresting it. Remember that ch.8 is the foundation for the arguments of the rest of the book. These verses say,

29 For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: and whom he called, them he also **justified**: and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**.

These are all verbs, and they seem to indicate a progression of actions taken upon believers by Y'hovah. If we see evidence of these things occurring in us, we can be pretty well assured that we are his. The church has done all kinds of mental and scriptural gymnastics trying to explain the seeming inconsistencies of this text in juxtaposition to others. But if we'd just look elsewhere in Romans for Sha'ul's usage of these words in like context, it would clear right up for us.

Whom did Y'hovah foreknow? The answer is given in ch.11

1 I say then, Hath Elohim cast away his people? Elohim forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Avraham, of the tribe of Binyamin. **2** **Elohim hath not cast away his people which he foreknew**. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Eliyahu? how he maketh intercession to Elohim against Israel, saying, **3** Master, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. **4** But what saith the answer of Elohim unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. (1Ki.19.18)

This tells me that Paul spoke of those who followed Y'hovah as those whom Y'hovah foreknew. This includes us, if we have not bowed the knee to Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is **a remnant** according to the election of grace.

He is speaking specifically of believing Israelites, but it extends to all who worship Y'hovah in Spirit and in truth, without intentional or known compromise. Kind of gives new impetus to "Come out from among them, be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing," doesn't it?

Now, whom he foreknew he did also predestinate. Predestination is a tough saying of Sha'ul because it seems to contradict free will. But it really doesn't, and here's why.

Paul has a definite meaning for predestination, and he shows it in ch.11.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **26** **And so all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There **shall** come out of Sion the Deliverer, and **shall** turn away ungodliness from Jacob: **27** For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I **shall** take away their sins.

Now the word 'shall' is much more powerful than the word 'will'. Y'hovah can will something, and it not come to pass. After all, he wills none to perish and that ALL should

come to repentance, but that isn't what actually happens. But if he says, "I SHALL do such and such," you can put that in the bank and collect the interest. It is an unconditional promise to perform. It is **predestined**. The promise is that it shall be done. We just have yet to see the performance. The 2008 US Senior Open was at the Broadmoor course in Colorado Springs. There were people who had purchased their tickets and reserved rooms at the hotel in 2005. That is an earnest expectation and belief in a promise. I have my ticket to the show, but the performance is yet in the future.

ALL ISRAEL shall be saved also refers to the return from exile in Babylon and Assyria, from which only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin returned along with so small a number of the other tribes that they could not be considered even a remnant and were counted as parts of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. In the future redemption, ALL Israel SHALL be saved. **It is predestined.**

Those who are predestined are the 'called according to his purpose'. We see this in - you guessed it - ch.11.

²⁸ As concerning the gospel, enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election beloved for the fathers' sakes. ²⁹ **For the gifts and calling of Elohim are without repentance.**

Believing Yisrael is called of Elohim. Did you notice the jump from v.5 to v.25 in ch.11? I hope so. The verses in between 5 and 25 show HOW Israel means those who believe Y'hovah and are the called according to his purpose in 8.28.

What does Paul mean by 'justified'? He tells us in – you guessed it again! – ch.11.

³⁰ For as ye in times past have not believed Elohim, yet **have now obtained mercy** through their unbelief: ³¹ Even so have these also now **not believed**, that **through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.**

Justification is the outworking of Y'hovah's mercy in that we don't get what we deserve; i.e., destruction. We could not justify ourselves before him, so he had to work a plan where he could show his mercy and justify us freely by his grace (3.21-26).

Those of us who believe Y'hovah and do not bow the knee to Baal are predestined to partake of his glory. We do not now look as if we are glorified, but these promises (8.29-30) are past tense. He HAS glorified us and we can put **that** in the bank and collect the interest, too.

So, whom did he foreknow? Who has been predestinated? Who has been called? Who has been justified? Who has been glorified? Choh Yisrael – All Yisrael are the foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified children of Elohim. Does this mean that every physical descendant of Avraham is included? Rom.9 says,

⁶ Not as though the word of Elohim hath taken none effect. For they not all Israel, which are of Israel: ⁷ Neither, because they are the seed of Avraham, all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. ⁸ That is, They which are the children of the flesh (Ishmael/Esav), these *are* not the children of Elohim: but the children of the promise (Yitzchak/Ya'acov) are counted for the seed.

According to Eph.2.11ff all believers are of the Commonwealth of Israel, and according to Rom.11.6-24 all believers are grafted into the Root of Yisrael. So Yisrael must therefore mean all believers who are not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit of Elohim (8.1), whether Jew or goy.

Vv.31-39 - Seeing that we are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified already in heavenly places in Moshiach Yeshua, what is left to say? Elohim is for us. He's our ally in the fight. Who can stand against us if he is our Rock and our Strength? Noone can take from us what he has freely given. Noone can bring a charge against us, for our advocate is the Redeemer of all the earth who justifies us. Noone can condemn us, for if we are walking after the Spirit there is no condemnation toward us (8.1) who have the Redeemer as our intercessor (Zech.3). We cannot be separated from the love of Moshiach by anything the world and its system can throw at us. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through Elohim to the pulling down of strongholds (2Cor.10.4). We are MORE than conquerors through Avinu/Moshiach/Ruach – Y'hovah. Nothing and noone can get between those of us who walk after the Spirit and our Elohim, Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach. **Q&C**

Fulfilling Torah Ministries

Romans 9

Chapter 9 begins the pericope on Israel, the physical descendants of Ya'acov that Paul set up in ch.8. Now the focus is on Israel. He begins with those professing believers who are after the flesh (physical Israel, not believers in Y'hovah Yeshua) in ch.9 and ends with those who are truly after the Spirit ('true' Yisrael) in ch.11.

Vv.1-5 – In vv.1-2 Sha'ul says that he is constantly 'groaning' in his heart (Rom.8.22, 23, 26) for all Israel, his brethren after the flesh. For they were promised the adoption that Paul spoke of in ch.8, but they kept after their own way (**look these up** - Is.56.11, Eze.22.31, Prov.1.23-33), instead of Avinu's Way (**these too** - Pro.11.20, 13.6). They more closely followed the fences (traditions) than the Torah that the fences kept and keep them (and us) from. All that Y'hovah intended to give them they forsook for their traditions. But Y'hovah has NOT forsaken them any more than he forsakes us when we stray from the Way of Life. They were given the promises, the covenants of grace, the Torah to give them life and Peace (chayim v'Shalom), and he has not forsaken those promises. When they repent of their sins and fulfill their end of the ketubah (marriage contract) Y'hovah will repent of his condemnation of them and fulfill his end of the ketubah. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, so he will give them chayim v'Shalom. Everything that WE; Judah, Ephraim and whosoever wills; have received for our trusting Y'hovah and his promises were first received by the patriarchs, prophets and people who trusted Him and his promises. There is NO DIFFERENCE between the fathers and us in Y'hovah's eyes. Those who have gone after their own gods (traditions of men) as we had and repent as we have will also receive the adoption of sons. That promise was Yisrael's in the first place, and we, only by Y'hovah's grace, are partakers thereof.

In v.3 we see that Sha'ul held no animosity towards those who were after his skin. They were trying to kill him, but he was praying for them and would have given up his own reward in order that they should have the veil removed from their eyes (11.25).

Vv.6-7 - In v.6 we see that, as Sha'ul reveals 2 laws in ch.6-8, he also reveals 2 Israel's - the Yisrael that is after the Spirit and the Israel that is after the flesh. I will attempt to distinguish the 2 by calling believing Yisrael, Yisrael. 'They are not all Yisrael who are of Israel (6b)'. The Torah has done its dual job: it has taken its designed effect: it has condemned Israel and acquitted Yisrael. Sha'ul enters into a little parable (through v.13) to illustrate the truth he's expounding. One's being a physical son of Avraham does not deliver the promises to him. Avraham had 2 physical sons, Ishmael and Yitzhak; only one is the son of the promise. Yitzhak had 2 sons, Esav and Ya'acov; only one is the son of promise. It's Yitzhak and Ya'acov through whom descended the promises to Yisrael. Ishmael/Esav represent the 'minding of the flesh' (8.6a)¹⁴ and its traditions – NOT the children of Elohim. Esav sold his birthright for a bowl of vegetable soup. It doesn't get much more carnal than that. Yitzhak/Ya'acov represent the 'minding of the Spirit' (8.6b) and its Way, its Truth and its Life – the seed of Avraham and the adopted sons of Elohim. So we see that they who are after the flesh are of Israel, but they who are after the Spirit

are Yisrael. Please keep that in mind for the rest of the book, as it is very important to understand ch.11.

Please also notice that ‘in Yitzhak shall thy seed be called’. Those who are called are those who have been predestinated and foreknown. The foreknowledge of Elohim is a result of his attribute of eternity. He tells the end from the beginning because he IS at every point and place in history (past, present and future) at all times. His foreknowledge isn’t a general overview, but intimate and total because he IS everywhere and everywhen all at once. He knew before he placed history in motion who would have a heart to believe and these he predestined to his calling, he knew their destiny before they were born. **Q&C**

Vv.8-13 – The Israel who minds the flesh are NOT the children of Elohim. The Yisrael who minds the Spirit are b’nei Elohim, the children of Elohim. Elohim’s children are the children of the promise. Paul tells us what the promise is – that Sarah and Avraham, a barren 89-year old woman and her 99-year old husband will conceive and deliver a son. The original promise was given in Gen12.15, 17-19. Avraham believed with his mind, but not his heart at that time. His faith had no works (James 2.17). The first thing he did was to go down to Egypt and plead with this wife that she tell them that she was his sister and not his wife. He didn’t fully trust Y’hovah that through his barren wife he would have a son in whom the entire earth would be blessed. What made them children of Y’hovah was their eventual belief and trust in his power to deliver on his promise. They learned that their flesh could not do what Y’hovah had promised and that only Y’hovah’s Spirit could bring their greatest desire to fruition.

The same can be said of Yitzhak and Rivkah, who waited 20 years to see the birth of their sons, Esav and Ya’acov. As with Ishmael and Yitzy, the elder brother is the child of the flesh and the younger is the child of the Spirit. The same can be seen in the parable of the prodigal son, in which the elder son (Yehuda) is after the flesh, but the younger son (Ephraim), after his initial descent into idolatrous debauchery, makes teshuvah - repentance - and returns to his Abba, expecting nothing in return, hoping to be allowed to return as a bond-servant. In the case of Esav and Ya’acov, they were separated from the womb, Ya’acov having been elect and called, while Esav was rejected by the determinate foreknowledge of Elohim. In each case it was predestined that the elder would be servant to the younger. The flesh must serve the Spirit of Elohim, or the spirit of man will serve the flesh.

The saying Ya’acov have I loved, but Esav have I hated shows us that just being the physical seed of a patriarch doesn’t qualify us for election. By the same token, just being born of Esav doesn’t disqualify us for adoption unto life. Y’hovah looks on the heart. It is the heart of Ya’acov - which was to believe Y’hovah - that made him Avraham’s seed and what Y’hovah loved, not his birth to Yitzhak. And it was Esav’s heart – which was to feed his flesh – that disqualified him for adoption and what Elohim hates. It is the fleshly spirit of Esav that Elohim hates, not Esav himself. Likewise it is Ya’acov’s openness to the Spirit of Elohim that he loves. Y’hovah has made both types of heart come from one and the same father, so it is not unreasonable to think that any person COULD be a son of

promise regardless his station or ancestry. Each will receive judgment for his own sins, but Yisrael will receive loving chastisement (5.18b, 19b), while Israel/Esav will receive just punishment (5.18a, 19a). The difference is in their hearts. **Q&C**

Vv.14-18 - Here we see the logical outworking of the 2 spirits. Hyper-Calvinists see the absolute sovereignty of Elohim here, which to them negates the free will of man. Nothing is further from the truth. Y'hovah does have absolute sovereignty, but that does not negate my responsibility to obey him.

Is Elohim unrighteous to condemn sinners? WhatahNutz? He shows mercy to those sinners who will believe him, and wrath to those who will not. Pharaoh chose to not believe Y'hovah by a conscious act of his will and his pride (Ex.5.2).

² And Pharaoh said, Who *is* Y'hovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Y'hovah, neither will I let Israel go.

Moshe chose to believe Y'hovah by a conscious act of his will and his meekness. Pharaoh thought he was all that AND a bag of chips. Moshe knew he was dust in need of some living water so that he could be shaped into something useful. Pharaoh never got over his pride of position in the world, the very thing that was Sha'ul's thorn in the flesh (7.7ff). When Y'hovah saw that he had a heart of stone and that Pharaoh would not allow him to replace it with one of flesh, he sent him more hardness – Y'hovah gives every man what he truly wants. A hard, stony heart (Mat.13 says that this is one that will not hear and heed the Word of Y'hovah. He says, “You want a hard heart? I’ll give you a hard heart!” as he did to Pharaoh). By the same token, those who call on Y'hovah's Name for deliverance are redeemed through his mercy. We have to humble ourselves at least to the degree that we realize our impotence to save ourselves, and to call on him who can deliver us.

Vv.19-24 - Here's where the hyper-Calvinists go awry. They use this numbered sound-bite (v.22) out of its immediate and general context. The general context is the 2 hearts we've been discussing. The immediate context runs at least through v.22, where he tells us that Y'hovah is longsuffering toward the vessels of wrath. If we look into Yisrael's history, we see that Avraham was given a promise and a prophecy in Gen.15. The promise was that his seed would be as the stars and the sand of the sea. The prophecy was that his seed would be 400 years before they could obtain the promise because ‘the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.’ He was enduring the ‘vessels of wrath’ until their cup was full (Rev.15&16).

Y'hovah's will is that no flesh should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He shows his will in that he gave the Amorites 400 years to repent before he brought Yisrael to remove the Amorites from their land and to receive the promise Yah had made to Avraham. His will was to have the Amorites repent. He did not impose his will on them any more than he imposes his will on us. Y'hovah is sovereign, but he is not a bully. He gives us the choice to obey or not. He exercises his sovereignty in his mercy or hardening, and even his hardening is merciful.

The vessels of dishonour (v.21) are those whom Y'hovah, in his foreknowledge, knew would reject him, those who have the spirit of Esav and walk after the flesh. Notice that

he endured their insolence and despite beyond any reasonable extent of patience, in the Amorite's case (Gen.15) for 400 years (actually 430). His way of mercifully bringing judgment is gradual; first a hint, then a more urgent hint, then a warning, etc., until he finally just forsakes the object of his mercy (as the Amorites) and drives them from his sight or allows them to be wiped out entirely. When he judges a people, he uses another people as his vehicle. Israel drove out the Amorites; the Philistines badgered Israel for 450 years. Then Israel under David and Solomon conquered the known world and held the rest as tributaries until the people went after other gods (following their leaders, of course). Then Y'hovah exiled the 10 Ephraimite tribes to Assyria, followed by Judah's 3 tribes going into exile in Babylon. When Judah repented and called on the Name of Y'hovah (in the person of Daniel haNavi – the prophet), he delivered them back into their land. And the cycle repeated itself. BTW, as had occurred in the Egyptian exodus, only about 10% of the people returned from captivity. The rest were, presumably, after the flesh.

Do you see his mercy in his patient, longsuffering endurance of their pride and willful disregard for his Word? Do you see his mercy in the fact that he hints, then cajoles, then warns with ever increasing severity to bring about repentance, not only in his people, but even in the heathen? Do you see his mercy in his willingness to forgive at the merest sincerity in turning toward him? Even in his wrath he shows mercy because he brings it quickly and with minimal suffering. Behold the goodness and severity of Elohim (11.22).

And what of us, who have softened our hearts towards him by our positive decision to obey him? He further softens them so that his Word can take root in the good, soft earth of our hearts and bring forth fruit to his glory. He gives us what we want. As he gave Pharaoh the hard heart he'd decided upon, so he will give us the soft heart of flesh that he can circumcise and hallow to himself when once we choose to obey him. **Q&C**

Vv.24-26 - Do you see how he juxtaposes all gentile believers in v.24 with the ten tribes in v.25? It's there; you just need to go a little deeper into the scripture than what's in the immediate context. You need to go from the peshat (literal) to the remez (hint, reference to Tanakh).

“...not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living Elohim.

That quote from Hosea is in Ch.1, which begins by specifying that he is speaking mainly to the House of Israel and not Judah. Y'hovah instructs Hosea to take a whore to his wife, to signify to the house of Israel that they have played the harlot and gone after other gods. For that reason, he allows Gomer to conceive 3 children, whose names are also symbols of how Y'hovah is going to deal with Israel. V.4 (blood of Yezreel) speaks of 2Ki.9.30ff, where Yehu rode into town and had Jezebel thrown down from the tower, where dogs licked up her blood as prophesied by EliYahu. Yehu instituted the revival of Y'hovah worship, after a fashion; i.e., Yerovoam's mixed system of worship. His revival didn't go far enough towards true Y'hovah worship. So Yah had Hosea call his 1st born son Jezreel to remind 10-Israel about her spiritual shortcomings. Hosea was then told to name his

daughter Lo-Ruchamah – “No mercy” due to 10-Israel’s idolatry. Then he was told to name his son Lo-Ammi – “Not my People” due to 10-Israel’s idolatry.

The good news is in verses 10-11 of Hos.1, which is the hinted at reference.

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are not my people*, it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living Elohim. 11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great the day of Jezreel.

Even though Israel is called “No Mercy” and “Not My People”, Y’hovah promises to enlarge their borders and numbers and to eventually rename them “The Sons of the Living Elohim”. I think this is a reiteration of the promise made in Jacob’s blessing of Ephraim in Gen.48, where he uses the Hebrew phrase ‘melo hagoyim’ – ‘multitude of nations’, which Paul alluded to in his passage in this same section of Romans in 11.25,

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until **the fulness of the Gentiles** be come in.

So, what Sha’ul has done in vv.24-26 is identified gentile believers (v.24) with the people of Israel, who WERE Lo-Ruchamah and Lo-Ammi, but have NOW obtained mercy and ARE his people. He makes the same reference in Eph.2.11ff, “aliens” (grk. apollotrioo – estranged – like a divorced spouse), “far off”, etc. IOW, whether literally or spiritually/metaphorically, gentile believers in Messiah Yeshua ARE the descendants of the 10 tribes of Israel, according to Sha’ul. And Yeshua HAS fulfilled his mission to bring Ephraim to repentance and brought the 2 houses together in him.

Vv.27-29 - Paul then quotes Isaiah to show that a remnant of Yisrael would be saved, while the majority would not. Y’hovah called his seed, not for the purpose of excluding any from his Kingdom, but to make it available to all, Jew and Gentile, Judah and Ephraim. If not for the remnant the entire earth would be as Sodom and Gomorrah long before its time. Ecc.3 tells us that there is a time and a purpose for everything under heaven, and the time of earth’s destruction by fire is not yet. 1004 years from now, perhaps; but not yet. Remember the goodness and severity of Elohim? There’s another example of it. If not for Y’hovah’s gracious provision of a remnant, earth would have been a burnt out cinder long since.

Vv.30-33 – What shall we say then? Sha’ul uses a Pharisaic rhetorical device to make his point that the Gentiles have obtained righteousness by faith in the same way that Avi, Yitzy and Jake did, not to mention all the rest of the ‘Heroes of the Faith’ (Heb.11). But they do not replace Israel. The fact that Israel has not ‘attained to righteousness’ does not negate the faith walk, which is based in Torah obedience. The reason Israel did not ‘attain’ to righteousness is the same reason noone ever can – righteousness comes by the faith of and in Yeshua.

The way Israel tried to attain to righteousness was by works of law (no definite article is ever attached to this phrase, which is only seen in Rom.9.32 and Gal.2.16, 3.2, 5&10), not by faith. Paul invented the term. Works of Law has nothing to do with observing Torah. It has to do with what the Pharisees called the ‘Oral Torah’, the traditions of the rabbis. An excellent source for this is Galatians, by Avi ben Mordechai. He explains the

1st C. historical background that has come down to the rabbinic Jews of today in the Mishnah and Talmud. While they may be good commentaries (well, some is), they are not scripture. So they are not a source of Y'hovah's instruction in righteousness.

V.33 refers to Isaiah 8.14 and 28.16,

8.14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for **a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence** to both the houses of Israel [2-houses], for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

28.16 Therefore thus saith Adonai Y'hovah, **Behold, I lay in Zion** for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner, a sure foundation: **he that believeth shall not make haste.**

Paul jumbles the 2 verses, lifting a phrase from one and inserting it in a re-ordered other where he changed a word and said, "he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed" not exactly a direct quote. But this is a 1st C. Pharisaic rhetorical device called midrash, juxtaposing one scripture with another, even making a change in verbiage to make the point. It is how arguments are made throughout the Mishnah and Talmud. Midrash was and is common practice in the synagogue. If we were to try this in the church we'd be given the left foot of fellowship, thrown out on our ears (or worse) and called heretics. Midrash assumes either that the listener has some training in rabbinic thought and a thoroughgoing knowledge of Tanakh, as the elder or rabbi of the synagogue in Rome would, or a rabbi who could explain the passage to those without the training. It's the reason some teachers think that Hebrews should not be in the canon. It's why Martin Luther thought James should be scrapped. They're 'too Jew-ey'. It's also why so many in the church can't seem to grasp that, even though we are unable in and of ourselves to obey Torah 100%, it is still our standard and guide for right living before Y'hovah. Unlike the fool of Ps.14.1 and Rom.3.12, we believe there is an Elohim, and that he has given us a guide to live by – his Torah.

As to the change in verbiage, I think it may have to do with the fact that whenever a patriarch 'made haste' or tried to hurry along Elohim's plan by helping him out (Avi/Hagar, David and the ark, etc.), they were always ashamed. It is therefore a warning to the Romans to be patient with each other and not to get ahead of Elohim. We'll see this developed in ch.14. **Q&C**

Romans 10

While looking at ch.10, let's remember that the foundational, most basic truth of scripture is the Shema, "Hear Oh Yisrael, Y'hovah our Elohim, Y'hovah is One." The Shema is seen in the 'unity of the faith', that Y'hovah is the Elohim of both the Jews AND the Gentiles (3.29), the nature of Y'hovah, all in Messiah are one, etc. It is seen in nature and the nuclear family. The atom has 3 basic particles, neutron, proton and electron. Matter has at least 4 states, solid, liquid, gaseous and plasma. Time is both past, present and future. The family consists of Father, Mother and Children. The examples are numerous that Y'hovah has pointed to his echad nature in his creation. Echad does not mean ONLY absolute oneness, but unity of purpose in a plurality of manifestations or members [family, time, matter, atomic structure and Y'hovah himself].

Earlier in our study, Sha'ul told us that Elohim is not merely the Elohim of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also (Rom.3.29). He treats all people in the same manner, and he always has. For him to expect different things of different people or to expect different things of the SAME people at different times would be to compromise his echad nature.

The Jewish mystics see Y'hovah manifested in at least 10 'emanations'. They are seen in 3 sublevels, each consisting of 3 attributes, headed by the absolute Truth of Y'hovah that no mere human can really comprehend. You can see allusions to this in Paul's writings.

His statement to 'behold the goodness and the severity of Elohim' (11.22) is also an allusion to the 10 emanations of Y'hovah. The goodness of Elohim is seen in his mercy to usward. His mercy is an emanation that balances his emanation of severity, which is his absolute justice. The emanation of beauty is the one that binds all his emanations into a unity in the 'Ain Soph'; the endless, unknowable truth of Y'hovah Almighty. It is the Ain Soph that we will spend eternity studying and never find an end of discovering and understanding (another emanation of Y'hovah).

All of that is to give you just an inkling of the Unity of Yah. We need to bear this in mind as we move into ch.10.

Vv.1-3 - Sha'ul addresses his brethren, which context will show is all of the Roman believers, both Jew and Gentile. At various times, he specifically addresses his Jewish brethren and at others the Gentile brethren. The subject is Israel, but the message is for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.

His desire is the salvation of chol Yisrael. As we've seen already in our explanation of 8.29-30¹⁵, all Yisrael shall be saved. This is the body of the argument Sha'ul started way back then.

Most of Yehudah at the time Sha'ul wrote this book has a zeal for Y'hovah, but they are blinded in part (2Cor.3.14 - they can't or won't see Messiah in the Tanakh), 'not according to knowledge'. No one knew this better than Rav Sha'ul, who was very zealous,

as he himself testified in Acts 22.1-10. Paul did what we all do when confronted by a new paradigm that shows either we've been mistaken, fooled or lied to – he attacked the very truth he was convinced of, but which he, in his pride, would not acknowledge. I have been there myself, and so, I think, has everyone else who is reading or hearing this study. Once we are convinced of our own mistake or delusion, we need to come to grips with it and stop fighting it. That is what Yeshua said to Paul in Acts 9.5, "I am Yeshua whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The truth that we know but won't acknowledge keeps pricking us until we repent of our pride and stop kicking.

In Hebrew mysticism, knowledge is the highest level a student of scripture can attain. It connects understanding and wisdom. Israel has an understanding of Torah, but little or none of Messiah. The 'church' has the wisdom of Messiah, but little or none of Torah. Neither has the knowledge that Messiah and Torah are one, as Y'hovah is one, as we are told in the Shema. There are those who have some knowledge without either understanding or wisdom. These may actually brand us heretic because we would say that Yeshua is Torah, even though John 1 plainly says that Yeshua is the Word. The last time I checked, Torah was still in the Canon. **Q&C**

Paul said in v.3 that they have not submitted to the righteousness of Elohim. What is the righteousness of Elohim? **Jer.33.16** gives one of the Names of Elohim as "Y'hovah Tzidkenu, Y'hovah (Yeshua) our righteousness and **Deut.6.25** says that our righteousness is in submission to Y'hovah - in obedience to his commands. Can you see that 'they' in v.3 means both Jews and Gentiles, who comprise Israel (without the Y – or, in unbelief)? Jews have not submitted to the righteousness of Elohim ... how? I thought they had an understanding of Torah. They do, but they submit to the righteousness of their man-made traditions OVER Torah. That was Yeshua's main point to them; he was calling them to repentance from tradition and toward Torah. They would not acknowledge that Yeshua is Torah.

Every Xian understands that, but they don't usually see how THEY have not submitted to the righteousness of Elohim, either. They have accepted Yeshua's free gift to them, but have not submitted themselves in that they have rejected 2/3 of Y'hovah's revelation as binding on them. They know that Yeshua is the Word of Y'hovah, but then reject the authority in their own lives of 2/3 of his very Words. So, both Jews and Gentiles, which are shown by Sha'ul to be Yisrael in Eph.2.11ff and in Rom.11.5-24, have rejected ... what? Both have failed in submission to Y'hovah's Word.

Now, remember that works of Torah justify noone. Works of Torah naturally follow him who has repented of his sins, trusted in Y'hovah Tzidkenu and studied his Word; for without knowledge of his Word, he cannot know what sin is (Rom.7.7).

In Aramaic, the Word = the Memra. The Memra in Hebraic mystical thought is the Creative force of Y'hovah. Creation is not a one-time thing in an absolute sense. He did finish his creative work in 6 days, but he must be constantly creating to uphold his creation. If he stops speaking, the universe will dissolve (shades of 2Peter3.10-12).

The creation has no intrinsic being; doesn't exist of itself. If it did, IT would be Y'hovah, like the evolutionists believe it is. Creation is the object that was created by Y'hovah, without whose Spirit's energizing, it would just stop moving. As an example, a ball is inanimate, it cannot move by itself, it needs an outside source of energy to move it. When something pushes the ball it moves as far as the energy exerted on the ball will move it. Likewise, creation. If Y'hovah had just created it and left it to itself it would be just like our ball. Now, if Y'hovah creates something, but then forgets about it, what will happen to it? It will cease to exist (like our forgiven sins that he decides to not remember, Jer.31.34). He must keep on creating it, keep on speaking it into existence or it will cease to be. His ex nihilo creation was a one time affair, but his sustaining creation will go on until after the GWT judgment when death and hell are thrown into the Lake of Fire, which itself may be an allusion to the ultimate dissolution of all matter when Y'hovah STOPS speaking his Word concerning this Creation.

Yeshua is the Memra/Word of Y'hovah by whom all that is came into existence, consists and is sustained;

15 Who is the image of the invisible Elohim, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Col.1.15-17).

John says it in the first verses of his gospel.

1 In the beginning was the Word [Memra], and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. 2 The same was in the beginning with Elohim. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1.1-3, 14)

John understood the concept of the Memra as an emanation of Y'hovah, the very Son of Elohim, Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach. **Q&C**

V.4 – Here is one of the most misunderstood verses in scripture. It is misunderstood because most in the church see the word 'end' to mean 'doing away with' or perhaps just to make useless or vain. That is what the church has taught for 1800-1900 years. Yeshua does not make Torah vain. He fulfills another meaning of 'end' – he is Torah's purpose. A Christian friend of mine with whom I have a disagreement about this very subject once said he was going out street preaching. I said, "To what end?" He said to be used in the witness of the Word. He knew the meaning of end, as it is used in this verse, but he assumes through his learning and the teachings of many good men who sincerely had it wrong that it actually means Yeshua = the abolition of Torah.

In reality, Torah is still in force and has the same dual nature it has always had; it convinces us of death and evil while it brings life and good to those who trust Y'hovah and follow him (Dt.30.15). If that were not true, he would not go street preaching, for that is HIS (that is, both my street-preaching friend's and Yeshua's) end in doing it – to convince folks of the death and curse of disobedience in going their own way and to show them the life and blessing that comes from repentance and obedience to go Elohim's way.

Vv.5-6 - V.5 continues the thought in v.4, “For Moshe describeth the righteousness which is of Torah, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Does it say that we live eternally BY keeping Torah, or that Torah is the guide by which we live our lives? I think the latter, ‘for by works of law shall no flesh be justified.’

V.6 begins with the word ‘but.’ The Grk word is *de*, which can be translated any of 5 or 6 ways, including and, or, but, also, moreover, now. If the author meant ‘the opposite’, he would probably have used *alla* as he did in Rom.1.21, ‘neither were thankful, BUT’. It means to go the exact opposite direction to that prescribed. *Alla* is always negation, while *de* denotes affirmation.

So, the ‘righteousness which is of faith’ speaks to the righteousness we perform because we have faith, which according to Eph.2.9 is a gift from Elohim, not of ourselves lest we boast. But what does the righteousness which is of faith say? (Notice the # of the pronoun, thou = 2nd person singular)

Dt.30.10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Y’hovah Elohecha, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, if thou turn unto Y’hovah Elohecha with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. 12 It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 **But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.**

Why is the Word nigh unto thee? It is **so that you can do it**. James.1.22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” The pronouns Y’hovah spoke are all 2nd person **singular**. Y’hovah, through Moshe, was speaking to each of us, individually. Notice that when the objects of the verses (thee, thou, thine, etc.) speak, they use the first person **plural**. Each was looking for a corporate justification, sanctification and glorification, when Y’hovah gives all that to individuals who THEN become parts of his body and corporately receive rights and privileges. We are grafted into the root of Yeshua individually, but the grafting makes us members of an assembly. Each is taken from one group; i.e., the lost and exiled, to become a member of another; i.e., the found and delivered.

So let me disabuse you of a grievous error of the church; Torah observance was NEVER about salvation. The Hebrews did NOT have to keep Torah perfectly in order to be saved. Had that been true then all those animal sacrifices were just useless cruelty imposed by Y’hovah – a thing that is impossible. A sacrifice was needed to make the offerer **blameless** before Y’hovah. ‘Blameless’ is the key. The blame was transferred to the offering. Remember that the apostle Sha’ul was blameless according to Torah

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.** 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Moshiah. (Phil.3.6),

as were Elisheva and Zacharyah

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were **both righteous before Elohim, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of Y’hovah blameless.** (Lk.1.6).

Let's look at the word blameless.

In 1Cor.1.8 (also 1Tim.3.10 and Tit.1.6&7), the Greek word is *anengklaytos*, **unaccusable, irreproachable**: literally **uncalled out**. This implies that we are not always blameless. We are made blameless by the application of 1Jn.1.9 – confession and repentance. In Philippians, the word is *amemptos*, **irreproachable, without fault**. In 1Tim.3.2 (also 5.7), the word is *anepileptos*, from a negation of *epilambanomai*, literally **unarrested, not seized**. In 2Pe.3.14, the Greek word is *amometos*, **without censure, unable to discredit**. Notice please, nowhere does the word mean innocent. It means that we are **unchargeable with any crime or wrongdoing**. Our blame has been transferred to another so that we are found 'Not Guilty' in Y'hovah's court. This was the purpose of the animal sacrifices in the Temple. Those of us who are in Messiah have no need for the animal sacrifices; in fact, we would be sinning grievously to perform one for a sin offering because we'd be saying that Yeshua's once for all offering was insufficient in our eyes. Heb.10 says,

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moshe' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of Elohim, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

That was the whole point of the book of Hebrews, for the believing Jews in Jerusalem [and especially the 'great company of priests' who believed Acts 6.7] were actually considering going back to the Temple to offer sacrifices for sin. Everything that came before in Hebrews was for the express purpose of getting here, and everything that follows illustrates it. Paul was telling them that the sin sacrifice in the Temple is so much wasted effort; there is no more sacrifice for sins (v.26). No only that, but to offer a sin offering when one knows that Yeshua's offering was sufficient was walking all over him, counting his offering unworthy and thinking the Spirit of grace of no value. If you can find a better definition of blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, I'd love to see it.

The nation, chol Israel + the mixt multitude, was saved by the blood of the Lamb at Passover, as are we. They were to *shema* Torah, that is to hear it and obey it (kill the lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts and lintel) because Y'hovah saved them from physical Egyptian exile, as Yeshua (who is Y'hovah) saves us from our spiritual Egyptian exile (in the world), and will do so again physically when the 'greater Egypt', the NWO and the Anti-Messiah Satanic system, imposes itself on us, demanding our worship. Our salvation and their salvation was, is and always will be by the same means: trusting Y'hovah to deliver on his promises by the instrumentality of his Moshiach. Yeshua's ONE offering both saves us and ATONES for us, making us all more than blameless before Avinu. He makes us clean. He reconciles us to Abba. We still need to repent and confess when we sin [wash that part of us that contacts the filth of the world system], but there is no more need for sacrifice to make us blameless. Our reconciliation and propitiation has been made. **Q&C**

Vv.7-9 - Paul is making another Midrashic point. He is quoting De.30.10-14 and applying it to going after Messiah. Messiah Yeshua IS Torah, so the application is absolutely valid (as if it needed my endorsement, eh?). The point of the whole passage is

that those who were in the wilderness (like us) and about to go into the Promised Land (like us) had Messiah right there in their hearts and minds in the form of Torah for the purpose that they (and we) obey it and him. Look at De.30.10 and 14 again. What are we supposed to hearken to? The Voice of Y'hovah – the Memra. What is it that is very nigh? The Word – the Memra. Yeshua is the Memra of Y'hovah, his Word and his Voice. He was right there with them in the Shekinah.

So, in v.9, what is it that we confess? Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach, the Memra, the Voice and the Word of Y'hovah. What do we believe? That Elohim has raised Yeshua from the dead. A parallel passage to this is Phil.2.10-11,

10 That at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Master, to the glory of הויה the Father.

That is another Midrashic application of Is.45.23 to Yeshua. That passage from Isaiah is also recited every day by the Orthodox Jews in their Aleinu prayer (We shall extol).

All the world's inhabitants will recognize and know that to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear (Isaiah 45:23). Before You, Y'hovah Elohenu, they will bend every knee and cast themselves down and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage and they will all accept upon themselves the yoke of Your kingship that You may reign over them soon and eternally.

For then shall the words be fulfilled, "Y'hovah shall be king forever" (Exodus 15:18) and "Yehovah shall be king over all the earth; on that day shall there be one Y'hovah and His Name one." (Zechariah 14:9).

Paul is showing the Jews in Rome and in Philippi that Yeshua is the answer to that Aleinu prayer that they had been reciting for about 500 years by the time he wrote his epistles.

Vv.10-13 - So which is the formula, confess and then believe (v.9) or believe and then confess (v.10)? The answer is ... YES! They work in conjunction towards our justification – the one complementing the other, like soup and sandwich, spaghetti and meatballs, cheese and wine, Rowan and Martin, Martin and Lewis, Lewis and Sullivan, Starsky and Hutch, etc.

V.11 quotes Is.28.16, kind of, again. Isaiah says that he that believes shall not make haste. We spoke of this earlier. If we get ahead of Elohim, trying to help him out, like Avraham and Sarah did, we run the risk of messing it all up and Y'hovah will have to deliver us supernaturally, as he did Avraham and Sarah. They believed his promise, but were impatient for his fulfillment. This almost always spells trouble. The verse from Isaiah that Sha'ul misquoted midrashically at the end of ch.9, he misquotes again right here. Paul again makes it clear that Yeshua is the Rock of Offense. The important word in this verse is 'whosoever', because Sha'ul defines it in v.12 – No difference between Jew and Greek. Why? There is no difference because they each serve the same Y'hovah who calls them. Both Jew and Gentile are saved by calling on the same Y'hovah. So who calls upon whom? Yes! He calls us to call upon him. **Q&C**

Vv.14-18 - Paul is still speaking of Israel, his brethren after the flesh. But he is making the case here that 'they' are without excuse, which is the reason he is torn up about their having missed Messiah Yeshua and the Kingdom that he offered. They were thinking in

the pre-conceptions of their rabbis, much like I used to think in the pre-conceptions that I learned in Bible school. I thank Y'hovah every day that he didn't let me finish and go on to Cemetery, where they add a lot of hardener to the mud. I had an instructor who said, "Gentlemen, your minds are moosh. It shall be my job to form and aggregate them." He was going to take my soft heart and shape it the way HE wanted and make that form unbreakable, i.e., hard. The rhetorical questions Paul is asking here are not to the Roman Xians whom he is trying to encourage to preach Yeshua to the Jewish unbelievers, though that may also be a valid application. It is to prove that Israel after the flesh KNEW what their calling was and that they failed in it.

Israel was to be different from the nations in a number of ways to show that they served a different Elohim. The things that made them distinctive were designed to make the nations jealous. If Israel would DO what Y'hovah told them and maintain the distinctions, Y'hovah would bless them beyond reason. The blessings would be so readily apparent that the pagans would naturally want to know why and Israel would be able to do the work of the evangelist: "We serve the Elohim of the universe, not a local deity. We plow the same ground that you plow, but we have a garden and you have a desert because the Elohim we serve blesses us with abundance for no other reason than that we serve him and are called by His Name."

Is that what Israel did? Some did I'm sure, but for the most part they were just like you and me – on again, off again. And the more they were off; the harder it was to turn back on. Corrosion on the wires or something. Have you ever tried to start your car when there is a great buildup of corrosion on the cables? Sin corrodes. You have to clean the connection before the juice can flow. When there's sin on your heart, it needs to be cleaned so the Spirit can move through you. Yeshua cleans the crud. Israel's pagan neighbors never heard of Y'hovah because Israel kept the blessing to themselves. Instead of encouraging them to come to assemblies to learn of Y'hovah's Torah, they shut them out. Do you see a 'Court of the Gentiles' anywhere in the blueprints for the Mishkan (tabernacle)? How about the Beit haMikdash (Temple)? Is Elohim the Elohim of the Jews only, Or of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the gentiles also (3.29).

The idea was that people were to live for Y'hovah and show their distinction in their obedience and the blessings that accrued therefrom. This would engender jealousy and a desire for the same blessings. This would make the called out people of the nations ask. If the pagan comes to you to ask what is reason for the hope that is within you, he already believes that you have a knowledge that he needs and he wants that knowledge. Y'hovah has pre-qualified him for you. So you get to tell your pagan buddy about Y'hovah Yeshua. So you get to teach him Torah so he can go out and preach in the same manner, by his new and distinct lifestyle of obedience to Y'hovah. And the cycle will continue.

The gospel we are preaching is the simplest thing in the world. Y'hovah has given all mankind a blueprint to follow. It is called Torah – instructions. If we follow the instructions, he blesses us. If we don't follow the instructions, he curses us. Do all the people who are called by the Name of Y'hovah Yeshua obey? Will every pagan who asks obey? No way. But if they believe what you say about Y'hovah, they will obey; they will

have Shalom with Y'hovah, and all the blessings that follow. And that will encourage them to keep on in obedience, which will bring the same blessings and perhaps even more. And that will bring people to them who want to know. And the cycle continues.

'Hearing' in v.17 would be translated into Hebrew as 'Shema', which is not just receipt of an auditory message. It includes receipt and acknowledgement of the receipt by doing what the message says. Now Yisrael in v.18 DID Shema. All the earth heard their report. Some believed; some didn't. When I say the whole earth heard, I mean the whole earth. During the reigns of David and Shlomo, the Israelite/Lebanese navies (Phoenicians) went all over the world. They set up cities in strategic places to keep the world's treasures to themselves. Carthage was an Israelite garrison, as were Cadiz and Majorca. The Carthaginian navy guarded the Straits of Gibraltar to keep other Mediterranean powers IN. As the Phoenician navy went all over the world, they carried the gospel with them.
Q&C

Vv.19-21 – Who is the foolish nation? First of all, what is a fool in biblical parlance? Ps.14.1 and 53.1 say respectively

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no Elohim. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. Abominable works = disobedience.

1 The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no Elohim. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is* none that doeth good. Iniquity = Torahlessness.

So, a fool is a god unto himself. He thinks there is no 'higher power' to which he will answer. So a foolish nation is one that believes IT answers to no one. Sounds like – US! Who do you suppose those who are no people could be speaking of? Hos.1.8-9 says

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. **9** Then said **Elohim**, Call his name Lo-Ammi: for ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your **Elohim**.

Hosea is written specifically to the northern 10 tribes of Israel who were carried afar off and assimilated into the nations of the earth. They eventually migrated all over the known world, and remember that the whole world was known to the sons of Jacob. SO! A foolish nation who is not a people will provoke the Jews to jealousy. Who would that be?

It had been Judah and Israel's job to follow Y'hovah and receive his blessings so they could provoke the nations to jealousy. Israel went after other gods and was divorced from Y'hovah and sent into exile 'afar off', but Judah also went after other gods but was NOT divorced and a believing remnant was kept 'nigh' [YirmeYahu 3.8]. But even the believing remnant went astray. They kept fealty to Y'hovah's Torah, but they also trusted the 'Oral Torah' – and some trusted 'oral torah' more than Y'hovah's written Torah. These were nigh, but not on Derech Hashem, the way of Y'hovah. Now look at Eph.2.11-22.

In v.20, Sha'ul tells us that in 65.1 Isaiah was speaking about US, gentiles after the flesh and in v.21 he says that in 65.2 Isaiah is speaking about the Jews, Israel after the flesh.

I am sought of *them that* asked not *for me* ; I am found of *them that* sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name. (That's us, Israel) **2** I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people (**That's Judah**), which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts;

That sounds like Hosea 1.10, where Y'hovah says he will call those who are NOT his people 'My people', and those who have not obtained mercy, 'Mercy'. And Paul has

shown us in Eph.2 that Yeshua's purpose was to call gentile Israel to himself after their 750-year exile and to call Judah away from the siding they'd gotten themselves onto.

The Jews got themselves all puffed up with their position in Y'hovah's kingdom plan. When they refused to listen to their Creator when he came to speak to them *pan'yim l'pan'yim*, face to face, he left them to their prideful attitude – but he did not forsake them. He left them a faithful remnant, as he always had, who trusted him and not their own wisdom. Then he set about to fulfill his promise to 'provoke to jealousy by a nation not called by his Name – gentile descendants of the 10 northern tribes and some mixt multitude gentiles. Now the believers in Yeshua have been made the head and not the tail (Dt.28.44), instead of Judah.

We do not have to do the will of Y'hovah. We can do our own thing. We have free will. But, if we do our own thing, we get to be the tail and not the head, the debtor instead of the lender. To quote Mel Brooks from The History of the World, Pt.1, "It's good to be King!"

However, we need to be careful not to do what Judah did in pride of our being made partakers of the Commonwealth of Israel and grafted into the root of Y'hovah Yeshua. It is the Commonwealth of ISRAEL, not of the gentiles. The root is Yeshua, but the olive tree is ISRAEL. We'll look at this in greater detail in ch.11 **Q&C**

Romans 11

Chapter 11 culminates the problem Judah has had with pride and also reveals more fully the problem the gentile Church has in thinking that because the majority of Judah has rejected Messiah Yeshua that Elohim has rejected Judah and replaced them with another people who can disregard his Torah. Sha'ul puts an end to that foolishness right at the start. In fact he issues a warning to those thinking this way. Let's remember that Paul set up this chapter in ch.8.29-30

29 For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: and whom he called, them he also **justified**: and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**.

Vv.1-4 – Has Elohim cast away his people? WhatayaNutz? He has NOT cast them away. That's a pretty definitive rebuke of replacement theology straight from the pen of Paul. He makes the argument that a prophet as great as EliYahu made the same mistake in thinking that he was alone in Israel, that Elohim had rejected them for rejecting him. But Y'hovah knew there were 7000 men in Israel (as opposed to Judah) who had not bowed the knee to Ba'al. The Hebrew in 1Ki.19.9-10 says that '*d'var Y'hovah*', the Word of Y'hovah – Yeshua haMoshiach, came to Eliyahu and he called him *Mari*, or my Master. Elijah recognized '*d'var Y'hovah*' as his Master. But Elijah was projecting his own reaction against Israel on Y'hovah, who isn't like humans. If Y'hovah didn't keep his promise to Israel, how could anyone ever trust him again? No way Y'hovah can ever break a promise. Even when the majority of Israel is in sin, Elohim doesn't break his promise to their fathers. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. So is his Word, which he esteems above his very Name (Ps.138.2).

Vv.5 - Elohim ALWAYS keeps a remnant true to him and to the faith once delivered to the saints. It is the Torah of liberty that he gave to his people so they could know when they strayed from Derech Hashem, the Way of Y'hovah, by examining ourselves against it. Torah IS the faith of Yeshua that was once delivered to the saints (Jd.3). Jms.1.

22 But **be ye doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But **whoso looketh into the perfect Torah of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**

Jms.1.25 from the Aramaic/English New Testament says this:

But everyone that looks into the perfect Torah of Liberty and lives fully in it, is not a hearer of something to be forgotten, but a doer of the things; and he will be blessed in his work.

Isn't that 'works righteousness'? Do you see anything there about justification by works? I don't. I see that if we live fully in the perfect Torah of Liberty, we will be blessed in our work, which is in context, Torah. Do you want to be blessed? Walk according to Torah as Y'hovah empowers you. It is not far from you, nor is it too difficult for you. Dt.30.

8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Y'hovah, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9 **And Y'hovah Elohecha will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for Y'hovah will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:** [there are the blessings, folks] 10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Y'hovah Elohecha, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto

Y'hovah Elohecha with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. **11** For *this commandment* which I command thee this day, it **is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.** **12** It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? **13** Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? **14** ***But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*** [shades of James 1.22, 25]

What did Y'hovah say? It's not too hard, it isn't hidden from us, and it isn't on another planet. Torah is in our hearts and mouths. Hey, does that sound like the New Covenant to you? Does to me. Maybe the New Covenant ain't all that new. Or maybe our traditions have taught us some stuff that ain't so. Or maybe it just isn't very different from the Old? Obedience to Y'hovah's Torah follows justification by his grace, 'like the fragrance after a rain'. **Q&C**

Vv.6-10 - Not rhetorical - When has works ever made anyone elect of Y'hovah? When Paul speaks of works being one thing and grace being another, he is not speaking of the Torah given by the grace of Elohim and written by the hand of Moshe, but the one handed down by word of mouth as if from Moshe – Oral Torah. If election is by grace it can't be by works, otherwise grace is not grace. If election is by works it can't be by grace, otherwise works are not works.

So who are the elect? Whosoever trusts in the finished, atoning work of Y'hovah Yeshua whether Jew, Ephraimite or full gentile AND whether or not they've ever heard the Name Yeshua are elect. Election alone does not confer justification unto life.

2Pe.1. **5** And beside this, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; **6** And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; **7** And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. **8** For if these things be in you, and abound, they make neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Y'hovah Yeshua Moshiach. **9** But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. **10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, **give diligence** to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: **11** For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Y'hovah and Saviour Yeshua Moshiach.

What is diligence? Diligence is close attention to something we do; careful, persistent work. Peter tells us twice to give diligence to our calling and election. Even some rabbis taught, before Yeshua's walk on earth in the flesh, that Messiah was the suffering servant of Is.53. Many still do. Those who do today, but who do not accept that Yeshua is the Messiah, are some of those who will be grafted into the root and olive tree in the not very distant future. We'll discuss in the next segment why they do not accept Yeshua now, but will soon. They lack only the knowledge that Yeshua is Messiah. They are elect of Elohim to justification without works. The rabbis who know that Is.53 refers to Messiah have not done due diligence to make their election sure. They need only one little push in the right direction. Many in the church have also not done due diligence to make their calling and election sure in that they live negligently, don't walk godly, after the truths of scripture. They believe, but do not follow Yeshua in their life's walk. They need only one little push in the right direction. The elect who have done due diligence are Yisrael. Those who were blinded or negligent, whether Jew, Ephraimite or full gentile, are Israel.

It is Elohim who gave them a 'sleepy' spirit. We see them in all denominations of Judeo-Christianity. Those who just trust what the pastor says because he went to Cemetery and

he's a snappy dresser. Or who trust their rabbi because he went to Yeshiva and looks good in his pe'ot and tefillin. The rabbis and pastors spout the same old junk they've had passed down to them by their rabbis and pastors for 18-30 centuries. But they don't ever get a personal revelation that agrees with scripture during their personal study – especially not one that might get them fired for teaching things unpopular or uncomfortable with the congregants, though they may get a new-to-them thought that fits with the traditions of their elders. They keep on parroting what they've been taught to their congregations. “Polly want a crack-ER! AW-W-K! All Jews were discarded! AW-W-K! Rambam says! AW-W-K! We're not under the law-AW-W!” Never mind what scripture says. Don't make waves. Fit in. Receive your colleague's approbation and your paycheck. Who needs to be blessed of Y'hovah, anyway?

To what table do you suppose David was referring in v.9? I think it really refers to their spiritual table, the one from which they should be receiving and on which they should be serving manna from heaven, but they treat it as a common thing, like the kitchen table at home. They are gospel peddlers, not gospel spreaders or men who are concerned for the spiritual welfare of their kahal. They are after their own gain. Their god is their belly. This describes MOST of the people in pulpits or bemas today, unfortunately. They have a job from Elohim as watchmen on the wall and shepherds of the sheep, but they are unable to discern things of the Spirit of Y'hovah. Their ‘eyes are darkened’ speaks of inability to see the deep things of Elohim. Yeshua spoke in parables, or dark sayings (Ps.78.2, Prov.1.6). Parables teach deep spiritual truths, when applied or interpreted correctly. The non-elect don't really understand parables, and they see little if anything beyond what's written on the page. They are unable to see connections between biblical prophecies and their modern applications and fulfillments. **Q&C**

V.11-12 – The main background point to the rest of this chapter, actually the rest of the epistle, is Paul's ministry (v.13, I magnify mine office). He is making the point to the Jews that his message is true, and in order to do that he has to show that Yeshua fulfilled their eschatological expectations. What were the Jews expecting of Messiah? How would they know who he was when he appeared? We've discussed it briefly before. The main reason they reject Yeshua as Messiah is that he did not regather the 10 tribes of Israel to Judah and make them one flock. Ezek.34 is all about Y'hovah bringing the lost sheep home, and he uses LOTS of metaphors to make the case. Many rabbis even teach that Messiah is the one who brings the lost sheep home, and that David is a metaphor for Messiah in **Ez.34.22-24**. Also in Ezek.37.15ff we see the 2 sticks metaphor for Judah and Ephraim, and again in v.24 David is the one shepherd of the united flock. When Yeshua, who EVERYONE knew was a son of David, did not physically regather Ephraim from the nations, the Jews, the religious leaders of J'lem, rejected him. He didn't fit their expectations, as they interpreted Torah and the Prophets. Was their eschatology incorrect? Or did they apply it out of time? Or did Y'hovah have a slightly different plan than they had deduced from scripture? From our perspective, we can see the 2 comings of Messiah as separate in manner, but with the same purpose – to recall Ephraim to follow in the Way of Y'hovah, first spiritually (ben Yosef) and then physically (ben David).

Have the Jews stumbled that they should fall? WhatayaNutz? To stumble is not to necessarily fall. I stumbled the other day on my trip down the hill to my house, but I did not fall. Even though the Israel who has not been elected (yet) fit all the things spoken of in vv. 7-10, they have NOT been discarded by Y'hovah. They may be tripping themselves and others in their quest for more 'stuff', but he has not given up on them altogether. Y'hovah is using his election of Yisrael to make his people Israel jealous and desirous of the fellowship we have with him. There are 2 words translated 'fall' in v.11, *pipto* and *paraptoma* in the order of use. Pipto = to fall down. Paraptoma = to fall aside. Pipto suggests a permanent fall, never to arise, while paraptoma suggests being put on a siding for a time to make room for another train to pass. If Y'hovah's moving Israel to a siding brings richness to the world, how much more will he bring riches by their fullness? When unbelieving Israel stops trusting the Edomite nations of the world for her security and calls on Y'hovah for deliverance (Y'hovah Yeshu'enu), they will see once again his provision and protection and believe on Yeshua haMoshiach, for it will be he who is the answer to their sincere call for deliverance. **Q&C**

Vv.13-16 - Why does Sha'ul single out the gentiles in v.13? It is they who were causing division in the Roman church over who should be in leadership. Already rearing its ugly head was anti-Semitism, possibly as a result of decades of preferential treatment of the Jews in Rome due to their religion and culture pre-dating Rome's establishment. From our background material (pg.3 of this work):

By the time of Yeshua and Paul, the land of Israel (Judea and Samaria) had been part of the Roman Empire for several decades. The first emperor, Julius Caesar, granted rights to Jewish communities because their ancestral laws predated Rome. Jews had legal privileges as a *collegia* (defined by Roman law as religious & legal entities), giving them the right to assemble, have common meals and property, govern and tax themselves, and enforce their own discipline.

All of this authority was placed under the auspices of the Synagogue and its legal body, the Sanhedrin. The Jews were also given exemption from military service and emperor worship. They were the only non-pagan religious group in the Roman Empire to have these rights. Under Roman law, no new religions were allowed and all other religious societies (other than Judaism) were forbidden by Caesar to have presence in the city of Rome. All of these factors led to much resentment and the formation of a social anti-Jewish sentiment among the population (from Romans by Mark Nanos).

To 'provoke to emulation' is from the word *parazeloo*, to stimulate alongside, excite to rivalry. Paul travels on the main track and gets right alongside Israel on the siding to REALLY provoke jealousy of his standing in Y'hovah for the purpose of reconciling them to Avinu. He, as apostle to the Gentiles, is performing the office that is Israel's – it is Israel's calling from Y'hovah to be a light to the Gentiles, to bring them out of darkness into his marvelous light (2.19, 1Pe.2.9). V.15 says that they are cast away, but v.2 says they are not. The KJV translators didn't use a contextual approach on this verse or they would not have entered so obvious a paradox only a few verses apart. They are not thrown out, but cut off and let lay, awaiting the time that they can be grafted back in. The word *apobole*, broken down, means to lay aside. Israel was laid aside to make room for Yisrael from both houses and to be engrafted again at a later date.

V.16 speaks of the firstfruit. Who is or are the firstfruits of Y'hovah? Yisrael!

Jer.2.2, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith Y'hovah; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. **3 Israel holiness unto Y'hovah, the firstfruits of his increase:** all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith Y'hovah.

Let's not forget the 144K, a part of Yisrael who are also the firstfruits of Y'hovah.

Rev.14.1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: **3** And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred forty four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, **the firstfruits unto Elohim and to the Lamb.**

But the ultimate firstfruits of Y'hovah is Yeshua.

1Cor.15.20 But now is Messiah risen from the dead, *and* become **the firstfruits of them that slept.** **21** For since by man death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Messiah shall all be made alive. **23** But every man in his own order: **Messiah the firstfruits;** afterward they that are Messiah's at his coming.

The reference to the firstfruit and the lump has to do with the firstfruits offering in the Mishkan (Tabernacle) on the Feast of Shavuoth (Pentecost). The offering was of leavened bread, yet it was set apart unto Y'hovah, as are the 144K. In v.16, the firstfruits are likened to the root, each being set-apart and thus setting apart that which is a part of it. The firstfruits sets apart the whole lump as the root sets apart the branches attached thereto. This starts the branches analogy. Please note that association with that which is set-apart makes the associate set-apart. IOW, if we are in Moshiach, we are set-apart unto Y'hovah. Moshiach cannot be separated from Yisrael. They are echad; WE are echad.

Q&C

Vv.17-18 - Rav Sha'ul uses a metaphor of an olive tree to make his point that the firstfruit is the faith once delivered to the saints, which is trust in and obedience to Y'hovah's Word that has now been revealed as Yeshua. The lump/root represents the faithful remnant of Yeshua, whether Jew or Gentile, or Yeshua himself. The Unbroken branches are the natural followers of Yeshua (Jews) and those engrafted into the faith from among the gentiles. The broken branches are those hardened of Israel who are yet to accept Yeshua as Messiah.

V.16 doesn't make a distinction between the branches. If the root is set-apart, so are the branches. V.17 begins the olive branch metaphor. Branches are broken off and let lie, but they are still set-apart against the day they awaken and are softened, are circumcised in their hearts and the veil is removed from their eyes. For now, they suffer for the sake of Y'hovah's Name, which they still carry and revere.

If we who are of a wild (uncultivated and uncared for) tree can be grafted into the natural (cultivated) tree, we ought not boast about it, as if it's something we've done or merited. It is the gracious provision of Y'hovah that we are made worthy to be engrafted into the natural tree.

What are the characteristics of the 'wild (uncultivated) olive tree'? The wild olive tree produced nothing. It was uncultivated and unpruned. If it produced any fruit, it was

stunted, useless for oil or eating. The Gentiles in Messiah needed to see that their place in Messiah was by the grace of Y'hovah and nothing else.

Eph.2.11 Wherefore remember, that ye in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Moshiach, being **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without Elohim in the world:** 13 But now in Moshiach Yeshua **ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh** by the blood of Moshiach.

'Far off' can be likened to being in the wild olive tree, and 'nigh' can be likened to being engrafted into the cultivated tree.

The olive tree was also a symbol of the Greco/Roman culture. Cited from Wikipedia:

The olive tree is frequently mentioned in religious texts such as the Bible, the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon, and is one of the symbols of the Greek goddess Athena... Its oil was used as a rub for the body and hair as well as to fuel the perpetual Olympic flame, and its leaves were fashioned into wreaths for the Olympic victors.

Paul here likened the pagan culture to one left to grow wild by the same Y'hovah, who had cultivated, fertilized and pruned Avraham's seed for 2000 years. Now he is taking unpruned branches from the pagan culture and grafting them into the tree he has been caring for since his first promise to the patriarchs. If that ain't grace, I don't know what is. Now that they are a part of the natural tree, they will be pruned and cared for. Pruning is not pleasant to the tree or the branch, but it helps them to produce more and better fruit.

So how can anyone boast of his recent engrafting against those whom Y'hovah has been cultivating for 2000 years? Seems a bit arrogant to me, and to Sha'ul, as well. Some Gentiles incorrectly believed (and believe), that because the Jews had rejected Moshiach, Y'hovah had rejected them. But 'the gifts and calling of Y'hovah are without repentance' (v.29). Y'hovah NEVER repents of a call made or a gift given. He'll test our faithfulness. He'll send trials to see how we'll respond in relation to his gifts and calling. That's called pruning. But he will NEVER repent of having gifted or called you, me OR the unbelieving Jew. **Q&C**

Vv.19-24 Sha'ul anticipates their argument and cuts it off. Follows a 'Mark Paraphrase': "Well, you just said they were broken off to make room for me." "That is well", he replies, "They have been put on a siding due to unbelief, while you stand in your faith. But don't let that knowledge puff you up to thinking you are better than them. You ought to tremble. If Elohim has broken off the natural branches from the tree he's been cultivating for over 1500 years (at the time he wrote Romans) to make room for you, on whom he's not given all that effort, what makes you think he won't break you off to make room for them, if they repent and you turn your back on him?" In Rev.2, Yeshua says very much the same thing to the church at Ephesus as he calls them to repentance:

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

First Works? I think it's talking about Torah, sans traditions and Talmud/Mishnah, which didn't exist at the time (T/M was written over a couple of hundred years soon after this).

There are 2000 yr. old olive trees. They grow until they die or are cut down. So he can graff them in right alongside us. There's plenty of room. So don't get haughty about your engrafting into the olive tree and their shunting to a siding. They will 'take' a lot easier than you did, for they are the natural branches. And even in their unbelief, they can teach

us wonderful things of Y'hovah that Yeshua and Paul knew, but that we have lost in our arrogant attitude relative to them.

Remember our discussion of the Sephiroth tree a while back? The rabbis had/have this idea of a tree with the 'ayn soph' - 'the One who is unknowable' or, literally, 'without end' - above it, energizing it and directing it, much like the spirits in Ezekiel 1&10. The Sephiroth tree is an attempt to understand and explain Y'hovah Elohim in his various aspects or emanations, which I also think Ezekiel was describing in ch.1. In the Sephiroth, these emanations are in groups of 3 and on 3 levels between the Kingdom on earth and the ayn soph. Paul makes a reference to the center level of this Sephiroth tree when he says, "Behold the goodness and the severity of Elohim". Superimposed on the tree is a representation of a man standing on the earthly Kingdom (Y'hovah's Bride, the earth is his footstool, Is.66.1) with his arms outstretched, his right hand (Y'hovah's grace) resting on the emanation of mercy/goodness and his left hand (Y'hovah's justice) resting on the emanation of his severity/judgment. (It looks, after a sort, like a man crucified on a tree.)

That center level has the goodness/mercy of Y'hovah on the right hand side of the tree (as we look at a representation of the tree it is on our left), while the severity/judgment of Elohim is on the left side of the tree. These are joined in the center of the tree in the beauty of Y'hovah Elohenu's Holiness. The beauty of Y'hovah Elohenu is also the center of the man's body - his heart. This is a good graphic illustration of the heart of Y'hovah Yeshua, who is the outworking of Y'hovah Avinu's mercy and goodness, but has also been given the power to judge the earth with severity and righteous judgment. Now, the rabbis won't make that connection - YET. But many of them will, and soon. Right now, they are receiving his severity and judgment. But remember that judgment doesn't always end in condemnation - it often ends, as in our cases, with acquittal. That is his mercy and goodness.

Paul is telling us in ch.11 that chol Yisrael will be acquitted after they are judged in righteousness. When their suffering moves them to repentance and they call out for Y'hovah's deliverance, he SHALL deliver them. And their deliverer will be Yeshua, whom they will recognize immediately and welcome with the Words, "Baruch haba b'Shem Y'hovah! - Blessed is he who comes in the Name of Y'hovah", echoing the crowds that greeted him as he rode into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass:

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Y'hovah; Hosanna in the highest. (Matthew 21:9)

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Y'hovah: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Y'hovah: Hosanna in the highest. (Mark 11:9, 10).

"Hosanna" = Hebrew, *Hosheanu!*, which means "Save us NOW!" **Q&C**

V.25a - To keep the Gentiles from being all puffed up in their engrafted position in Messiah, Paul is revealing a 'mystery' to the Gentile believers in Rome. 'Mystery' is from Strong's #3466 *musterion*, moos-tay'-ree-on, from a derivative of muo (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites): --mystery." Now, I don't think this is saying that Paul was initiated into a

secret society, like Freemasonry or Skull and Bones. It means this is one of those deep things of Elohim that he speaks about in I Cor.2:10:

But Elohim hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of Elohim.

We have discussed briefly before the rabbinic doctrine of PaRDeS, which says that there are 4 levels of understanding of the scriptures.

The first level is the *pashat*, which is the concrete, literal, exactly what's written on the page understanding. Pashat is the bedrock on which all the other understandings lie. If any understanding or interpretation of the verse or passage contradicts the pashat, it is invalid. This is, generally speaking, the Baptist understanding – if it isn't written out in black and white it's not scriptural truth, and no matter how much you try to expand their scope of understanding, they will resist it, usually by denouncing you as an heretic. This I know from personal experience.

The second level of understanding is *remez*, which is a hint at the deep things of Y'hovah. The words on the page often allude to something much deeper or hidden. It is a hint at the 'deep things of Elohim'. We have seen a bunch of these in Romans already. In Rom.1.18ff, we see that the creation itself is a hint at the existence of the *ayn soph*, 'the one who is unknowable' - he who is literally 'without end'; we spoke of a few minutes ago. Every time Paul speaks of one of the emanations or characteristics of the *ayn soph* he is giving a hint at understanding him. To many, these emanations are themselves very deep concepts, but in reality they are hints at the deepest of all the deep things of Elohim – himself.

The third level of understanding is the *D'rash*, which is the personal life application of the verse or passage. This is where the Ruach, the Spirit of Y'hovah, gives us the ability to apply the truth to ourselves or to those whom we counsel. Paul often does this, as well. 1Cor.5 comes to mind, where he counsels the elders at Corinth to put the man out of the kahal who is having carnal knowledge with his father's wife. This is an application of a commandment of Torah, which was seen as an action of Ya'akov when he removed the birthright from Reuben who had gone in to Bilhah, his father's concubine and his brother's mother. Our sin affects ALL of our descendants, as happened to Reuben. He was held responsible for his own sin, but the consequence of that sin passed on to his seed as well. When we compare scripture with scripture like that and see how it applies to us or those around us we have engaged in *midrash*, expounding on the meaning of scripture. A good sermon is always a good midrash. *Mi* = with, *d'rash* = application. Often, expounding on scripture will reveal the fourth level of understanding.

The fourth level of understanding is *sod*, which is the hidden meaning – the mystery. This is where Paul is going in our passage. There is, for example, nowhere in Tanakh that states plainly that Messiah must suffer before men, be crucified and die for the sins of the world. It's hinted at in *remez*, but never stated plainly. However, many rabbis BEFORE Yeshua's appearing believed that was in fact how the nation would be delivered from sin and into the *olam haba* – the world to come. They always saw Messiah as a national deliverer, not a personal Saviour. Yeshua's own talmidim didn't get it, even AFTER the

40 day Yeshiva with the risen Messiah before his ascension. Look at Lk.24.13-35 and zero in on:

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
26 Ought not Moshiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moshe and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Notice that he ‘expounded’, he applied one prophetic scripture and its meaning to another prophetic scripture and its meaning and arrived at a conclusion that Messiah was certainly spoken of in Tanakh, it just was not understood BEFORE his crucifixion and resurrection. Often a sod teaching is not understood until AFTER the deeply covered prophecy has already occurred. Once it is shown to a person who knows the pashat of the prophet how Y’hovah made all things work together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose, he flattens his forehead and says, “How could I have missed it?” He missed it because he needed an event to happen to supply the insight. OR we need to be in intimate communication with our Creator (but even then it is not a ‘done deal’ – we need to be open to the truth he is revealing). But even after the 40-day yeshiva with their Creator and risen Saviour, they were STILL asking if he would restore the Kingdom now! (Acts 1.6) They were looking for Israel’s national redemption right then, not the personal redemption of everyone who believes. **Q&C**

V.25.b – “Blindness in part” means their blindness is not total. Yehuda had become myopic, not totally blind. They could still see deep truths of scripture, even of the nature of Elohim, but the rabbis were given over to blindness concerning the person and work of Messiah. The Jews – the leaders of the Hebrew religion – would not accept that Yeshua was Moshiah ben Yoseph, especially knowing that he ‘was of the house and lineage of David’ (Lk.2.4). What they failed to see was the mystery that Paul is revealing in this passage, that in order to bring the 10 tribes out of bondage Messiah had to fulfill the office of the son of Yoseph, which was to bring them back to the faith once delivered to the saints. He did this by placing Judah on a siding for the time being while he brought in the multitude of Nations, the *melo hagoyim* and the fullness of the gentiles.

In Gen.48, Ya’akov told Yoseph that Ephraim would be greater than his older bro (a theme in scripture – the younger being greater in faith and practice than the elder) and that his seed would become a ‘multitude of nations’. The Hebrew phrase here is ‘*melo hagoyim*’, which also can be translated, ‘fullness of the gentiles’. *Melo* is the Strong’s

#4393 mlo' mel-o' rarely mlowf {mel-o'}; or mlow (Ezekiel 41:8), {mel-o'}; from 4390; **fulness (literally or figuratively)**: --X all along, X all that is (there-) in, fill, (X that whereof...was) full, fulness, (hand-) full, multitude. see HEBREW for 04390

#4390 male' maw-lay' or malae (Esth. 7:5) {maw-law'}; **a primitive root, to fill or (intransitively) be full of, in a wide application (literally and figuratively)**: --accomplish, confirm, + consecrate, be at an end, be expired, be fenced, fill, fulfil, (be, become, X draw, give in, go) full (-ly, -ly set, tale), (over-) flow, fulness, furnish, gather (selves, together), presume, replenish, satisfy, set, space, take a (hand-) full, + have wholly.

M'lo is only translated ‘multitude’ one other time, in Is.31:

3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not Elohim; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When Y’hovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together. 4 For thus hath Y’hovah spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a **multitude of shepherds** is called forth against him, *he* will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall Y’hovah Tzavaoth come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

The shepherds he is speaking of there are the generals of the troops coming against Y'hovah Yeshua at Armageddon. The lion and the young lion both speak of Messiah, who is not afraid of the 'fullness of shepherds', or all the generals of the NWO, 'called forth against him'.

So, comparing scripture with scripture, the multitude of nations and the fullness of the gentiles coming in must mean all the gentiles called forth TO him. That's Ephraim, or 10-Israel + whosoever will. And that is the message and the ministry of Moshiach ben Yoseph. Moshiach ben Yoseph has been calling forth the *melo hagoyim* ever since his resurrection, REALLY, ever since their dispersion into Assyria. When they have all responded to the call, either positively or negatively, he will set up, as Moshiach ben David, the Kingdom that his talmidim and the entire nation of Yehuda were looking for.

The word *male* is only translated once as multitude in Jer.12.6. In that passage, their leaders have called all the multitude of the NWO nations to 'weary' Y'hovah's people.

5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace thou trustedst then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? 6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a **multitude** (*male*) after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

I think this prophecy is warning Israel and Judah to not trust the 'land of peace', for that nation will turn against Israel in the end of days. I think this speaks of the United States. The US will weary Israel. The US is largely made up of descendants of the 10 tribes, especially Ephraim and Menasheh, Judah's brothers and the firstborn of Jacob, according to Gen.48. The US will call 'the multitude' (*male*), the NWO armies, against the land of Israel in what may be the prophecy of Ezek.38-39 coming to pass. This is coming soon to Y'hovah's people living in the political nation of Israel. Do you think they'll listen to this prophecy? Not until they come to the end of themselves and realize their need for Y'hovah's deliverance from the hole they've dug themselves. I think this may be coming to pass very soon. When they call on his Name, he will respond with his Deliverance. Their blindness will end when they 'look upon him whom they have pierced' (Zech.12.10). **Q&C**

V.26 – Notice that AFTER the fullness of the Gentiles come in, **all** Yisrael is saved. Juxtapose this verse with Eph.2.11-18 and our passage above, vv.13-24. All Yisrael includes all believers of all time, every person who has placed his trust in the Name of Y'hovah to deliver him from his bondage to sin and exile. This statement, 'chol Yisrael y'shuato' could not have been true until the *melo hagoyim* was brought in.

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when **Y'hovah bringeth back the captivity of his people**, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. (Psalms 14:7)

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When Elohim **bringeth back the captivity of his people**, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. (Psalms 53:6)

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Y'hovah, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of Y'hovah out of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3)

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth **a remnant, and they that escape** out of mount Zion: the zeal of Y'hovah Tzavaoth shall do this. (Isaiah 37:32)

Y'hovah also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but Y'hovah will be **the hope** of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. (Joel 3:16)

Ha Tikvah, The Hope, is Israel's national anthem. The hope of Yisrael is the ingathering of the exiles that will be accomplished by Moshiach Yeshua. THAT is the blessed hope; the glorious appearing of Moshiach bringing in his sheaves with him. Guess who the sheaves are. Ps.126 says the sheaves are those whose captivity Y'hovah has turned to liberty. Jews and Gentiles in Moshiach = chol Yisrael, the saved from exile and slavery.

V.27 is a continuation of v.26; Paul has added to the passage he quoted. Is.59:

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Y'hovah. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Y'hovah; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Y'hovah, from henceforth and for ever.

Paul quotes v.20-21a, then adds "when I shall take away their sins." When will he take away their sins? That's not rhetorical. When will Y'hovah take away Yisrael's sins? Has he done so, already? Spiritually and metaphorically, he has. But in our experience we know this is yet to be fully accomplished in us (though it should be more real in our lives daily). So when will he take away our sins?

Look at the rest of Is.59.21. When will Y'hovah's word be ever present on our lips, as well as on the lips of our children and grandchildren? When he takes away our sins. Our seed and our seed's seed can only be spiritual or metaphorical today, as is our part in Avraham's covenant (Gal.3), but in eternity, on the new earth and in the new heavens, it will also be physical reality, when both we and our faithful literal, as well as our spiritual, offspring will both have his Spirit and have his Word forever on their lips.

In effect, Paul has taken the covenant with Yisrael, that he would not remove his Word from Isaiah or his seed forever and applied that promise to all Yisrael – His Spirit will be upon ALL Yisrael, not just Yeshayahu. Y'hovah's Words will be on our lips, and those of our children and their children forever. The timing is in the millennial Kingdom and in eternity beyond, when the New Covenant with both the houses of Israel and Judah will be fully accomplished. This can ONLY be after he has drawn the lost and scattered sheep of the house of Israel out of the nations. **Q&C**

Vv28-32 - Paul is still speaking about the Jews to the Gentiles in Rome. He is still giving instruction to the Gentiles who have come to the faith of Yeshua directly from paganism, and admonishing them for their attitude of superiority over the Jews. He's already told them to fear, lest any of them be cut off from Y'hovah's fellowship due to unbelief, even as many from Judah had been. These are made enemies so the wild branch Gentiles could be grafted into the cultivated tree. But they are NOT forsaken. They can be grafted back in, for they are STILL elect and beloved of Y'hovah for their father's sake, for the gifts (the promises given to Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'acov) and the calling (of Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'acov) of Y'hovah are without repentance. Y'hovah has not 'recalled the call' to chol Yisrael. All those who heed it will be grafted in. Notice that they ARE beloved for the father's sake is **present tense**. Not 'will be' or 'were', but 'are'. This goes to the attitude of the Gentile believers in Rome (and America as well).

He recalls to the minds of the Gentiles that, even as THEY were once without Elohim in the world system but have now obtained mercy, so it shall be with Judah. He has 'concluded' Judah in unbelief in Moshiach. 'Concluded' does not mean that this is the final conclusion to the story of Yehuda. 'Concluded' is from Greek *sugkleio*, to 'close

together'. Have you ever wondered why it is that Jews have always lived in closed communities? Many think the root is anti-Semitism or Israel's self-segregation; that the Gentiles didn't want them to live among them or that they didn't want to live among the gentiles, but this verse shows us that those are symptoms, not causes. The cause is Y'hovah's *sugkleio*, HE has 'closed them together' so that he may more easily graff them back into the natural tree when they call on him for his deliverance. This has been a two-edged sword, for Judah has suffered much persecution, and it was easier for the persecutors due to that segregation. But the persecution was not so much a punishment for their unbelief as protection for their partial faithfulness. I think persecution is a vindictive, satanic act because of Israel's position in Y'hovah's plan and their obstinate adherence to their trust in his promises.

Sha'ul concludes the chapter with an insight into the very nature of Elohim and a benediction on Y'hovah. When Paul speaks of the 'depth of the wisdom and knowledge of Elohim', he is realizing for himself just how much Y'hovah loves his people Yisrael, regardless the 'house' they are from. I think that he recognized that what he has just explained is from the Spirit of Y'hovah, but didn't fully comprehend it himself until just then and was in awe of Y'hovah's mercy as he grasped the gracious implications.

Paul uses the Pharisee's tool of Midrash again to make the point of the incomprehensible nature of Elohim. He takes 2 seemingly unrelated speeches from the book of Job and jams them together:

Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: (Job 5:9)

This is Eliphaz speaking to Job.

Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. (Job 9:10)

This is Job answering Bildad.

The 'wisdom' of the Almighty, as we see in the illustration of the Tree of Sephiroth, is the primary attribute of the Father. When this attribute is combined with the primary attribute of Ruach haKodesh, which is the understanding of the Almighty, the result is the primary attribute of the Son, knowledge of the Almighty. This is not only the knowledge possessed by Y'hovah, but to know him intimately. Yeshua said;

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: **but I have known thee**, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (John 17:25)

The more one knows the Father, the more like Yeshua he is and the greater the reward he receives. Conversely those who do not know Y'hovah receive his wrath.

Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. (Psalms 79:6)

The world has not known the Father; the heathen have not known the Father. Those people and kingdoms that know not Avinu receive his wrath. So, who HAS known the mind of Avinu? Messiah is the wisdom of Y'hovah. Who has been his counselor? Messiah works in the power of the Ruach haKodesh, so Messiah is the Understanding of Y'hovah. Messiah Yeshua is the perfect embodiment of the mind of Y'hovah. And elsewhere we are told that we have the mind of Messiah (1Cor.2.16). **Q&C**

Romans 12

Rom.12 needs to be seen in light of ch.9-11. It doesn't stand alone.

V.1 – A basic rule of interpretation is, “When you see a wherefore or a therefore, look to see what it's there for.” “I beseech you therefore” is referring to the metaphorical grafting in of the wild branches/gentile believers into the cultivated Israelite olive tree.” Because the wild branches have been grafted in, Paul is begging them in particular to present their bodies (plural) a (singular) living sacrifice. He is continuing on the theme that the gentiles need to be well grounded in basic Torah knowledge before they take any leadership role in the local assembly. He reminds them that Y'hovah is merciful to them AND to the Jews in leadership in the synagogue, and that the leaders of the synagogue have a wealth of Torah knowledge to teach them, even if they do not understand who Messiah is, yet. He is asking the gentiles to be as merciful to the leadership, as Y'hovah is to all of them, in both engrafting the gentiles and the future engrafting of the broken off branches that are lying there awaiting their chastisement's end, which will be when they come to the end of themselves and call out to Y'hovah for his deliverance – Hosheanu!

For that is the mercy by which he beseeches them. Mercies = grafting due to the faith of Messiah, as seen in 11.28-32. We were not grafted in by any merit of ours, but by the merit of Yeshua haMoshiach. HE has done it. HE has had both the faith and the perfect works to merit his eternal life, which he of course had from the foundation of the earth because he is Y'hovah. Then he 'marries' us and we become a part of him. He becomes our covering and what is his becomes ours.

For.... the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy (set-apart, sanctified). (I Corinthians 7:14)

Faith in the Hebraic way of thinking is not mere assent to a few concepts. It's not just an abstract. In the Hebraic mind, faith includes the resulting actions of that assent as evidence that the faith of Yeshua has 'taken' in us. Heb.11 speaks of faith, defines it as “The substance of things HOPED for; the evidence of things not seen.” Can you see faith? Of course you can – in the actions that accompany it, which are evidence of your belief. Can you see hope? Of course you can – in the actions that come as a result of it. The actions of believers that are based in faith and hope may seem stupid to the casual observer, but they make perfect sense to the actor and to those in fellowship with him. So, when you make preparations or teach the truth based on your understanding of 'the blessed hope', the result is substantial. That substance may be material or spiritual, but it is real in either case.

Rav Sha'ul speaks of 'reasonable service' to the entire kahal (congregation), but to the gentile believers in particular. He asks them to submit to the authority of the elders of the synagogue – their living sacrifice; their reasonable service - so they can learn the truth of Torah. He asks them to use their reason and not react emotionally to the presumably foreign teachers (i.e., Jewish rabbis in Rome). He is not asking them to submit to the traditions of the leadership, but to their Torah instruction. This is seen clearly in v.2, where he says 'be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of

your mind...' The world includes the traditions of the elders, the 'oral law' that placed a fence around Torah so that the Jew could not get close enough to it to break it – or keep it.

We have traditions in the gentile church, as well, that keep us from the Word, and for the same reason – to protect us from transgressing. An example is the biblical prohibition against drunkenness (Eph.5.18), as drunkenness is a counterfeit Spirit-filling. It doesn't say to not drink alcoholic wine, but to not be drunk with it. In many fundamentalist churches this is taken to mean more than the scripture says – they ADD to the Word of Y'hovah and say to drink anything alcoholic is a sin. I have yet to see such a commandment – except among certain 'fundamentalists' who add that one. People go so far as to break fellowship over this fence placed between the believer and the Word of Y'hovah. This is a form of idolatry, making the fence our rule instead of the revealed Word of Elohim.

We are to be in control of our spirits (1Cor.14.32), hence the prohibition on drunkenness AND the admonition to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. This takes our reason and not our emotion - reasonable service. **Q&C**

V.2 – We've lightly touched on this already. The admonition is 'be not conformed to this world'. We are to be IN the world, not OF the world (1Cor.5.10). We are to be set apart by our faith and faithfulness to the Word we believe. In this we will be different and it will hopefully be seen in our everyday walk. We should be people of integrity, our word should be our bond (Jms.5.12). There ARE people who are not of faith who have impeccable integrity, but they are VERY few and far between. But we, the people of Y'hovah as a whole, should be **characterized** by our integrity. If we have no integrity when it comes to things that CAN be seen, how can we be trusted to be truthful about the things that can't be seen? This is James' argument about faith restated – show me your faith without works; I'll show you my faith BY my works (Jms.2.18). Who is the world more likely to believe? The man of impeccable integrity is whom they will believe. Why does almost noone trust the US government anymore? It lacks integrity. Why does almost noone trust the church anymore? Why the lack of integrity? Because of lack of faith and hope in Y'hovah to deliver what he's promised. Why does the world not hope in Y'hovah? Because it itself can't be trusted, and we tend to project onto others what we believe or know about ourselves. When we fail to trust Y'hovah, it's because we know our own lack of integrity and project that onto him.

What do we do about it in our own lives? How do we build up our personal integrity? By being transformed through renewing our minds. Our minds are renewed when we internalize the truth of Elohim's Word, when we study it and apply it to ourselves and then ACT on it. As we see that HE is faithful to his Word, we begin to trust that he will perform it in us and for us in the future and to act according to his faithfulness in us. As we see him actually do what he's promised in and through us, our faith in him is built up and we study his Word and apply it to ourselves all the more. Thus, we grow in our desire to be what he would have us be, as he has revealed it to us by his Word. And Y'hovah will ALWAYS give us the desire of our hearts, whether for good or ill. As we WANT to

be more like Yeshua, he fulfills that desire in us. Thereby are we ‘conformed to the image of his Son’ (8.29), by the renewing of our minds. **Q&C**

What is the purpose of this transformation in us? To ‘prove that good and acceptable and perfect will of Elohim’ in us. To ‘prove’ is to show that something is true. ‘Prove’ is from grk., *dokimazo*, to test. This is the same word translated ‘try’ in 1Jn.4.1, “...try the spirits, whether they be of Elohim.” So how do we prove the will of Elohim? By walking in his Word. If we obey his Word, he promises us certain blessings. By certain, I do not mean only specific, but absolutely sure and certain, as in “certain, unalienable rights”. **Y’hovah** has promised, not some hunk of wood made to look like a phallic symbol (church steeple?) or a lump of gold shaped by my own hands to look like a calf. Y’hovah who created the universe with a Word from his mouth has promised and he shall deliver. Try him, if you don’t believe me. Mal.3.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and **prove me now** herewith, saith Y’hovah Tzavaoth, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*.

That blessing may or may not be in kind. He may bless you with something or in some area completely unrelated to the specific area in which you are faithful, but it will certainly come. But when you try him and he proves himself true, you WILL be transformed. Your trust will grow. And the more you test his promises, the more he will prove himself true and the more you’ll trust. It won’t be long before you see his blessings to you everywhere and in everything – even the bad stuff haSatan sends to try to get you to doubt Y’hovah, because you’ll know that Rom.8.28 is true. What haSatan means for your ill Y’hovah uses for your good. And you are made to be MORE like his Son, which IS his good and acceptable and perfect will for you and me.

So, what will a ‘renewed mind’ look like? The question is not rhetorical. I’d like at least one answer. It’s going to look like Yeshua’s mind in Phil.2.1-8

1 If *there be* therefore **any consolation in Messiah**, if **any comfort of love**, if **any fellowship of the Ruach**, if **any bowels and mercies**, **2** Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be **likeminded**, having **the same love**, being of **one accord**, of **one mind**. **3** Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in **lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves**. **4** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **5** Let **this mind** be in you, which was also in Messiah Yeshua: **6** Who, being in the form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be equal with Elohim: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the tree.

V.1 has four ‘any’ attributes and v.2 has four admonitions that can be seen in relation to each other. Those verses are an entire sermon unto themselves, so I’ll let it go at that, but here is the mind of Messiah. He thought and thinks nothing of himself. Everything he does is for OUR good who love him and are called according to his purpose. In the ultimate scheme of things, who is not fulfilling Y’hovah Yeshua’s purpose in his life? That is really not rhetorical either. In one way or another, either by walking in his perfect will for us or by walking in our own ways, we do fulfill his purpose. We can thwart his perfect will in our own lives, but we cannot thwart his PLAN, or purpose. What is Y’hovah’s perfect will for us? It’s for our minds to be like Yeshua’s mind. Ps.40.7-8 shows us Messiah’s mind;

7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the scroll *it is written of me*, **8** I delight to do thy will, O Elohai: yea, thy Torah *is* within my heart.

Didn't David write that a year or 2 (or 400) before Jeremiah prophesied the 'New' Covenant'? If there was no 'New' Covenant yet, how could the Torah be written on anyone's heart? May I say that the 'New' Covenant is no different from the 'Old'? The 'new' covenant has to do with a renewed heart in the believer. The commandments were written on tables of stone at Sinai, but in the 'New' Covenant they are written on fleshy tables of our hearts (2Cor.3.3). The tables/hearts of stone correspond to the carnal man's uncircumcised heart. Y'hovah has always commanded us to have our hearts circumcised (Deut.10.16, 30.6). THAT is what Yeshua modeled for us in his walk – a circumcised heart. Do we succeed in walking as Yeshua walked at all times? Not likely. But it should become more and more evident in our walks over time. **Q&C**

Vv.3 - The words, 'of himself', are supplied by the translators. Don't think on things or try to do things that you aren't prepared for. This may lead you to things that will hurt your walk, and to think you can handle the pressure and spiritual attacks that will come at you when you reach a position for which you are not prepared. New converts to Messiah should NEVER be placed in any kind of authority in a kahal (congregation). Our American devotion to 'Hollywood', fame, fortune and hero-worship has caused no end of trouble in the lives of famous people who have converted to Messiah. Bob Dylan is probably the most famous American I can recall who has had a conversion to Messiah Yeshua. He was immediately a guest on every 'Xian' TV/radio show, and any other media outlet that could contact him. As if the guy didn't get enough adulation from his screaming fans, NOW he's got Pat Robertson and Jim Bakker and the whole TBN crowd fawning on him when he should have been studying in quiet and growing in the nurture and admonition of Y'hovah.

Rav Sha'ul did it right, I think, and was an example that we should emulate and admonish our talmidim to emulate. When he was converted on the Damascus road, he didn't get put on the Nazarene lecture circuit. He didn't immediately go on a concert tour to promote his new album of 'Yeshua-freak' music. In Israel, there may not have been a more famous anti-missionary than Paul. He was the top student of the top rabbi in the land. He was the most successful anti-missionary hit-man there was – a Pharisaic 'James Bond', as it were. ("Saul. Saul of Tarsus, Agent 001. Licensed to kill.") The Notzrei were scared to death of him and for good reason; he had open arrest warrants from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. It's no wonder that Ananias tried the Spirit (1Jn.4.1) that gave him the command to go meet him and lay hands on him for healing. Paul gives us the timeline in Gal.1.13ff,

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in **the Jews' religion**, how that beyond measure I persecuted the kahal of Elohim, and wasted it: **14** And profited **in the Jews' religion** above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the **traditions of my fathers**. **15** But when it pleased Elohim, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, **16** To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; **immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood**: **17** Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

He went to Arabia for basic training from Ruach haKodesh before he went to the synagogue in Damascus to study Torah and show the rabbis Messiah in the scriptures, which would have gotten him killed had he not written the book on persecution of the kahal. Imagine the personal Yeshiva with the Ruach of Messiah in Arabia! On Sinai?

Have you ever wondered why Saul was so successful at arresting Notzrei? If one were a Jewish follower of Yeshua (and there were absolutely NO gentile believers at the time), where would he be on Shabbat? In the synagogue hearing Torah read and discussed. Unless they were very wealthy, they had no Torah scrolls among themselves. So all Sha'ul had to do was go to the synagogues and round up the 'Yeshua-freaks', who were all Torah observant. They would obey Y'hovah's Word even at risk of life and liberty. THAT is faith, my friends - to go despite one's fear to where there was a virtual certainty of arrest and possibly death (Stephen had been stoned already). But, if you wanted to obey Y'hovah, that was what you needed to do. Would we go to shul under those conditions?

I would hope so, but in America there has never been a need for worry – YET! That may change soon and suddenly. One morning, you'll have religious liberty, the next – gone! I see the political landscape of May 2014, and I see our ability to practice our faith about to be squeezed out of existence. In fact, our liberty to even HAVE our faith privately to ourselves, much less in public, is about to be taken from us. "Hate-speech", AKA preaching and teaching the Word of Y'hovah, is about to become a crime. What we think and believe is about to be policed by 'authorities' that have no Constitutional authority to police what we think and say (1st Amendment). "Thought-Police" will soon be at our doors, arresting us for 'thought-crimes'. Hello, George Orwell. Pleasure to make your acquaintance – NOT!

We need to think soberly, i.e., coolly and rationally, about our place in the kahal. Are we *ready* to teach? Are we *ready* to serve in another capacity? Maybe it'd be best if we were taught, growing in the nurture and admonition of Yah for a while, & then serve. **Q&C**

V.4 – A part of thinking soberly is to look around and see who is best suited to which position in the assembly. Hopefully we do this with our children and we build around their natural talents and abilities. Why would we think it should be different in our kahal? There are varying gifts given in varying degrees in various people. Part of the nurturing process is to determine who is suited for what and to build up that area of his walk, 'train up a child' and all that. Remember that Paul is still addressing the gentile believers and their relationship with the rabbis and their (the rabbis) leadership of the synagogue. Spiritual gifts are about to be discussed in that light. Passages about spiritual gifts can be found in 1Cor.12 and Eph.4, but Eph.4.11ff is the better parallel to Rom.12.4ff as it deals more with positions within the kahal than the manifestations of the Spirit. Both the gifts of ministry and the 'sign' gifts are important, for they each have the same purpose.

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? This is not a rhetorical question. I'd like an answer. The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is the edifying of the body. Each gift is needed to build the kahal into the image of Messiah, and by that I mean not just the local assembly, but the entire organic body of Messiah in the world. Each person is given each of the gifts of the Spirit in varying degrees. Some prophesy, some help, some are hospitable, some speak in tongues, etc. Each is also given the gift that is most suited to him in the measure it is needed in his congregation. Some are pastors, some are apostles (sent out ones – missionaries to others in need of the gospel or instruction in right living, like Sha'ul),

some are teachers. All are for the 'perfecting of the saints', ministering to the needs of other kehalim (assemblies) and individuals, and building up the faith of the brethren and their families until when?

Eph.4.13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Messiah:

Given the state of the 'church' today, how long do you think this will take? It need not take that long, if we'll accept other believers' giftings and both teach them what they need, and learn from them what we need, to be made more perfect in the faith and in faith-fulness. To do this takes humility to listen to what people have to say and glean the truth from within the error they hold to. NONE of us has it all correct. Not even this author (though I hate to admit it). We need to actively listen, not just to shoot down errant teachings (that's the easy part), but to find truth that we may not yet have understood. Sometimes, that truth may go 180^o from what we've been taught. Are we ready to do an about face on our preconceptions and the attitudes we've learned to accept the truth from someone we considered an heretic, if it proves true? Am I saying that even Benny Hinn might have something to teach me? As much as I would hate to say it, he could have a salient understanding hidden somewhere among all that tripe that I would never have come upon myself. This takes an open mind to the truth, from whatever source it may come. For this reason, I am loathe to dismiss anyone's ideas until he proves to be a total reprobate. I DO need to be careful to check words against THE Word, but I also need to be open to the truth of Y'hovah. I mean, I'll even hear what Dave or Joe have to say.

V.5-8 - Every one members one of another. We are interconnected. What happens to any one of us affects every other one of us and all of us. You may be the right hand and I the left buttock, but if something happens to me it will affect you, and our entire body. It is hard for a body to live without an essential part (like a left buttock), for as lowly as the part may be, when it is missing or not working to its accustomed efficiency, the whole body has to find a way to compensate, and becomes less effective. For that reason, we need to be watchmen for each other, warning each other of potential threats to the health and unity of the body.

Your gifts and my gifts will be different. Each gift is needed in each body. I believe that we are all gifted in every type of spiritual gift, but not all in the same measure in each gift. My strongest gift may be one thing and yours may be another, but we each are gifted in both areas. If my strongest gift is prophecy and yours is administration, that doesn't mean that I can't learn or receive a prophecy from you or that I can't have a valuable suggestion to help you administer the body. We need to listen to each other about everything. This is why I don't mind so-called 'rabbit trails' in our study time, because it is often the rabbit trail that Y'hovah uses to bring the greatest spiritual insight and is what everyone needed to hear and discuss.

The gifts mentioned here are pretty much self-explanatory. But 'giving, with simplicity' may need some interpretation. Simplicity is from the grk Strong's #

572 haplotēs hap-lot'-ace from 573; **singleness, i.e. (subjectively) sincerity** (without dissimulation or self-seeking), or (objectively) generosity (copious bestowal):--bountifulness, **liberal(-ity)**, simplicity, singleness. see GREEK for 573

Simple giving seems to mean singleness of mind, to be of service without thought of return. This is the way that Elohim gives us grace and faith, and salvation thereby. Our mind needs to be like Yeshua's, which is like Avinu's.

Matt.6.24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve Elohim and mammon. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if Elohim so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of Elohim, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

That is the simplicity with which we need to give – and live. Q&C

V.9-13 - Here begins a section of practical instructions on what walking with a renewed mind will look like.

Love without dissimulation. Dissimulation = hypocrisy. The grk word is *anupokritos*; *an* = negation, *hupo* = underlying (hypo), *krinos* = critique or judgment. Y'hovah's love is without underlying criticism, it is without reservation. That is our model for loving, especially the members of our body.

Abhor evil, cleave to good. To abhor is to hate vigorously, from the grk. *apostugneto*. *Apo* = the highest degree (apogee = furthest point of a body's orbit), *stugnetos* = odious, hateful. Cleave is a funny word, because depending on its context it can mean exactly the opposite of itself. Cleave = hold tight; or cut away. Here it means the former. Grk. *Kollao* = to glue things together. I wonder if there is an etymological relation to *kalle*, to call.

Kindly affectioned, with brotherly love. *Philostorgos* and *philadelphia* are based in *phileo*, which is human affection or friendship. Remember Peter in Jn.21? Peter, do you agape me? I *phileo* you. *Storge* = familial affection; sibling to sibling, parent to child. So, *philostorgos* = actually liking your family – no small feat for many. *Adelphos* = from the womb, i.e.; brother. *Philadelphia*, then, means actually liking a brother – also, no small feat for many. IOW, we ought to interact as a loving family interacts. My family may be weird, but when we get together, we argue over the stupidest stuff. We holler and make recriminations, but when it's all over we still like each other. In Messiah we are allowed to disagree, and sometimes vehemently disagree. But that disagreement should not be the source of hatred or bitterness one to another. Each has different experiences that shape his view of the world and of scripture. We ought to listen and calmly consider what the other is saying in light of truth before we dismiss it or them.

In honor preferring one another. *Time* = a value or money paid. We are to value each other in Messiah above ourselves, as Messiah values each of us above himself. The word

translated ‘preferring’ is Grk. 4285 *proegeomai*, to lead the way for others; in military parlance, to take the point. What does a ‘point man’ do for his platoon? He blazes a trail, he watches out for the enemy and warns the rest of the group of potential threats to their security, he subordinates his own well being to that of the others.

Not slothful in business. Slothful is from Grk. 3636 *okneros*, which means tardy or indolent (lazy). Business does not mean necessarily that by which we earn a living. It is from Grk. 4710, *spoude*, (speedy?) eagerness, dispatch, earnestness. IOW, when Y’hovah moves on our hearts, we need to MOVE, like the spirits in Ezek.1. This puts me in mind of the Olivet Discourse:

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

We need to be ready at all times to take off in obedience to Y’hovah’s commands, not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally. Hence, preparedness videos. We need to be ready to do as we are told when we are told. We try to train our children to do this, and it is for their protection. Same with Y’hovah and us.

Fervent in Spirit. *Zeo* = hot, boiling liquid or glowing solid. I think the word may be related etymologically to *zoe*, life. Can you see how the two are related? If this were Hebrew instead of Greek, I’d say they ARE related by virtue of being built from the same letters. This may be a Hebrew word play that translates into greek. Something boiling surely looks to the casual observer to be full of life, like a fish on a hook. Maybe.

Serving Y’hovah. Our service to Y’hovah Yeshua should be characterized by all above (and below). **Q&C**

Vv.12-13 – Still looking at what our walk should look like. **Rejoicing in hope.** Biblically, hope is an earnest expectation of Y’hovah’s fulfilling his promises. Rejoicing is from Grk.5463, *chairō* which is the root for *charis* – good cheer, cheerful.

Patient in tribulation. Patient = to stand under, from *hupomeno*. *Meno* is to stay in a given place or circumstance. *Hupo*, as we’ve seen before = under or behind. When we are tried, we need to endure and be steadfast. If we are rejoicing in hope, if we are living our lives based on what Y’hovah has promised us and not on what we see coming at us, we will be better able to stand what comes at us, and be witnesses to the grace of Y’hovah even in tribulation. Which will prove our faith, both to ourselves and to those who are watching, and will REALLY tick off those who are tribulating us.

Continuing instant in prayer. *Proskartereo* is translated ‘Continuing instant’. *Pros* is the prefix of forward direction, or leading. *Kartereo* means to be strong or to endure. This phrase means we ought to lead immediately with prayer and to endure in it. We should be characterized by praying first, then waiting for direction and then doing what we are directed to do. The first thing we should be doing is praying, and continue in prayer until we get an answer. This may take no time at all, or it may take years.

How urgently do we pray? When we see a situation arising, do we do what seems right to us, or do we take time to ask for Y'hovah's direction? Prayer should be our first resort. Too often it is my last resort (even once is too often). I am preaching to myself, but if you want to take ownership of it yourself, feel free. I don't mind. And I seriously doubt that Y'hovah will mind. In fact, I'm pretty certain he'll be pleased. I think the more we lead with prayer and then wait for direction, the more immediate will be the response, because we will have more practice getting out of Yeshua's way and following his lead.

Vv.14 - Bless them which persecute you, bless and curse not. If ever there is a spiritual gift, this is it. THIS is not a normal human response to persecution. If you are being persecuted and bless the persecutor, how blessed will you be? This commandment from Paul points to the situation in the local synagogue in Rome, where the non-believing Jews were not very happy about the new gentile believers who were 'infiltrating' their kahal without going through the traditional conversion process as proselytes. Notice that just being able to not curse your persecutor is a blessing. *Eulogeo* literally translates as 'speak well of'. David spoke well of Saul, would not allow his men to speak badly of him because Saul, as king, was Y'hovah's anointed – moshiach. 1Sam24

1 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of Engedi. 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. 3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. 4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which Y'hovah said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. 5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. 6 And he said unto his men, Y'hovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, Y'hovah's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of Y'hovah.

In this passage there are a couple of things that are interesting. One is that moshiach doesn't mean 'Saviour' – as in Yeshua. Moshiach is anyone who is anointed. In Israel, the king and the priest were anointed to their offices. This anointing was done by pouring anointing oil on the new priest or king, the outpouring of the oil symbolizing the outpouring of Y'hovah's Ruach on them. There is no evidence in the gospels that Yeshua was ever physically anointed as either king or priest in his days on earth. In fact, only Mary is said to have anointed him at all (Jn.11.2). One who is anointed by Ruach is able to bless his persecutors.

The other interesting thing in 1Sam.24 is that 'skirt' is from Heb. 3671, *kanaph*. This is the exact word used in Mal.4.2,

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The word translated as 'wings' here is *kanaph*. Yeshua had healing in his *kanaph*, proven by the woman with the 12 year issue, who was immediately healed by touching the hem (*kanaph*), or wing, of his garment (Mat.9.20). I think this was the tzitzioth, fringe, of his tallith, prayer shawl.

The King is also the healer of the breach (YeshaYahu 30.26, 58.12) between Judah and Israel. That healing is in his *kanaph* as well as in the ointment that is poured out on him. Both symbolize the Ruach HaKodesh. **Q&C**

V.15-17 - It is a lot easier for me to rejoice with them who rejoice than it is to weep with them who weep. It's an American 'guy' thing, I think. We haven't had to experience a lot of hardship in America. Even those whom we consider 'poor' are rich by the standards of most of the world's people. Our 'poverty stricken' mostly have roofs over their heads, food on their tables (not to mention the tables the food is on) and at least 1 car. So rejoicing is pretty easy in America, because we are spoiled. So we don't really know how to react to mourning and weeping and many of us just avoid it. When Jacob's trouble comes, we will be unable to handle it as a people. Americans will panic and seek help from the quickest mollifying source available, which will naturally be the worst source – government. We don't know how to mourn with them who mourn, weep with them who weep. We will learn. Do you think this may be why Israel has suffered so much over the years – to learn empathy and sympathy? Do you think we'll learn quicker than they have?

V.16 – **Be of the same mind** – This phrase kind of restates the last verse in more general terms. It means to put yourself in their situation mentally. Think of what YOU would need if you were going through what others are going through and help them through it.

Mind not high things – in context, this means to meet a need at the level it is on. If the need is physical or emotional, do what you can to meet it. People who have a material need don't want you to say you'll be praying for them – more often than not, that's a Xian cop-out. They'll believe you a lot more when you say you'll pray for them if you actually meet the material or emotional need first. Sincere prayer is ultimately more important, but how sincere will your prayer be if you are unwilling to meet the material need? Out of sight, out of mind is a very true saying. "I'll be praying for you, brother," has a very hollow ring to me when most Xians say it. What did James say? "Show me your faith without works. I will show you my faith BY my works." (Jms.2.18) It is not lost on folks in need. And if you are going to promise to pray, why not just do so right then? And meet their other needs on the spot, as well.

'High things' is from grk. 5308, *hupselos*, which is 'lofty' in place or character. We have a tendency to make ourselves out to be more than we really are. It's a pride thing. We all to one extent or another build ourselves up in our own minds and then project that image of ourselves. This can be good or bad. I do it – hold up my ideal for myself, and then I try to live up to it. Sometimes I actually succeed and, when I do, those around me benefit. That's good. When I don't, they see I am just human and I can't even hit MY target, much less Y'hovah's. That can be bad, depending on the one watching. When we think more highly of ourselves than we ought, we consequently think of others LESS highly than we ought, and we portray an attitude of condescension.

But when it comes to dealing with others and their needs, we need to **condescend to men of low estate**. *Sunapago* = *sun*, with + *apo*, off or away + *ago*, lead or drive. So 'condescend' means to lead people or go off with people who are in life's low points – to get down with them, not to be looking down from above. We are to condescend without being condescending. This is exactly what Y'hovah did in the person of Yeshua – he got down with us. Yeshua had the mind that we should have (Phil.2.5). We need to be

transformed by the renewing of our minds to be like him, getting down to ‘brass tacks’, as it were. When we are led by the Spirit of Moshiach, we will do it.

Be not wise in your own conceits – This is the 2nd time Sha’ul used this phrase (11.25). The phrase own conceits is from the Grk 1438, *heautou*, which is the root word for himself (herself, etc.), in the context it would translate ‘yourselves’. The idea is that we ought not think ourselves wise by using ourselves as the basis for comparison. Wisdom is not self-approved or subjective. True wisdom is in the Word of Y’hovah, using it as our basis for comparison because we have no other truly objective truth to base it on. We need to judge ourselves by the Word, trying to be as ‘objective’ as possible. When we can be honest with ourselves about our knowledge and understanding of the Word of Y’hovah, THEN we can be truly objective in judgment; i.e., wise. When Paul says (1Cor.11) ‘examine yourselves’, by what does he mean us to do so? By Y’hovah’s Word, of course.

V.17 - Recompence to no man evil for evil – *Apodidomi* means give away or give off. Evil in both uses is the grk. *kakos*, from which we get the English word cacophony – bad sound. *Kakos* is literally worthless. We are not to give back in kind, for that draws noone to Yeshua.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men – *Pronoeo* means to exercise the mind before. *Kalos* means virtuous or valuable. Putting the 2 sentences together, we get “Don’t react to your enemy’s evil treatment, but consider that he will treat you that way and plan how you will respond to his evil treatment in such a way as to show forth Y’hovah’s love.

But sanctify the Y’hovah Elohim in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: (1 Peter 3:15)

That’s how to be a witness to the virtue of the gospel of peace (*besorah hashalom*). **Q&C**

Vv.18-21 - If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Why is this phrased this way? *If* it is possible? Why would it not be possible to live peaceably with all men? Probably because sometimes we allow people to just tick us off. I think the key phrase in this verse is the qualifying ‘as much as lieth in you’ – grk *to ex humown* – that which comes out of you. *Ex* has a root meaning of ‘out of’, not in. I think this means we are allowed to be inwardly peeved but we need to try to control our outward expression of that anger. In other words, when people in the congregation do or say things that make us angry, we need to try to let it roll off our backs like water from a duck. How often are we able to do that? And how are we able? Not often enough and only through the power of Ruach HaKodesh. If it were left strictly up to me, I’d verbally level the guy, and I do that often enough. But the Spirit of Y’hovah would have us let inadvertent or unintentional slights go, and to temper our anger at even the advertent and intentional slights from those who are less mature in Yeshua, or who do not know him at all.

The point of v.18 is expounded in v.19 - **Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Y’hovah.** The Hebrew word underlying the phrase ‘dearly beloved’ is *dodi*. That was just a gift for you, *dodi*. Paul commands us to not avenge ourselves, but to ‘give place to

wrath'. 'But' is from *alla*, which means 'exactly the opposite'. We are to give our wrath (grk. *orge* – guess what English word we get from *orge*) to Y'hovah and let him deal with our light work. He is so much better at the whole wrath thing, anyway. Our wrath is usually meant to harm the object thereof, while his is meant to reconcile the 'perp' to himself. If we are acting out of love for the brethren, we ought not lash out at every slight we perceive, but we ought to place our wrath with Ruach and let him bring 'constructive retribution'.

Our attitude should be to serve, even when those we serve take advantage or use our service to harm us. When we serve those who would harm us, their condemnation is made that much more severe, because it is a witness to them of the *agape* of Y'hovah. Keep this in mind when we get to Ch.13, where the gentile brethren whom Paul addresses here are exhorted to 'be subject to the higher powers' in the synagogue.

Can we be 'overcome with evil'? I've shared how 'cold' doesn't actually exist, haven't I? I think in the same way, evil doesn't exist. As cold and darkness are the absence of energy, so evil is the absence of good or righteousness. Is.45.7 illustrates this idea;

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Y'hovah do all these.

Taken just as it is written, darkness was created with the formation of light and evil was created with the making of peace. What Y'hovah did was to 'form' light, to give it shape. The Hebrew word is *yatsar*, to mold into a form. To mold something it must have already been there. So when Y'hovah created light, the light just was, and it must have been everywhere. But when he *yatsar*'d it, he localized it. May I submit to you that Y'hovah is light, and in him is no darkness (or absence of light – 1Jn.1.5). Now Elohim may be light, but that doesn't mean that light is Y'hovah. This sounds dangerously close to pantheism, does it not? The step from scriptural truth to paganism is very short, logically speaking. I mean it is a very short logical step to go from Elohim is light to the logical parallel that light is therefore Elohim. But the one side of the equation is true – Y'hovah is light. The other side is false – light is not Y'hovah. The difference is that light has no life in itself. It helps to sustain physical life, indeed is essential for life, but it has no life, nor can it even exist, of its own.

Light is a property of energy, as is heat. Energy is that which animates life, but energy has no life of its own. Both energy and light are given their properties by Elohim. He is the one who provides the energy that manifests to us as heat, light and life. So his Ruach is the source of all life.

It can be said that energy, being the first ordered creation of Elohim, is the building block of all creation. And this can be proven by nuclear physics. When the weak nuclear force is removed (that which holds the atom's nucleus together) the result is fission, the complete dissolution of everything at least to the sub-atomic level. When Yeshua removes his power from the creation it will dissolve, for Yeshua is both the Creator and sustainer of all things;

11 Strengthened with all might, **according to his (Yeshua's) glorious power**, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the **inheritance of the saints in light**: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible

Elohim, the firstborn of every creature: **16** For **by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: **17** And he is before all things, and **by him all things consist**. (Col.1.11-17)

The word translated 'darkness' here is *skotos*, and means 'obscurity'. That is EXACTLY what the Hebrew word *choshek* (Gen.1.3) means. Nothing had form before Elohim gave it form. When Moshe and Sha'ul talk of 'darkness', they speak primarily about spiritual things, i.e.; lack of spiritual light. It is the same with 'evil'. They speak primarily of lack of spiritual life and peace. And we overcome evil with peace, in context.

Everything Paul exhorts us to in this chapter are the outworking of love from us. This is what love looks like. **Q&C**

Fulfilling Torah Ministries

Romans 13

Before we get into the text of this chapter, let's recapitulate the context. It's the context, or, rather, lack of context – the heavy reliance on isolating 'numbered sound bites' - that makes church theologians think that the first 7 verses of Rom.13 is about our relationship to civil government. That and the one mention of 'the sword' for punishing 'him that doeth evil'. Was Stephen stoned for doing evil? Yeshua crucified? Both were killed in accordance with Jewish Law and for the same 'offence' - blasphemy.

Ch.1 is addressed to the entire kahal. Vv.18ff show us the natural regression of the natural man into ever greater and more abominable sin when left to his own devices. Indeed without Elohim's influence in man's life, there is no hope of anything much better than reprobation.

In ch.2, he addresses the Jews in Rome, specifically the elders of the synagogue who sit in Moshe's seat to judge according to Torah (cf.v.17ff and Ex.18) about their relationship to the Gentiles in their midst. He ends the chapter making obvious reference to the numerous injunctions of Tanakh for a heart of flesh and a circumcised heart (Ezek.11.10, 36.26, Deut.30.6, 10.16), rather than a heart of stone and circumcised flesh, being Elohim's desire for his people and making the case that the Gentiles in their midst have shown that they have had their hearts circumcised by the Ruach of Y'hovah.

Ch.3, Paul makes the case that both Jew and Gentile are sinners and subject to the curse of Torah without Messiah, whom he later shows submitted to the curse in our behalf. He also makes a distinction in v.21 between Torah and rabbinic 'oral law', otherwise how can the righteousness of Elohim without the law be witnessed in Torah and the prophets? This distinction sheds light on vv.19-20 and much else in the book. He concludes this chapter by showing that Elohim is one and is not only the Elohim of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also, and that his Torah is valid for both as the standard to determine between sinful and righteous behavior.

He further developed this idea in ch.4, where he shows that Avraham, the Gentile, was justified by his faith in Y'hovah before he was circumcised, but his justification did not negate his obedience to Y'hovah in being circumcised, among other things. As we've seen previously, faith and everything else in the Hebraic mind is based in action, not mere philosophy. Faith, as mental assent to truth only, is a Greek way of thinking – philosophy vs. action. Faith, in Hebraic thought, is both the mental assent to the truth, but also the resulting actions based in that truth. If the actions don't follow the assent to the truth, that faith is useless – a said faith is a dead faith. Faith is the **substance** of things hoped for, the **evidence** of things not seen. Avraham believed Elohim and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Then, when he received the commandment to circumcise his household, he acted – evidence of his belief in Elohim's Word and promise. This translates to us in our actions based in our belief in the resurrection of a Messiah we've not seen, heard or touched, which show the substance of what we hope for and are our evidence of a Messiah we've not physically seen, heard or touched. **Q&C**

Ch.5 opens with Paul talking to the Jews (inferred from the pronoun 'we'). He shows the relationship between sin and grace – polar opposites. Sin existed before Torah was given; therefore the sin was not 'imputed' to the sinner. The sinner 'earns' his death sentence. Grace also existed before Torah was given, as we see in Noah finding grace in Yah's sight (Gen.6). It is not Torah that is the polar opposite of grace, but sin (Where sin abounded, grace abounded more; as sin reigned, so grace reigns). Torah's dual purpose works on or under both sin and grace. It testifies to the sinner that he has sinned and is under the curse as it testifies to the righteous that he has received grace and is under the blessing. Once more, 5.12ff shows the Jewish leadership of the kahal that Y'hovah is the Elohim of both Jew and Gentile.

Ch.6 opens with a question that shows that Torah works under both systems, grace and sin. Sha'ul, still speaking directly to the Jews (inferred from the pronoun 'we'), then builds on the idea that we are dead to sin but alive to righteousness, both through the grace of Elohim. Which system will we submit to - sin unto death, or righteousness unto life (vv.17-18)?

Ch.7 begins the transition from speaking primarily to the Jews to speaking primarily to the Gentiles of the synagogue. He shows the Jews how Messiah reconciles his adulterous divorced bride, Ephraim Yisrael (Jer.3.8) – Gentile descendants of Israel (+ those 'mixed multitude' 'whosoever' with no relation whatever to Israel), to himself by dying the death of the adulterous wife (Num.5.11-31), thereby fulfilling the requirements to be able to take his divorced bride back and marry her (Dt.24.1-4) – his own death. Torah is not sin, but that which makes us aware of our sin. It is our flesh that makes sin abound in us, but the Ruach that gives us life. Therefore my spirit wants to do Torah, but my flesh gets in the way.

Ch.8 continues the transition. Sha'ul continues the argument that grace overrides sin in people of biblical faith that results in a change in the person's life. Note the use of the 3rd person plural. He is speaking to both Jew and Gentile here. Condemnation is no longer operative in those who walk according to, or obey, the Spirit of Y'hovah and not the flesh. We can know if we are obeying the Spirit by comparing our actions to the Word of Y'hovah (1Jn.4.1). He again shows the dual nature of Torah in vv.2 through 4. In v.9-11 he completes the transition to speaking directly to the Gentiles with the change to 2nd person plural, before addressing the entire body for the rest of the chapter with the primary use of the 1st person plural 'us', with a couple of exceptions where he addresses 'they' and 'we' in one breath to show the union. Here is the Shema, scripture's central truth, working itself out in us. Jew and Gentile are one in Messiah, as Y'hovah is one.

Q&C

In ch.9, the transition is made full to primarily addressing the Gentiles on the relationship between them and the Jews. Ch.2-6 was primarily addressed to Jews on their relationship to the Gentiles in the synagogue, to teach them Torah and its dual role. Ch.7-8 reveal the gradual transition to this point. Gentiles are shown why they must submit to the authority of the leadership within the Roman kahal, which was primarily Jewish. Paul starts with

his attitude towards his brethren after the flesh, perhaps intimating the attitude he wants to see in the Gentiles in Rome. He explains that faith in the living Elohim was revealed through believing Yisrael and that there is a difference between believing Yisrael and natural Israel, but that it is Elohim's will that all Israel, believing and natural, be redeemed. He also reveals that even the Gentile believers are primarily descendants of Israel by quoting Hosea and Isaiah in relation to them.

The central point Paul makes in Ch. 10 is that in Messiah there is no difference between Jew and Greek. All who believe and trust in Y'hovah are Yisrael; all who do not are not, regardless national or racial origin. Paul makes it a point to call the Gentile believers his brethren. This may have been the first time they'd been acknowledged as such by a Jew in Rome. The reason the Gentiles are even in the synagogue is so they can hear the Word of Y'hovah – "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Elohim (v.17)." As Kefa said to Yeshua, "...to whom shall we go? thou hast the Words of life (Jn.6.68)." The reason the Gentiles need to submit to the authority of the non-believing Jews in charge at the synagogue is so they can hear the Word of Elohim. To the leadership in the kahal, their submission will be evidence of their faith (Jms.2,22). He ends this chapter by telling the Gentile believers that they are there to provoke the unbelieving Jews to jealousy so that Israel will repent and be reconciled through Y'hovah Yeshua.

In ch.11, Paul shows that all believers in Moshiach are grafted into the root of Yisrael, which is Yeshua. The root theme runs throughout Tanakh and Paul is making midrashic reference to its uses at least in Prov.12.3, 12, Is.27.6 and 37.31 (**look them up**). He also completes his argument about foreknowledge and predestination of all Yisrael in Moshiach that he began in 8.29-30. We know that he is speaking to the Gentiles because he says so in v.13. He clearly defines the 'you/them' pronouns there and for the next couple of chapters. He speaks of life from the dead, which is almost always a metaphor, a spiritual application of redemption from exile for Judah or Ephraim or both. The Psalmist's 'valley of the shadow of death' is a metaphor for exile and separation from Y'hovah due to our sins. But the separation is we from him, not him from us, as he is always with us, even in exile. Do you see the 2 uses of 'cast away' in vv.1 and 15? These are different words, v.1 meaning 'reject' and v.15 meaning 'loss'.

He continues speaking to the Gentiles in ch.12 ("I beseech **you**, therefore") about their relationship to the Jews in charge of the synagogue, how they are to submit to the Jews' authority for the purpose of staying in a place where their minds can be transformed by hearing the Word of Elohim (10.17). This whole chapter is about submission of oneself to Ruach haKodesh by submission to the synagogue authority. If they will not do so, they can expect to be excommunicated and their faith will stop growing for lack of edification. He uses the metaphor of the body being many members (3-8), each with an essential job to do, differing gifts. Then he describes what their submission should look like (9-21).

Q&C

To get the historical background, let's go to our historical background (pg.4) and take any questions about that before we go to the text of ch.13. (**Q&C** after 'the synagogue')

Let's remember that the KJV was translated under the authorization of James I, King of England. That having been said, it is understandable where the idea of the secular government being the 'Higher Powers' came from. The KJV translation would have been influenced heavily by the both historical and contemporary idea of 'the divine rights of kings.' That is not to mention that before the Reformation, there was very little in the way of rebellion from the authority of the Roman Church by any king or nation – all power was subject to the Roman Church on pain of excommunication. You think the **synagogue** had authority? The synagogue in Rome had some autonomy, but was not the secular authority. They could have been wiped out by the Roman army or thrown out of the city at any time (and were in 135 CE, on pain of death, after the Bar Kochba rebellion of Jews following a false Messiah by that name). The Roman Catholic Church was both the ecclesiastical and secular authority for 1200 years before Luther's theses were nailed to the Wittenberg church door. So the western idea of 'higher powers' being the secular government authority is understandable. It just isn't contextually correct.

As we've seen through the last 4 chapters, Paul has been building up to this point. For this to mean the secular authorities, it would mean a 7 verse 'bubble' in an otherwise religious context through 7 chapters of text. It is vv.3-5 that really make the argument for the synagogue leadership being the 'higher powers'. The Roman secular authority could not be mistaken for ministers of Y'hovah – Mithra perhaps, but not Y'hovah.

Are the secular authorities the ministers of Elohim? Do they only punish evildoers? Or do they punish those who do good? Believers who are exercising their right to worship as they believe Elohim would have them do and raise their children in the nurture and admonition of Y'hovah are often persecuted in 21st C. America (1st Amendment rights). In Germany, parents can be arrested and school children committed to a mental institution for daring to say they want to 'home-school'. How long do you think it will be before this same inane law is enacted in America? WHO regulations that are binding on all signatory nations make it a CRIME to refuse vaccination in a declared pandemic. Laws are passed and regulations established with the **intent** of making us criminals. I would be willing to bet (and I am not a gambling man) that, if we were to look diligently through laws already on the books, every one of us writing, reading or hearing this teaching is guilty of some felony – and possibly are 'habitual felons'. And I believe I would win that bet every time – it wouldn't really be a gamble. The governmental power in America has become wicked in the extreme, passing laws with the express purpose of extracting money or control from the people through the application of 'the guilt trip'. The godly are finally awakening to it, but it may already be too late. **IF** there is another election and **IF** it is **free and unfixed** in any way, we **MAY** have one chance left to take America back. Unfortunately, those are very large qualifiers. Does anyone suspect it was **better** in Rome, that had no 'Christian tradition' to influence it? **Q&C**

V.1 speaks of the 'higher powers'. 'Higher' is translated from the greek word, *huperecho*, a compound word which derives from the preposition *huper* (hyper-), meaning above and *echo*, a verb meaning to hold. 'Powers' is from the greek word, *exousia*, another compound word deriving from the preposition *ek* or *ex*, meaning out of and *eimi*, a

primary verb root meaning to be, elsewhere translated “I am”. Strong’s primary translation is “I exist”. Higher powers ought to fully mirror Y’hovah’s good.

The idea Paul is trying to get across is that we ought to subordinate ourselves to (hold above) those whom Y’hovah has placed in authority over us for our good (v.3). Looking at context up to this point, these higher powers are the leaders of our local synagogue, and that only as far as their authority extends. Your pastor or rabbi is not your mayor, governor or king. His authority extends to your local assembly. His *influence* may reach to the secular authorities, but his authority does not – unless you live in a theocracy. Can you speak to your pastor or teacher for advise? Yes. And it may be wise to do so under certain circumstances. But **MUST** you get your pastor’s or teacher’s permission to do anything outside the assembly that doesn’t affect the assembly. No. Godly counsel? Yes. Authority over every aspect of your life? No. And if you have a pastor or teacher who is trying to exercise authority over every aspect of your life, **RUN AWAY** as fast as your feet will take you! He’ll be preparing the Kool-Aid before long.

When it says the higher powers are ‘ordained’ of Elohim, does that mean that Y’hovah has blessed the wicked, secular government? He may use a wicked, secular government to draw his people back to his Way (if they’re spiritually astute enough to recognize the fact – I hope America awakens to the idea quickly), but he does not ‘ordain’ it in the sense that a rabbi, pastor or elder is ‘ordained’ “for your good”. The grk. word is *tasso*, meaning “to arrange in an orderly manner, i.e. assign or dispose (to a certain position or lot)”. The idea that a wicked government is ordained of Elohim has the same sense as his creation of evil in Is.45.7, which we’ve spoken of before:

I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I Y’hovah do all these things .
He didn’t create darkness or evil, per se, but in his forming light and making peace evil and darkness were necessarily created as the relative absence of the things Elohim formed or made. In like manner, he didn’t ordain wicked governments as ministers of good. They came into being as manifestations of the absence of good (and in varying degrees) in that the sinful situation of the nation under its thumb required that absence of good to bring it to itself, even as the prodigal. How much suffering must a people endure before they will call on Y’hovah for deliverance? Israel had to go into abject slavery before they called out in Egypt. Judah had to be exiled to Babylon 70 years before Daniel discerned the time and called out to Y’hovah for deliverance. How much longer will we have to suffer? Until we, the people of Y’hovah, are no longer able to bear it on our own shoulders. Only then will we earnestly call out for deliverance from on high. Only when we humble ourselves, pray, seek his face and turn from our wicked ways will he hear from heaven, forgive our sins and heal our land. That time is coming. Things will have to get very uncomfortable for believers in general before we feel compelled to earnestly call on Y’hovah’s deliverance. Hopefully, it will not be so late that he’ll have abandoned us to our sin.

V.2 speaks of those who resist (*antitassomai* - arrange oneself against) the ordained authority. Remember that throughout this book so far Paul is telling the Jews that the new gentile members are their Yisraelite brethren whom Yeshua had called to repentance, for whom he’d died the death of the adulterous wife (7.1-4), so that he, as a new man, could lawfully take them as his Bride. Here he is telling the new gentile believers that they are

to 'hold above' (huperecho) the synagogue leadership in matters of righteous conduct in the kahal as elder brothers. They were to do this so that they could hear the Word of Elohim, which alone could bring them to faith (10.17). If they resisted the 'powers' in the synagogue, they would be sent out into Rome, where their new faith in Messiah would make them criminals. If they refused to worship Caesar they were subject to death UNLESS they were under the authority of the synagogue. So, the gentile believers had a decision to take – 1) submit to the synagogue authority, 2) submit to the Roman authority, or 3) die in the circus. Sha'ul expected them to submit to the rabbinic authority, hear the Word of Y'hovah and grow in faith. **Q&C**

V.3 emphasizes the point of v.2. "Rulers (*archon*) are not a terror (*phobos*) to good works." The question is, "What are 'good works'? The audience is made up of believers. Are the secular authorities worried about good works in a religious sense ('religious' here used as America's founding fathers used it)? The synagogue authorities would consider Torah observance as 'good works', as do I (and Paul in Eph.2.10, Gal.5.22-25 illustrates).

What would Rome consider a 'good work'? That would depend on the situation, wouldn't it? A Roman soldier performing a 'Caesarian section' on a pregnant woman in a conquered city would be performing a 'good work', wouldn't he? You betcha! And I don't mean to save the baby's or the mother's life, but to kill them both. I chose the most egregious and barbarous Roman practice I could think of just then. I seriously doubt Paul was thinking the Roman government was concerned with whether you were doing biblically 'good works'. What a secular government calls 'good' is not usually what scripture calls 'good'. If they agree to the 'goodness' of a thing, it is more likely coincidence than not. Would the government of a nation take notice of a person who lives as Paul describes in Gal.5? Someone living like that might not be arrested, but will he garner praise from a secular government? Not likely. But one who exhibits this type of behavior in the assembly will be noticed and possibly commended – especially if he's a gentile in the synagogue. The rabbis would definitely take notice of such a gentile.

Archon means first in rank. This would be the ruling elder or rabbi of the synagogue. I assume that the hierarchy was similar to the governmental authority in the camp. Moshe, as ruling elder, then the tribal elders, then family elders, then the fathers of households. The rabbi or ruling elder was usually not a political appointee, as was the High Priest in the Temple in Roman days, but a man proven to be of godly character, learning and discernment (1Tim.5.17, 3.1ff). While he may not (and probably wasn't) a believer in Yeshua, he was a man from whom the new believers could correctly learn Torah, which is their purpose in being in the synagogue.

Is this a 'hard and fast' truth? Must the gentile believers, in our present context, submit to the synagogue authorities in every aspect of their lives? I don't think so anymore than I think that your pastor has any business examining your ruling of your own house (unless it's obviously sinful and THEN his only responsibility is to bring the sin to your attention, to see if you are aware of it). But they must walk (righteous conduct) according to the local *halacha* within the synagogue and according to Torah in their daily walk. If

the rabbi were to, for instance, order them not to speak of Yeshua, they should follow Peter's example from Acts.5

29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey Elohim rather than men. 30 The Elohim of our fathers raised up Yeshua, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath Elohim exalted with his right hand a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom Elohim hath given to them that obey him.

But in matters of halachic conduct, they should submit so they can have fellowship and learn Torah. Remember that the new gentile believers are considered members of a sect of Judaism, the Notzrim or Nazarene sect, understood to be such by Jerusalem Temple authorities. **Q&C**

V.4 says the ruler is the 'minister of Elohim to thee for good'. The word translated 'minister' is the Greek word (Strong's 1249) *diakonos*, a deacon or a minister within the kahal. Where Paul calls him a minister of Elohim, he uses this word, *diakonos*. Will he minister to you if you do evil? Yes. In v.6, he uses the greek word (Strong's 3011), *leitourgos*, which is a functionary in the Temple or in the gospel. He is a Levite, but not a priest. The Levite's (*leitourgos*) function is to maintain the Temple; the priest's (*diakonos*) job is to perform in the offering system, to teach Torah, to judge disputes and such official duties.

The grk. word translated 'do' in v.4 is Strong's 4161, *poieo*. In this context it means 'abide in'. In Eph.2.10 it is the root word behind 'workmanship' (*poiema* 4160). As we are a 'work in progress' of our Abba, so is the evil in v.4. The ruling elder is both a minister of Y'hovah for our good who act righteously and a 'revenger to wrath' on those who are 'doers of evil'. The word translated 'doeth' is Strong's 4238, *prasso*, and means one who practices evil as his manner of life – an habitual sinner. Habitual evil must be punished in the kahal, as it had to be dealt with in the camp in the wilderness. In this case, the habitual 'bad actor' is to be excommunicated and left to live under the threat of Roman law. As happened in Corinth, the one who was excommunicated didn't live outside the protection of the synagogue for long before he; 1) repented (2Cor.2.4-10 – the primary purpose of the discipline), 2) reverted back to his paganism (2Tim.4.10a, 1Jn.2.19 - antiMoshiachs) or 3) was arrested and sent to entertain in the circus.

V.5 – The use of the 2nd person plural in vv.4 and 6 makes this supplied word 'ye' likely to be correct. The word translated 'be subject' is greek *hupotasso*, to arrange oneself under. Ye (that is gentiles in the synagogue) must order yourselves before the elders of the kahal, not just because they can excommunicate you, but because your conscience will afflict you if you don't – the Spirit of Y'hovah won't let you alone.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth not, to him it is sin. Jms.4.17

Paul takes up this idea again in ch.14.

V.6 speaks of paying tribute, another reason this is seen as speaking of Roman authority. If you remember from our background review, the synagogue collected the Temple tax, as well as the Roman tax. I assume the synagogue assessed some cost for maintenance of the meeting place, too. Members of the local kahal did not pay taxes directly to the Roman authorities, but through the synagogue. There is no distinction made in v.6 about what is being called tribute. The word is from the greek *phoros* (Strong's 5411), meaning

a load, as borne. Every tax is a load borne by the taxpayer, even the Temple tax (which is scriptural – Ex.30.11-16). The Temple tax was a ½ shekel, which = 2 Roman drachma – the amount the poor widow was putting into the treasury in Mk.12.42. At any rate, the members of the kahal paid all their taxes through the kahal and Rome took its cut from there. This should have made the payment of taxes fairer within the kahal, as well, for the ministers of Elohim for our good should be less likely to assess more than what was due.

Q&C

V.7 then delineates where tribute money went and that the members ought to pay what was due (not more than what was due). “Tribute to whom tribute” speaks of taxes. We’ve been over a couple of the taxes assessed at the synagogue; Temple tax, Roman head taxes, poll taxes, and etc. The Romans hired tax collectors all over the empire and empowered them to assess whatever they darned well chose. These tax collectors would assess the tax + whatever they thought was ‘fair’ compensation for their ‘services’. This is why ‘publicans’ were so hated in Israel. They were Israelites who stole from their own people because they had ‘legal’ (if not legitimate) authority to do so. Rome’s governors backed them up. As long as Rome got its cut, the governors cared less how much the publicans (like so-called ‘judges’ today) extorted from the people. So, when the synagogue assessed the taxes, they should have been more fair, or less grasping at least, than the average tax assessor. It’s interesting to me that Zaccheus told Yeshua that ‘IF I have cheated anyone, I will repay him 4-fold what I’ve stolen’. I think he may have been an ‘honest’ tax collector, taking only that which was due + a truly reasonable fee. If Zacc was an inveterate thief, he’d have broken himself financially with this oath. *I think* the synagogues in Rome were honest, as well.

“Custom to whom custom” - ‘Custom’ (Strong’s 5056) is from *telos*, which usually means goal or end, but in this and most other instances where it deals with the actual payment of taxes it means “an impost or levy as paid.” W1828 has impost as, “A duty or tax laid by government on goods imported, and paid or secured by the importer at the time of importation.” So when customs assesses an impost on what you carry into the country from outside, it is legitimate and you need to pay it. Customs are usually a small percentage of the cost of the goods. Once again, these were assessed at the synagogue, if applicable.

“Fear to whom fear” – The greek word is *phobos*, terror. To whom is ‘fear’ due? Fear is due to anyone who has legitimate authority to bring judgment against you. In our context, that would be, in order of importance to the believer, 1) Y’hovah, 2) the authority of one’s family (preferably the father, but mother in father’s absence, or eldest sibling), 3) the elders of the kahal, 4) local/municipal police/judges, and then 5) provincial/State authorities. The reason the secular authorities are listed last is that these SHOULD be the last ones anyone would see, judgment being most just at the most intimate level. Seen in light of the 5th Commandment, this explains the reason given in Ex.20.12:

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which Y’hovah Elohecha giveth thee.

If we honour our parents and obey them, we are most likely to be good citizens of a just nation and good leaders in the local kahal, because we are most likely to be obedient to Y’hovah’s Word.

“Honour to whom honour” – We’ve already seen who is most worthy of our honour – Y’hovah and our parents. But to whom else do we render due honour? Let me list a few direct from scripture:

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and **honour the face** (meaning countenance) of the old man, and fear Elohecha: I am the Y’hovah. (Leviticus 19:32)

For thou hast made **him (Messiah)** a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. (Psalms 8:5)

A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches. (Proverbs 11:16)

That all men should honour **the Son**, even **as they honour the Father**. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. (John 5:23)

Honour widows that are widows indeed. (I Timothy 5:3)

Let the **elders that rule well** be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (I Timothy 5:17)

Honour **all men**. Love the brotherhood. Fear Elohim. Honour **the king**. (I Peter 2:17)

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour **unto the wife**, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (I Peter 3:7)

And they shall bring the glory and honour of **the nations** into it. (Revelation of John 21:26)

You could easily say that any righteous man, or any person righteously filling an office of trust or authority is worthy of our honour. It is his due. And what do we generally find? We find that when someone faithfully observes to perform his assigned duties, to keep his word and to honour his trust, he is given much honour. **Q&C**

Vv.8-11 - “Owe no man any thing” has been taken to mean not to go into debt. It immediately follows the admonition to ‘render’ to whomever what is his due. *I think* that meant to do so as we would unto Y’hovah. This is a reference to Dt.28 and the curses for disobedience.

43 The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. **44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.** **45** Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Y’hovah Elohecha, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: **46** And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. **47** Because thou servedst not Y’hovah Elohecha with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart (like Yonah, who served reluctantly), for the abundance of all; **48** Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which Y’hovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

This is, of course the latter end of Y’hovah’s judgments and condemnations against his disobedient children. This is all exactly the opposite of what he **WANTS** to do for us, but when we get rebellious and obstinate in our sin it is what he eventually **MUST** do to us to get us to want to repent and do his will instead of our own. Would that it were not so, but all too often it is. We, therefore, ought not get into debt. **However, the debt itself is not sin, but a symptom of it.** If we are following Y’hovah completely, none of the curses he threatens should come upon us. So, if you are deep in debt, especially credit card debt, you need to look at how faithfully you are obeying Y’hovah’s commands. And shred the cards.

The rest of the phrase says, ‘but to love one another.’ The only thing we owe anyone is to show our love to him by our obedience to Y’hovah’s commandments. If we show love for our fellow men, we show love for Y’hovah – and vice versa. There is **no disconnect**.

Notice please that 8b does not say that one has fulfilled the ‘whole’ law, as some mistakenly claim. This is a direct reference to Lev.19.34;

34 But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and **thou shalt love him as thyself**; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am Y’hovah Elochem.

This is the second greatest Torah instruction, and ‘neighbor’ must therefore mean a stranger who dwells with Yisrael. A fellow Yisraelite is a brother. In context to the gentile converts to the Way in the Roman synagogue, the ‘neighbor’ is the Jewish leadership. In context to the Jewish leadership, the neighbor is the gentile convert. Remember the Good Samaritan. Whoso loves his neighbor loves Y’hovah. It’s simple, but not easy. Vv.9&10 begin to illustrate and reiterate the truth of v.8 (“For this...”) – if you are doing anything to bring harm to your neighbor generally, or specifically according to v.8, you are not loving Y’hovah. We can only show our love for him, in this specific context, by showing love for those who are his, especially those who are different from us.

V.10 makes the point that Torah is for our good, in a slightly backhanded way – since love does no harm, it fulfills Torah.

V. 11 continues to illustrate the truth of v.8 (“And that...”) – We need to come together as people of faith in Messiah and his Torah (“high time to wake out of sleep”) because our salvation, deliverance to the land, is at hand. Paul’s grammar here shows a difference between belief and salvation. I don’t think it means that we are not saved by our faith, but that simply believing is not faith. Yacov (James) 2

14 What profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what profit? 17 Even so **faith, if it hath not works, is dead**, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one Elohim; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith without works is dead**? 21 Was not **Abraham our father justified by works**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how **faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect** (complete)? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed Elohim, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of Elohim. 24 Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**. 25 Likewise also was not **Rahab the harlot justified by works**, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

So, it is easy to see that works are the life-giving Spirit of faith, and faith is NOT simply a belief system. James juxtaposes faith and belief, showing that works are useless to save and that faith is MORE than just conviction to a mental assent. True faith is seen in both our belief AND our subsequent and consequent actions based on our belief. And also, in this case, I believe that ‘salvation’ (in Rom.13.11) may be better translated ‘deliverance’ or ‘redemption’ – and that redemption is from our evil inclination, or ‘sin nature’. It is what all of Tanakh told us, that our deliverance is into the Kingdom on earth. Q&C

V.12 carries the idea of waking from sleep a bit further by implying that our ‘sleep’ from which we need to wake is our ‘works of darkness’. We discussed what darkness is in our discussion of v.1 (pg. 109 and 103 above). Night refers to exile from fellowship with Y’hovah. The end of exile, our reconciliation with Y’hovah through the resurrection we

are promised in Yeshua, is at hand. The light is showing at the end of the tunnel. That reconciliation is now with us spiritually, and will be fully realized in the Millennial Kingdom. For this reason, because the end of our exile is at hand, we need to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

That light is Torah, a word rooted in the Hebrew word 'or, which means light. Torah is spelled w/4 letters; tav, vav, resh and hey. The two letters in the center are vav, resh, which spell 'or - light. Hebrew letters have meanings in and of themselves. 'Tav' is the mark of Y'hovah and the goal to which we aspire. 'Hey' represents an open window through which we behold things. So through Torah we behold the light of Yeshua, who is our ultimate goal.

Paul admonishes us to walk now AS WE WILL 'in the day', which refers to the light part of the day of Messiah. He delineates what he means by 'works of darkness' in v.13, then tells us that living in them is making provision for the flesh in v.14. So in vv.12-14, we see that works of darkness are those things prohibited in v.13, which are all provisions of the flesh based in our lusts. But we also see that when we cast off those works of darkness and put on the armor of light we are walking honestly before our Creator, having put on Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach, who is both the armor of light and the living Torah of Elohim.

The question is this, "Who is acting in these verses?" Sha'ul says, "Let US cast off and let us PUT ON and Let us walk" Then he commands his readers (including US), "Put ye on Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach and make not provision for the flesh's lusts." First he tells us to put on the 'armor of light'. Then he tells us to put on Y'hovah Yeshua haMoshiach. The connexion is obvious. Behold the goal and the mark of the high calling of Elohim through the light of Torah, and advance towards it. **Q&C**

Romans 14

Chapter 14 continues the general theme of fellowship with believers unlike ourselves. It illustrates what we've been seeing in ch. 9-13. I think we've already established that 'the faith' is that which was 'once delivered to the saints' (Jd.3) and that Yeshua delivered it (Jms.4.12a) on Shavuoth at Mt. Sinai in Arabia. But who are 'the weak' in the faith? Sha'ul illustrates this beginning in v.2, where he says that those who eat only herbs are weak. I don't know if this means they are weak of faith or weak of body from lack of nutrition (that was a joke, based on the b part of the verse). The weak in the faith are neither those who eat flesh nor those who eat only herbs, but those who get caught up in 'doubtful disputations' over such non-issues.

The problem arises with the added word 'but', which sets up a dichotomy that doesn't exist in the Greek text. What a person eats, within Torah's guidelines, is an example of 'doubtful disputations' – useless argument for argument's sake. Now, if a person wants to eat food that Y'hovah has specifically forbidden to his people, there is no doubt and should be no disputation. The person who eats unclean food is disobeying Y'hovah's revealed Word. But if I wish to eat clean flesh with my veggies, but you only want the veggies, we should not be arguing over it. We should accept each other in the unity of Messiah. The person who is weak in the faith is the one who enters into disputes over what is not revealed in scripture or non-essentials.

Paul lists a number of things that fall under the category of 'doubtful disputations'. In v.3 it is flesh food vs. vegan. V.4 answers this nicely – we are all servants of Yeshua; let HIM be the judge of our faithfulness.

V.5 talks about judging one day above another or considering them all to be the same. Does this speak of setting aside Sabbaths or Feast days as revealed in scripture, or does it more likely refer to days like the 9th of Av (the day of the year in history on which both Temples were destroyed) or pagan holidays? **That which Y'hovah has commanded is not doubtful, but clearly revealed in scripture.** THAT is the best definition of 'doubtful disputation' I can imagine. Those day that men have set aside are what I would consider to be doubtful. Unless they have been forbidden, if you want to celebrate them as holidays, go for it, but don't judge me if I don't. And vice versa. In America this includes Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, etc. There are some that are celebrated in America that I think are forbidden by scripture and that believers ought not celebrate, like Easter, Earth Day, Arbor Day, May Day, Halloween, Xmas, etc. This is an application of Dt.12.2-4

2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: **3** And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. **4** Ye shall not do so unto Y'hovah Elohecha.

Y'hovah specifically tells us to remove every vestige of pagan worship from our midst. Earth Day, Arbor Day and May Day revolve around worshipping creation. Easter, Halloween and Xmas have their origins in and retain some practices that are rooted in

idolatry and devil worship. I don't think there can be any disputation for the believer. We are to eschew even the appearance of evil (1Thes.5.22).

Does this mean that I will break fellowship over someone judging or esteeming those days as set aside to Yah? Not at all. I may think he's wrong – I may even think he's nuts – but if he is a believer and is otherwise working out his faith with fear and trembling, I will not cut him off from fellowship. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind. I just won't celebrate those days with him. Of course, I'll also tell him why I won't. From there, the choice is his to take. **Q&C**

V.6-12 – The man who is fully persuaded in his own mind will be very hard to persuade otherwise. If a man, for example, believes in his heart that he ought to observe the 9th of Av (the day that both Temples were destroyed 650 years apart – in my mind this is not coincidental), perhaps as a day of repenting of the spiritual condition of the people that brought about that judgment and condemnation from Y'hovah and remembering to not do likewise, go for it. I think that is commendable. If you are mourning the temple itself, and not the official societal idolatry that made its destruction necessary, there may be a misplaced attachment to the buildings - idolatry. Y'hovah has always been more interested in our hearts' attitudes than with our compliance to man-made or man-ordained celebrations or observances. Our hearts' attitudes are reflected in our submission and obedience to his Word, not the observances we devise to make ourselves feel better (or worse).

The subject of eating and drinking unto Y'hovah needs to be seen in the same way. I think this is speaking generally of the 'oneg' (Hebrew for 'delight'), the fellowship meal. The example was given in v.2 that ought to be seen as the precise subject of this verse, flesh or veggies. Some folks have a hard time digesting flesh, or believe we ought not eat flesh. If one is thankful to Y'hovah for the food he provides, let that be your point of unity and don't argue with him over what he eats or doesn't eat. Let his master persuade him. You just enjoy his fellowship over the meal. Just because a brother eats flesh (or doesn't, depending on his perspective) doesn't mean you can't discuss scripture with him over chow. That's the purpose of the 'oneg' – to delight in Y'hovah's Word and fellowship. We need to do what Y'hovah lays on our own hearts, not knuckle under to the fleshly pressure of or apply it to our brethren. These are good examples of doubtful disputations.

We do not answer ultimately to our brethren, nor they to us – we each answer to Elohim. Whether we live or die, whether we eat or drink, we do so to Y'hovah. Yeshua died, arose and lives again so that he might bring the unity Paul speaks of in this whole chapter. Yeshua is Master of both the dead and the living. What we think of another really does nothing to them. And if we judge others unrighteously, we harm OURSELVES in loss of reward in the life to come. Our judgment must be according to what's revealed in scripture, not our pet dogmas. Dogma = opinion. Dogma is also driven by pride. So is the judgment according to dogma that Sha'ul is writing about. Dogma = doubtful disputation.

We will give an accounting to Yeshua at his bema seat for how we judge and treat our brethren according to our dogmas. Do we cause brethren to fall by our dogma? Sha'ul quotes Is.45.23 in v.11 to make the point that both we and he whom we are troubling will bow the knee to the same Master Y'hovah Yeshua. It is he to whom we will give account for what we did to cause our brother to stumble. **Q&C**

Vv.13- - When Paul tells us here to not judge our brethren we need to see the context of doubtful disputations and causing our brethren to stumble as a result of them. We are not to judge what our brethren are doing that Y'hovah has not condemned, like eating only veggies or also eating flesh.

V.14 has become a real divider of the brethren, and some have gone to the extent of cutting off fellowship over only eating what scripture calls 'clean' food. This may get a bit lengthy, so bear with me.

Each instance of the word 'clean' in this verse is from the greek word *koinos*, which is the same root as *koine*, as in 'koine greek' (the common tongue) and *koinonia*, fellowship. The word means 'common' and is sometimes translated 'unclean' in the KJV. I think in this verse it is a doctrinal bias of the translators. Let's look at Acts 10 to see what I mean.

In Acts 10, Peter has a vision in which a 'sheet' is lowered from heaven that is filled with all manner of animals, both clean and unclean. Y'hovah tells Kefa to 'kill and eat.' Pete says, "I have never eaten that which is common or unclean." Y'hovah says, "What I have cleansed, don't call it common."

What Peter was thinking about is the common dogma of the Jews that when an otherwise clean animal comes in contact with an unclean animal – say a sheep rubs up against a pig, that renders that clean animal common, and a kosher man may not eat it. It is for this reason that a kosher Jew could not eat what was purchased at the bazaar of the suk – even clean food could be made common by its proximity to unclean animals, or by its having been offered to idols. They take this to great lengths that we won't go into now. Suffice it to say that Kefa had some unlearning to do. To him, the sheep on that sheet had been rendered common by its proximity to the unclean animals. This vision from Yah was given to disabuse him of that ridiculousness. This instruction had not come to them by divine decree, but by tradition and opinion – dogma.

The greek word translated 'common' here is *koinos*, which is exactly correct. The word in Acts.10 translated 'unclean' is *akathartos*, a compound of *a*, which is the prefix of negation, and *kathartos*, to cleanse or purge. We get our English word 'catharsis' from it. *Akathartos* is perfectly translated here, not clean or unclean.

Kefa saw the same vision 3 times. As he came out of the trance and thought about the vision and its meaning, there was a knock on the door and there were 3 men asking for him – all gentiles (v.7). Ruach spoke to Petey and told him to go with them without fear. When he'd heard their mission, he not only was ready to go with them, he invited them in and fed them and lodged them overnight. A Jew, a KOSHER Jew, asked 3 gentiles into

his benefactor's house and cared for their needs so they could take their journey to Caesarea the following morning. "Unheard of! Unthinkable! Absurd!"

When they got to Caesarea, Peter immediately entered the centurion's home, another no-no in Israel that had no basis in scripture. V.28 tells the tale of the vision.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Elohim hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Where does Torah say that any men are common or unclean? Nowhere – it's a tradition of the elders. It's Talmudic. Paul was told of this vision at the Jerusalem Council.

Paul applies Kefa's vision to food animals. Proximity to or even contact with unclean animals does not render a clean animal common. Proximity to or even contact with a gentile does not make a Jew common. Jews and gentiles who are washed in Yeshua's blood are made *kathartos* equally, and they should not refuse association or fellowship with each other.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse (*kathartos*) us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn.1.9)

To my mind, 'nothing is unclean (*koine* – common) of itself', is absolutely true. But also to my mind (and I think I have Y'hovah's mind on this), this does not remove a scriptural prohibition. Unclean animals are unclean because Y'hovah SAID they were, so until there is a clear contradiction from Y'hovah in scripture, I will consider pigs, shellfish, etc. as non-food animals. In this case, Sha'ul is speaking of clean animals purchased at the bazaar or suk, and of Jews having fellowship with gentiles in their kahal and 'oneg'. What Y'hovah has cleansed, whether food or people, don't call it common. **Q&C**

Vv.15-18 – Remember the context of Acts 10 and the lesson Peter got there. So nothing is common of itself, but Elohim has pronounced certain animals to be unclean to eat. We who are 'strong' in the faith need to walk circumspectly, keeping in mind our brethren and their spiritual condition. If our brother is grieved by what we eat, or if our eating flesh from the suk or bazaar is a stumbling block to him, we ought to stop eating that flesh so that we don't offend his conscience. If he is not fully persuaded of the goodness of what we are doing we should stop. We can eat whatever we want at home, but in the kahal and 'oneg' we need to consider our brother's need above our desire. We may have liberty to eat that flesh but we ought to restrain ourselves for their sakes. We need to walk in love for them, not in our proud, carnal desire to exercise our liberty in Messiah.

Liberty is freedom under control. The Oxford American Dictionary says this on liberty:

1. The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority upon one's way of life, behaviour or political views. ...

The 4th of July is the day on which Americans commemorate their nation's independence – a word that implies one's ability to stand alone without being sustained by anyone else.

Independence is applied to nations or countries, while freedom and liberty more often apply to people. But **unlike freedom, which implies an absence of restraint or compulsion, liberty implies the power to choose among alternatives rather than being merely unrestrained.**

Freedom can also apply to many different types of oppressive influences (freedom from interruption, freedom to leave the room at any time), while liberty connotes deliverance or release (he gave the slaves liberty).

We have liberty in Messiah from those fences the elders put up to keep us safe. In keeping us safe from breaking the Torah commands, they have also kept us so far from the Torah as to not be able to properly keep it. Our freedom is tempered by our love for the brethren. If we act without regard for our brother's stance in the faith, we are exercising license, not liberty.

We have it good because we've been set free from the bondage of human traditions that were intended to keep us safe from sin, but also made it impossible to truly obey Torah. But if we exercise that liberty before one who is not yet convinced of the rightness of that liberty, we ought to restrain ourselves for their sakes, that our liberty not be evil spoken of.

After all, we do not live unto ourselves, but unto Messiah; and his Kingdom is not restricted to eating and drinking, though that is where most of the learning occurred in synagogue – over the 'oneg' fellowship meal and the midrashic study of scripture. The Kingdom of Elohim is about righteousness. Please take a second to define righteousness - not where or from whom we get it, but what it is.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto Elohim, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto Elohim. (Rom,6:13)

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call to mind among all the nations, whither Y'hovah Elohecha hath driven thee, 2 And shalt return unto Y'hovah Elohecha, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul: 3 That then Y'hovah Elohecha will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Y'hovah Elohecha hath scattered thee. 4 If of thine be driven out unto the outmost of heaven, from thence will Y'hovah Elohecha gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 And Y'hovah Elohecha will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And Y'hovah Elohecha will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Y'hovah Elohecha with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7 And Y'hovah Elohecha will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Y'hovah, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day. 9 And Y'hovah Elohecha will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for Y'hovah will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: 10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Y'hovah Elohecha, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto Y'hovah Elohecha with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. 11 For this commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. 15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; 16 In that I command thee this day to love Y'hovah Elohecha, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and Y'hovah Elohecha shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it... 19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love Y'hovah Elohecha, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which Y'hovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deut.30.1-16, 19-20)

I think righteousness is defined as obedience to Y'hovah by the power of his indwelling Ruach of Life eternal. My life in Y'hovah is shown in my obedience to his Word.

Obedience to his Word does not secure to me my life. I show forth the righteousness of Messiah by my obedience.

If we are walking in righteousness, we will naturally have peace with Y'hovah, a peace that passes all understanding. Biblical peace, as we've said before, is not absence of war or conflict in our everyday lives. Peace is cessation of conflict with Y'hovah. Our peace may actually CAUSE conflict in our everyday life, because the world can't handle a witness like that. Here you are in the midst of tumult and tempest, but it doesn't affect your attitude? "Unheard of! Unthinkable! Absurd!" The world and the devils that control it will work overtime and in teams to knock you off your course towards peace – to get you to conform to its idea of perfect living. Y'hovah wants us to follow him, to keep our focus on his Word and off the distractions of the world. The world screams at us to get our attention, while the Spirit of Yah speaks in a still, small voice.

Stay in his Word. Study it. Ruminates on it. Speak of it – even if only to yourself. Talk to like-minded believers about it. Ask their perspectives on it – swallow the meat and spit out the bones. If we could do this, the peace that passes understanding would permeate our lives – and really tick the devil off. He'll send turmoil at us, but we'll be able to handle it. Y'hovah will give us his Shalom. And that will manifest in us as joy – peace amid the tumult. And men will see it and ask us about the hope that is in us. **Q&C**

vv.19-23 - Our focus should be on peace in the body. This passage is still talking primarily of the oneg, the fellowship meal. We can make application of the principles to other areas of life, as well, but that is the specific focus of this passage. And it speaks specifically to food that may have been sacrificed to idols. IOW, it is speaking of the Jews in the synagogue who are walking in traditional halacha and who may take offense at flesh purchased in the suk. In this light, it may be instructive to see the note from the Aramaic-English New Testament on this passage.

73. Anything fit for food is required to be from a 'clean' animal and to be properly prepared (blood drained, etc.). The issue is to not question the good intentions of the host who by tacit agreement would have made an effort to drain the blood from the meat, as Torah requires. It was and is considered rude to go into the kitchen of your host right before the meal and act as a 'kosher cop'. If your host erred, it would be he, and not you, who transgressed; therefore, don't cause an uproar over this issue during the meal.¹⁶

And this from a kosher Messianic Jew, Andrew Gabriel Roth. It is by 'tacit agreement' that we should assume the host is acting properly. Now, there would be an issue if he tries to serve shrimp and lobster and ham at the oneg, but that is not the case here. The idea is to do that which makes for peace, not to stir up strife, and to edify one another - the purpose of the oneg.

The Greek word translated 'meat' (v.20) is *broma* (Strong's 1033), defined as

1033 *broma* bro'-mah from the base of 977 (to eat); food (literally or figuratively), especially (ceremonially) articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law:--meat, victuals.

The Jewish law, from Strong's mainstream Christian point of view, is Torah. This should be instructive of the meaning of the phrase "all things indeed are pure". The word 'are' is supplied by the translators, as is the word 'things', even though it is not italicized. There are three greek words in this phrase, *panta*³⁹⁵⁶ *men*³³⁰³ *kathara*²⁵¹³ – 'all in fact pure' is the literal translation of these greek words. What is the antecedent that this adjectival

phrase describes? *Bromatos* is. Again, that definition is, “Food articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish Law”, or, in Strong’s thinking, Torah. So, all food articles allowed by the Torah are pure. By chasing down all the Strong’s words associated with the word *broma*, we can show that it speaks of field animals - sheep, goats, oxen – but primarily beef. Those numbers are 977, 1006 and 1016.

The Jew who walks according to traditional halacha is the man that will eat ‘clean’ (*kathartos*) food from the suk with offense. We are to watch OUR walk to ensure that we don’t cause our brother to stumble (vv.5, 13 &15), and we should consider the Jew our brother, for we have been grafted through Messiah into the same root of which he is a natural branch (ch.11) and accepted through Messiah into the Commonwealth of which he is a natural member (Eph.2.11ff). If what you eat or drink is a stumbling block to your brother, either Jew or gentile, you ought not eat or drink it. YOU are the stronger brother, so you ought to hold him up and thereby make or keep peace with him. The strong are to accommodate the weak. There is no command to the weak to adjust their walk.

You be happy for the liberty you have in Messiah, but don’t exercise it to the detriment of your brother, because if he exercises YOUR liberty when he is unconvinced of it for himself, he will be guilty in his own conscience and COULD fall away on account of it. It is the stronger brother who must be the more circumspect about how his conduct may affect his brother’s walk in or toward Messiah. This will be seen again in Ch.15.

This brings us full circle in chapter 14, for what we eat or drink is one of the doubtful disputations Paul warned of in v.1. **Q&C**

Romans 15

TTRT AE Vv.1-3 – We’re still speaking of deferring to the sensibilities of the ‘weak’, for the purpose of not causing them to stumble in their faith. Remember that ‘weak’ in this sense means someone who is ‘younger’ or not as ‘advanced’ in the faith once delivered to the saints: those who adhere more strictly to the letter; the concrete or what the eyes can see, than to the spirit; the abstract or metaphorical aspect (without breaking the letter), of the law of faith (3.27). This is a part of bearing one another’s burdens. We are not there to prove our liberty at the expense of a brother. The word translated ‘please’ in vv.1&2 is the greek word *aresko* (Strong’s 700), which is rooted in the word *airo* (Strong’s 142). *Aresko* means to be agreeable and *airo* means to lift up. I think the idea is to not make our selves look all spiritual and advanced in the faith at the cost of another’s walk. We shouldn’t do as WE please, but as the ‘weakest’ among us is pleased to do. We agree to walk in another’s presence as they are agreeable to walk. I think this is a pretty good example of meekness – quiet strength.

What I found most interesting in this word study was that the greek word *airo* is an Hebraism, based in the meaning of the Hebrew word (Strong’s 5375) *nasa*, which means to lift. (See, *airo* = lift?) I assume that there was no appropriate greek word to convey the idea, so Sha’ul (or the translator) made one up. *Nasa* is what Y’hovah did for Noah when he lifted the ark from the earth. *Nasa* is a primary root, and ALL Hebrew words are based in a root **verb**. It’s an action language – everything in Hebraic thought revolves around what we DO, not what we think or believe to be true. It is our job to do what is best for the congregation and for our brother, **not necessarily to do what we have liberty to do**. When Y’hovah *nasa*-ed the ark, he acted for the benefit of mankind.

Here are a few examples of the root meaning of *nasa*, taken from Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon¹⁷.

- The flood lifts the ark, Gen.7.17
- Lift up wings to fly, Ezek.10.16, 19, 11.22
- Lift up hands to heaven to pray, Dt.32.40
- Lift up one’s face, Num.6.24- פָּנִים 26
- Hold in honor, graciously receive, 2Ki.5.1

This is, by far, NOT an exhaustive list. The idea is to act in a way that is beneficial to another, or to edify another by deferring one’s own rights or privileges. Is that not what Yeshua did for us all?

And how ought we to walk? 1Jn.2.2-6,

- 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. 3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of Elohim perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Yeshua deferred his exercise of his liberty as Y’hovah in order to take on the physical body of a man and to subject himself to the humility of death on the tree for the sins of the whole world (Phil.2.4-11).

- 1 If therefore any consolation in Messiah, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Ruach, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, of one

accord, of one mind, **3** not through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. **4** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Messiah Yeshua: **6** Who, being in the form of El Shaddai, thought it not robbery to be equal with Y'hovah: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the tree. **9** Wherefore Elohim also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **10** That at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; **11** And every tongue should confess that Yeshua haMoshiach is Y'hovah, to the glory of Elohenu Avinu.

Abba highly exalted Yeshua for NOT exercising his divine prerogatives. Will he not do the same for us? Is it therefore asking too much for us to eat only veggies, if eating what's been sacrificed to idols is a stumbling block for our brother? I think not. Cf. **1Cor.10.15-33** Q&C Keep your finger in 1Cor.10. We'll be going back there.

Vv.4-6 – What things were “written aforetime”? It's pretty obvious to me that Paul is referring to Tanakh. He makes a similar statement in 1Cor.10.11, in specific reference to the Egyptian Exodus, as he expounds in the first 10 verses there. **1Cor 10.1-14**, Paul tells us in at least 2 places, and they fall in the apostolic writings immediately after the Acts (Romans and 1Cor.) and are written to both Jews and gentiles in the synagogues, that Torah is for OUR admonition and learning so that we will have hope in the end of days. And we will need hope because it will look quite bleak in the natural. Were it not for the hope that we have of the better future, we might despair and deny Messiah. At the end of each of the 5 books of Moshe in the Hebrew Torah is a phrase in Hebrew, “Chazakh! Chazakh v'nitchazakh!” “Be Strong! Take strength and be strengthened” in the Word of Y'hovah! Hope is further discussed in vv.13-16.

The word that is translated comfort in v.4 is the same that is translated consolation in v.5, *paraklesis*, from which we get the theological term paraklete. It's a compound word, from *para*, alongside, and *kalle*, call. The paraklete is the Holy Ghost, Ruach haKodesh, who comes to the aid of those who answer his call. He calls US alongside, and then stays with those who answer the call. He never leaves us, though we often leave him. A part of staying with him is to be meek in the presence of our weaker brothers. A prideful attitude can get us on a path away from the Spirit of Y'hovah, it can get us off the strait and narrow. Jews and gentiles need to be ‘likeminded toward each other’ in Messiah so we can have unity in our worship of Avinu. Ps.133;

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity! **2** like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, Aharon's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; **3** As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there Y'hovah commanded the blessing, life for evermore.

When we are dwelling in unity, it is like anointing the priest. Yeshua is our head, and the oil is poured out on him and flows down to his talmidim as the dew settles on Israel's mountains and waters ‘chol haAretz’, the whole land. Blessings flow when brothers unite, and where is unity if there is strife over such silly things as the clean food we eat at oneg?

The one mind and one mouth that glorifies Avinu is Tanakh. Romans was written in about 57CE and the only scripture that told of the glory of Y'hovah was Tanakh. 35-40 years later, Yochanan would point out which Apostolic writings were of Elohim and

which were just men's words, but when Paul wrote Romans, Tanakh was all the Word they had. It was the Tanakh that Sha'ul commended the Bereans for searching to prove his words. Paul taught Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim - instructions, prophets and writings. That is the one mouth and mind he wanted spoken between Jews and gentiles to the glory of Elohim Avinu. **Q&C**

Vv.7-17 are a summary of the main point of the book – that both believing and unbelieving Jews, AND the believing gentiles ought to walk together in unity of the faith once delivered to the saints (Jd.3), the strong deferring our liberty for the sakes of the weak. Tanakh is the common reference to ALL the groups involved, so THAT is the point around which all fellowship must revolve.

V.7 has an important instruction for us all in this day and age. 'Receive y'all one another' in the same manner that Messiah received you into the glory of Avinu. We in the body are very fractured and factionalized. "If your doctrine doesn't look just like my doctrine, I will not fellowship with you. So THERE! [and at this point the speaker sticks out his tongue as he says, "Nya-ah!"] There are Xians who will not associate with a Messianic because he believes the faith includes faithfulness (Hebraic mindset). By the same token, there are Messianics who will not associate with Xians because they say Jesus instead of Yeshua, or call it a cross instead of a stake or tree. This is stupid. We need to determine if the other is trusting Messiah Yeshua for his deliverance from sin and death and not from his own works. If he is, we need to receive him into fellowship. We can argue fine points of doctrine, iron thereby sharpening iron, but the issue for fellowship among believers in Messiah is Messiah, not semantics or personal conviction about what or what not to eat or whether we say 'cross' or 'tree'. As we saw in our last portion, Y'hovah Avinu will exalt us if we humble ourselves as Messiah did. So, meekness ought to be our normal attitude. As to fellowship with an unbelieving Jew, we can be edified in the discussion of our different perspectives on Tanakh. We might both be amazed at the insights we can give each other and how Y'hovah can use the unbeliever in Messiah to help us better understand Messiah through his knowledge and interpretation of Tanakh. Tanakh is our point of contact with them. Living 1Pe.3.15-16 is the idea here – to set up fellowship in which we can

... sanctify Y'hovah Eloheni in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Moshiach. **Q&C**

Vv.8-12 - V.8 could be the subject of its own book. Yeshua haMoshiach was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of Elohim; to confirm the promises made to the fathers. Just briefly, here's an outline.

I. Circumcision

A. Biblical purpose of Circumcision

B. The unbiblical ritual of proselytizing Gentiles BEFORE they could be accepted for fellowship in the body of Messiah. Acts 10, 11 and 15.

C. Whether or not the cut was something a believer NEEDS to do eventually, or not. Acts 15.21

II. The Truth of Elohim

- A. What did Paul/Shaul mean by 'the Truth of Elohim'?
- B. Has the Truth of Elohim changed?
- III. The Promises made to the fathers
 - A. Who are the "Fathers"
 - 1. Avraham, Yitzhak and Ya'acov?
 - 2. The human authors of Tanakh?
 - 3. All the teachers of Israel from Moshe through Yeshua until now?
 - 4. All of the above?
 - B. What Promises were made to the Fathers?

This may not necessarily be a LONG book, but the study would be fun and enlightening.

I think v.8 means that Yeshua was a minister to Judah, and particularly the party of the Pharisees, to call them to repentance from the "Oral Law" and back to Torah. He certainly did that for Shaul, who was "a Pharisee of Pharisees" (Acts 23.6). The Pharisees are the party who held that the 'Oral Law' came down in parallel with the written Torah and, for some, that the 'Oral' superceded the Torah. They had no objection to the people of 'the Way' keeping Torah, but that they would not strictly adhere to every word of the 'Oral Law'. When Paul was confronted on the Damascus road, he was going with open arrest warrants from the Sanhedrin for any who were of 'the Way' (Acts 9.2). I have a book at home by an orthodox Italian rabbi of great repute in Judaism, Moshe Chaim Luzatto, called Derech haShem, "The Way of Y'hovah". It is about how to walk in Torah. It is what I see as a Chassidic systematic theology. It is quite good, in the beginnings anyway, very succinct, but very deep. He starts at the beginning – who is Y'hovah and his attributes, and builds from there, but by the 6th chapter, I confess I was lost. His thinking is well beyond mine. I saw nothing there that I could categorically call heresy, though some Xians might, having no background whatever in Hebraic thought. His thinking is **very** Pauline. I should probably read it again, as I have a bit more understanding of Paul's Hebraic thought now. The point is that 'The Way of Y'hovah' is the Way that the apostles taught and that Shaul persecuted until the encounter with Messiah on the Damascus road. Luzatto sheds some light on what that Way was, even though that was not his objective.

V.9 continues Yeshua's purpose in coming – to show Judah that the gentiles would glorify Y'hovah for his mercy towards them (us). The Jews had (have) very little mercy for the gentiles who want to know Y'hovah and his ways. Yeshua came to point out the truth of Torah, to the Pharisees in particular (knowing that they would be the chief party among the Jews until his return), that the gentiles were Ephraim, 10-Yisrael - 'separated brethren', to use a Roman Catholic phrase. Paul refers to Is.66.19-20

19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, Tubal, and Javan, the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. **20** And they shall bring all your brethren an offering unto Y'hovah out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Y'hovah, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Y'hovah. (Is.66.4)

All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. (Psalms 66:4)

V.10 refers to

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. (Deuteronomy 32:43)

V.11 refers to

O praise Y'hovah, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. (Psalms 117:1)

V.12 refers to

And in that day there shall be a root of Yishai, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10)

Part of Yeshua's mission on earth was to awaken the Jews to the reunification of chol Yisrael by the acceptance of the gentile believers into the Commonwealth of Yisrael. The parable of 'The Good Samaritan' was a perfect example of this. Yeshua told the 'lawyer', the expert on Torah, but especially 'Oral Law', that even the Samaritans who lived Torah were their brothers (Lk.10.25-37). The Samaritans were leftovers of the Assyrian exile of Israel to the furthest reaches of the earth, the ones the Assyrians imported from other regions of its empire to populate and keep Israel's land from going wild. These were not sons of Ya'acov, much less sons of Yehudah, though they did intermarry with the few Israelites who were left in Israel and the few Jews who were left behind in that nations Babylonian exile. They asked that priests of the gods of the land be sent to show them how to worship, and the Assyrians did that. Unfortunately, the priests of Y'hovah from Israel were golden calf worshippers. The Samaritans to this day worship at Mt. Gerizim (the mountain of blessing), where Jeroboam set up the golden calf and called it Y'hovah to keep Israel from going up to Jerusalem for the Feasts of Y'hovah. The Samaritans NEVER worshipped Y'hovah 'in spirit and in truth' (Jn.4.23-24), but according to their flesh, what they could see and what their 'fathers' had taught them. (Look up the Luke and John references now) Yeshua told Judah that he was calling the gentiles to worship Y'hovah in spirit and truth, and that they (Jews) should accept them (gentile believers – even Samaritans). Paul does the same in Romans. And this is the climax of his argument to them. **Q&C**

Vv.13-16 - Paul uses the point of vv.8-12 to tell the Jews in Rome why he is going to the gentiles. If the Roman Jews knew prophecy, they should recognize that Yeshua was about bringing it to fulfillment and that Sha'ul was following after Yeshua in that ministry.

V.13 - The hope of Yisrael was and is Moshiach. Remember that hope is the earnest expectation of something promised. The prophets had been of one accord in proclaiming that the ministry of Moshiach ben Yoseph was to reconcile the exiled brethren to each other and to Y'hovah their Elohim. Sha'ul has shown the Jews in Rome (and presumably every city he'd visited) that Yeshua has fulfilled this and he has shown them HOW he has done it. This should be a matter of rejoicing, for the hope of Yisrael, which is the coming of Moshiach and the regathering of the 12 tribes in His Kingdom, had come. The regathering had begun. It was only a matter of time before that blessed hope would see complete fulfillment and the earth could rejoice in their righteous ruler.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (Proverbs 29:2)

Oh that the salvation of Yisrael were come out of Zion! when Y'hovah bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. (Psalms 14:7)

V.14 - Paul knows the goodness of the synagogue's leadership in Rome. When Paul speaks of the blessed hope, we must search the scriptures to find that of which he speaks.

He knows that they are looking for that blessed hope and the appearing of Yeshua haMoshiach in his glory to re-establish the Kingdom to David.

And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he (Moshiach) shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness. (Isaiah 16:5)

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: (Amos 9:11)

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: (Acts 15:16)

The Jews who were looking forward to this event now had their hope edified and could encourage each other in that portent of hope and glory to Y'hovah. I'm sure some did – and others did not.

Vv.15-16 – Sha'ul tells the Jews of Rome that he is ministering to the Gentiles in order to bring to fulfillment the blessed hope of those prophecies of the future redemption and restoration of chol Yisrael to haAretz – the Land.

For the grace of Elohim that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great Elohim and our Saviour Yeshua haMoshiach; **14** Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2.11-14)

Looks as though the blessed hope and the glorious appearing are either the same event or occur simultaneously. Yisrael's hope is Moshiach on David's throne. Just what is 'the glorious appearing' of Y'hovah?

So shall they fear the name of Y'hovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Ruach of Y'hovah shall lift up a standard against him. (Isaiah 59:19)

And, behold, the glory of the Elohim of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. (Ezekiel 8:4)

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Y'hovah. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. (Ezekiel 1:28)

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. **3** And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. (Rev.4.2)

Y'hovah's glory is his shekinah.

And it came to pass, as Aharon spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Y'hovah appeared in the cloud. (Exodus 16:10)

And the sight of the glory of Y'hovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. (Exodus 24:17)

And the angel of Y'hovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. (Exodus 3:2)

... And the glory of Y'hovah appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel. (Numbers 14:10)

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30)

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:26)

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. (Luke 21:27)

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. **12** His eyes *were* as a flame

of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of Elohim. 14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty Elohim. 16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev.19.11-16)

This does not describe the ‘secret rapture’, as is taught in the church, for no glory can redound to Y’hovah if it cannot be seen – Paul calls it ‘the glorious appearing’, after all. So, the ‘rapture’ is not the blessed hope Sha’ul speaks of in Titus. Biblically, hope is an ‘earnest expectation’ of a prophesied event. When Yeshua appears in his glory it will be to re-establish the throne of David in Zion, when he physically reunites Yehudah and Ephraim on the mountains of Zion.

It is for that reason that Sha’ul writes boldly to the Jews in Rome that they should put aside their animosity for the gentile believers whom Paul is offering as both a thanks and a peace offering to Y’hovah. He is in effect asking the Roman Jews to join him in the free will offering. **Q&C**

Vv.17-22 – Paul does not glory in his own right, but in Messiah Yeshua, to whom he gives all glory for those things Yeshua has wrought by his hand. Sha’ul is a willing instrument in the hands of his Y’hovah Yeshua. He knows only too well that his own work in converting the gentiles would have been futile, that only the Ruach of Y’hovah could do it through him. And that only the Ruach could produce the obedience of those gentiles in word AND in deed. These gentiles are not just SAYING they are obedient to Y’hovah and his Word, they are proving it by their lives and lifestyles – their conversation has changed for the glory of Y’hovah.

The ‘mighty signs and wonders’ Paul speaks of could have manifested either in him or in the gentiles – in fact, it is a mighty wonder that the gentiles understood the gospel when the very people through whom the Word was given to men, by and large, did not. This is similar to the men on the Emmaus road who did not understand the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua until he revealed it to them from ‘Moshe and all the prophets’. It MUST be understood that the gospel is IN the Tanakh, but it is not in the pashat, or literal level of understanding. It is in the Remez (hint) or Sod (deep, spiritual – the deep things of Y’hovah, 1Cor.2.10) level. Someone had obviously connected the dots for at least some of the rabbis in Rome, for the gentiles of the Way had been accepted into the synagogue as members of a sect of the Jews (**Acts 5.17, 15.5, 24.5, 26.5, 28.21-29**) – the gentiles were accepted as JEWS when Romans was written, though not without controversy.

Paul says that he’s fully preached the gospel of Messiah from Jerusalem all the way round to Illyricum. Where’s that? Illyricum is in what we would now call Bosnia/Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania. He’d almost made it to Italy on foot, and had it not been for wanting to hand-deliver the offering for the widows and orphans to Jerusalem by Shavuoth/Pentecost, he’d probably have made it – but not in chains with an appointment to meet Caesar.

vv.20-22 – Paul’s mission was to preach the gospel to those who had never heard it. When men get involved in preaching the gospel, they let their opinions get in the way; their opinions get mixed with the gospel. It’s only human, and it is the source of every heresy found within the church (heresy = denomination or sect, W1828). For that reason he wished to follow the scriptures and preach the gospel to folks who had never heard it before. There would be less for them to unlearn. The scripture he references in v.21 is Is.52.15:

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. (Isaiah 52:15 – remember Acts.28, where the elders correspond to ‘kings’ here)

The reference is to Messiah and that what could be known of him in Tanakh was not to be seen openly. Had it been, Satan would have known the whole plan and not have crucified Messiah (1Cor.2.8). Once Satan knew the plan, he put problems in the way of Paul and his ministry. **Q&C**

VV.23-26 – I think he was in Illyricum [whence he could possibly have seen Italy, like Sarah Palin can see Russia from her house] when he wrote this letter, and he is soon to be headed for Jerusalem with the offering for the widows and orphans. He says he has ‘no more place’ in these parts. I assume he means that either he’s covered the whole area or that the Spirit of Elohim is saying that he needs to go elsewhere. The Ruach leads us to go to certain places at certain times, and he gives us a burden for that place. Paul’s personal desire, it seems, is to go to Spain and to visit with the kahal in Rome on his journey thitherward.

Why would he want to go to Spain? Did you know that the cities of Malaga and Cadiz were Phoenician colonies founded for the purpose of protecting the Straits of Gibraltar from Roman incursion and from other incursions from the wider world? They were protecting their markets. Did you know that the Phoenician people were a mixture of Israelite and Lebanese (Tyre/Sidon) sailors who were doing bustling businesses outside the Straits in the wide world? They started co-operating during the reigns of David and Hiram, continued through Solomon’s reign and then continued with Jeroboam’s and Hiram’s descendants. Spain was populated by descendants of Israel [Sephardim] who had largely fallen away from Torah observance and who needed the gospel of the Renewed Covenant. Hence Paul’s desire to go and preach Yeshua to them.

But for the time being, he was headed to Jerusalem to ‘minister unto the saints’. Spain was where the diaspora were, brethren who were separated by as many as 1000 years from Torah observance, but J’lem was where the believers were, and he had an offering from the people of southeastern Europe for the poor there. He says in Acts 20.16 that he would get to J’lem for Pentecost (Feast of Shavuoth). It was customary to bring your tithes into the storehouse at Shavuoth/Pentecost and all the ‘presentation’ Feasts (Mal.3.15) for the poor, widows, orphans and Levites.

Vv.27-29 –The saints were poor because the persecution of the Way had begun. The poor of the Way began to get less and less support from the offerings of the rest of the Jews. So they had to find a ‘way’ to support themselves. The gentiles in Illyricum were pleased

to offer of their substance for the saints in J'lem. After all, Sha'ul had been sent by the kahal at Jerusalem to the gentiles and diaspora of Europe and had received great spiritual benefit thereby. So it is only right that those who received the spiritual blessing ought to share of their physical wealth in a blessing back to them.

Paul says that when he's 'sealed this fruit' unto them (do you see the reference to the harvest he's garnered from Illyricum?) he will take leave of J'lem for Spain, via Rome. I think that were it not for the offering he was bringing, he would just as soon not gone to J'lem at all. My brother-in-law is a missionary. He spent some 15 years in Brazil planting churches until his wife told him she couldn't deal with it anymore and they came home. But my brother-in-law's heart is one of a missionary, as was Paul's. He is thinking about going back to the field all the time. I'm sure it was the same with Rav Sha'ul.

"The fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Messiah" speaks of the relationship between the believer's faith and the destiny of Yisrael, as all believers are Yisrael (9.6) though 'they are not all Yisrael, which are of Israel.' **Q&C**

Vv.30-33 – Rav Sha'ul asks for very specific prayers from these he has instructed for the last 14 chapters, mainly on how to get along with each other, and he asks them ALL to pray for him. It's kind of an exercise in working together for a common cause. It's a trial run for them to see how well they CAN be a single community.

He has them pray with him that Yah will deliver him from the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, the ones for whom he was going to Damascus, with warrants for the arrest and delivery to 'justice' of people just like he himself was now. OH!, the irony! But that isn't ALL he wants them to pray for.

He asks them to also pray that the offering he's collected for the widows, orphans and Levites will be accepted by the BELIEVING Jews in Jerusalem, for the offering was being sent by people who had come to faith in Yeshua directly from their paganism. The Roman gentiles would know how the offering might be received by their experience with their own rejection by the Jews in their local synagogues in Rome. Those Jews in Rome who had learned from Paul in this letter would know how they had treated their brethren and would know how to pray for their brethren in Jerusalem. If the Roman Jews and gentiles would apply the lessons learned together, they would be a very effective group of spiritual warriors in Sha'ul's defense (and offense for Y'hovah).

If the Roman believers could do this and were successful, and the believers in Jerusalem would unite in Torah, they would be very effective in the battle with haSatan alongside the apostles and prophets of the Way. I can't think of anything that would have made Rav Sha'ul happier than to present a united front against the paganism of the empire. He tells us a bit of his plan when he tells the Romans that he was going to Spain. His idea, I think was to set up 3 bases of operations against the enemy at both ends and in the middle of the Mediterranean world, Jerusalem, either Malaga or Cadiz, Spain and Rome.

In light of the theme of the book, which I contend is the unity of the Jews and gentile believers in Rome, the final sentence is best understood – “Now the Elohim of peace *be* with you all.” Unity = peace. When these believers work together for a common purpose in Messiah, they will learn that Y’hovah is one experientially. And that is the central theme of the Bible, the Shema of Deut.6.4 – that Y’hovah is one and so should believers be. **Q&C**

Fulfilling Torah Ministries

Romans 16

Edit Chapter 16 is full of greetings (vv.1-16, 21-24) and instructions about how to deal with believers who might visit or pass through the area, and also some instructions on how to deal with less savory folks masquerading as believers.

Vv.1-16 - Beginning with Phebe (grk. 5402, *phoibay* – shine or make manifest, from 5457 *phos* from which we get the English words phosphorous, photo, photon, etc.), Paul gives special instructions on how to act with servants of Yah passing through. He uses this opportunity to send a letter of introduction for other laborers in the gospel. Phebe must have been one who really stood out, like the stars on a dark night. Her name means to shine and Paul addresses her first among all that he introduces or greets. I think she must have been a great witness to Y'hovah Yeshua and his gospel of Peace. That she was a trusted colleague is very evident, and she probably is the messenger who carried the letter to the Roman kahal.

Sha'ul says to receive Phoebe 'as becometh saints'. Do you suppose he means they should treat her as is becoming a saint of her stature, or that they should treat her as saints would treat her? I think more the latter than the former, for I don't think a saint would expect to be treated differently than anyone else, supposing humility to be one marker of a 'saint'. How ought a saint to deal with another? Paul gets kind of specific for Phebe – help her in whatever business she has, for she has been one who succors other saints when they've needed comfort and help. The greek word translated becometh = St.516, *axios* – meaning deserving, suitable and translated elsewhere as 'due reward, meet, worthy' (like, 'it's axiomatic' or self-evident). The idea is to repay her in kind for the assistance she's given to other saints of Yah. Basically, treat her as you would be treated. Paul is saying that helping her will repay itself many times among the kahal in both employment and in her giving to the help of saints.

Next he goes to Priscilla and Aquilla, his fellow-laborers who had somehow laid down their own lives to save his. There is no mention of this incident in the Acts, but Paul mentions it here. These 2 are seen in lots of places spreading the gospel of Peace with Y'hovah, which shows itself as peace between Jewish and gentile believers. Do you suppose that maybe P&A were in Damascus when Sha'ul went there warrant in hand to arrest and bring to J'lem for trial any follower of the Way he found there. Do you think perhaps they were persuaded towards the Way by Paul's preaching Messiah to the Jews at Damascus' synagogue? It is a possibility, isn't it? Perhaps they were the un-named disciples who let him down in the basket from their apartment on the city wall (Acts 9.25)? When they ostensibly meet in Acts 18, it sure seems like they're old chums. Not only that, but an assembly of the Way in Rome is in their home. This might be the place where the believers would meet for oneg and midrash 'after the Sabbath' on the evening of 1st day of the week (after Shabbat's sundown, the 'dark' part of the 1st day).

Next he greets Epaenetus, who was the first gentile saved in Achaia, which is the area in the southern part of the Greek peninsula including Athens, crossing the Peloponnesus to the Spartan peninsula. Next is Mary (Miriam), "who 'worked much work' on us." That is

interesting to me. It doesn't say where or why, but Mary did a LOT of stuff for Paul and his entourage somewhere. Andronicus and Junia are Sha'ul's cousins (probably) and were believers before he was and known to the leadership in J'lem, probably due to their having been in 'slam' with him. Andronicus' name means 'man conquered', and I assume that means that he had 'overcome.'

In all, he greeted 27 believers and the entire believing group in 2 other houses – possibly other kehalim in Rome. Some names whose meanings are of note include: Aristobolos, meaning 'best advice', he must have counseled Paul on a matter, and his home was probably a meeting place for the Way in Rome; Tryphena (5170) and Tryphosa (5173) may have been sisters, because their names have the same root, *truphe* (Str.5172), which carries the idea of effeminacy or luxury. Since both names have a feminine ending, I assume they are not effeminate men. Rufus is a Roman whose mother Paul claims as his own. Since Paul was also a Roman citizen, this may have actually been his brother.

Asyncritus' name means 'incomparable', and was probably the host of another kahal of the Way; Phlegos' means 'blazing'; Hermas and Hermes each have the same root, which is the name of the messenger of the Greek gods; Patrobas means (probably) father of life.

Philologus' name means 'lover of the Word', and he seems also to have hosted a kahal. Julia was probably his wife. Paul greets the 'saints' meeting at Phil's. Saints = *hagios* – sacred (physically pure, morally blameless or ceremonially consecrated). So, you saints are all just sinners who are blameless and consecrated before Y'hovah.

I think when he says to greet one another with an holy kiss, he is talking about maintaining unity between the individual home fellowships. The root word behind kiss = *phileo*, friendship love. **Q&C**

Vv.17-18 – Paul says to make note of and avoid those who cause divisions (like in 14.1ff) with bad doctrines contrary to those they have learned. Where did they learn these good doctrines? Not Sha'ul, who had never been to Rome, though some of the folks there had met him and been taught by him. But most of the believers there had only heard sound doctrine from the rabbis in the synagogues, or been taught by these who had been taught by Paul. The 2 sources were not ALWAYS at odds and, for the most part, were in agreement on anything taught in Tanakh. It wasn't what scripture taught that might cause division, but what men SAID scripture taught – traditions of men. Such stuff as Acts.11:

² And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, ³ Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

I want anyone to show me a Torah commandment NOT to go to an uncircumcised gentile's house and eat biblically clean food prepared by the gentile. They were arguing over the kosher laws [the word 'kosher' doesn't exist in scripture, BTW]. Kosher is not the standard of what Y'hovah commands us to eat or not to eat – biblically clean is (basically - Lev.11). Kosher laws MAY make our food healthier to eat than simple clean food, but it is NOT commanded. For example, in Gen.18, Y'hovah and 2 angels visit Avraham in the plains of Mamre. Avi runs inside to tell Sarah to make some cakes (unleavened) of bread, while he runs out to the field and gets a young man to prepare the fatted calf to roast and he milks the cow or goat. Then he takes all these ingredients and

serves them at the same time to Y'hovah and his messengers. This is NOT a kosher meal, because kosher doesn't allow flesh and any milk product to be served together. They make this oral law as an application of

The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of Y'hovah thy Elohim. **Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk.** (Exodus 23:19, 34:28, Dt.14:21)

So the rabbis see this as saying to not eat flesh and cheese together, but Avraham served Y'hovah and the messengers your basic cheeseburger. There must, therefore, be nothing sinful in eating a cheeseburger, right? Now, enzymes for breaking down flesh and for milk and for carbohydrates are different and may counteract each other, but there is nothing sinful in eating them together. There is also nothing sinful in eating the food Y'hovah allows us to eat simply because it was prepared by one who is uncircumcised. These are man-made restrictions on halacha that had mistakenly taken on the authority of scripture. In Acts 11, Peter addressed the party of the circumcision on the spot and put them in their place. This argument wasn't EVER fully decided by all parties involved, and was a point of contention throughout the rest of the book of Acts.

When Paul says they serve their own belly, he isn't saying they eat burgers without cheese. He's saying they are fulfilling the lust of their flesh. Lust is not just sexual, but can be over anything you prize highly – James deals with this in ch.4 of his letter, whose context is division in the body of Moshiah. ALL division in the body comes from lust for power or approbation, we want to control others or be approved by those in control. What we need to be is controlled by the Ruach and approved by him. These who serve their belly gain approbation by nice sounding words and power by their silver tongues. But the wise aren't fooled by their words. The wise weigh their words against their lives.

Q&C

Vv.19-24 -In v.19, it looks like the Romans have not succumbed to the 'great swelling words of vanity' (2Pe.2:18). That phrase means they sound good, but mean nothing and are useless – Robert Shueller and Joel Osteen come to mind (Talk about a photographer, armed only with his camera, getting between a mama grizzly and her cub! I heard Joel Osteen trying to exegete scripture the other day). Paul commends the Romans for being wise enough to disregard these empty vessels, whom I must assume are the CCers, those who would require gentile CC to gain entry to the synagogue and the feasts. He then told them that he would have them wise toward Torah and simple toward evil. 'Wise' is from Str.#4680, *sophos*, and means 'clear'. He wants them to understand Torah, to clearly see the goodness of Y'hovah's word. But he also wants them to be 'simple' *akeraios* towards evil. *Akeraios* means 'unmixed', or a total lack of confusion. He wants them to be so clear towards Torah that they immediately recognize any counterfeit. *Akeraios* is a different word than that which is translated 'simple' in v.18. That word is *akakos*, no mixture. *Kakos* is the root that means 'evil' by a mixture. We transliterate and jam together two Greek words to create the English word 'cacophony' which means confusing sounds. One person singing off key is not pleasant to hear, but an entire choir or orchestra that are all off key differently is terrible to hear. If they are wise toward the clear word of Y'hovah and unmixed with traditions of men (specifically, the oral law fences) in their understanding of it, he is certain they will gain the victory over haSatan who is about to test them (v.20). They will 'bruise Satan under your feet' shortly. Paul's

phrasing was meant to put them in mind of the proto-evangelion, the first mention of the gospel in Gen.3.15

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

Paul blessed the kahal in Rome with nearly identical words twice, in vv.20 and 24. In between, he proffers greetings from those who are with him in Corinth, including Timothy, who is Paul's fellow laborer there, and Tertius his amanuensis, as well as 3 of his cousins, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. **Q&C**

Vv.25 – Rav Sha'ul speaks of what he called 'my gospel' once again. He mentioned it in 2.16 (**Error! Reference source not found.**see bookmark - 'my gospel'; also seen in 2Tim.2.8). This is, quite simply the gospel as Paul preached it: 1) those who sin not knowing Torah will die in their sins, 2) those who sin knowing Torah will be judged according to Torah, 3) Elohim, the aspect of the Almighty that judges all men according to his righteousness and severity (11.22), will be the judge through Master Y'hovah, Yeshua HaMoshiach.

What is the 'mystery' (see bookmark – 'mystery') to which Sha'ul refers? He only references one mystery in Romans, in 11.25. That Master Y'hovah, Yeshua haMoshiach would come first as ben Yoseph to call out the children of Israel from the nations of gentiles to whom they'd been dispersed and exiled – THAT is the 'mystery' to which Paul referred. The pre-incarnation rabbis (and quite a few since then) understood about Moshiach ben Yoseph, but very few put Yeshua together with him. He was, after all, of the house and lineage of David and this was well known (and therefore, NOT a mystery).

This 'mystery' was made manifest by the death and resurrection of Yeshua and his subsequent revelation of it to his talmidim, which included Rav Sha'ul. That Paul, whom I believe was being groomed to be the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem under the tutelage of Gamaliel (which also explains the absolute HATRED of Sha'ul in Jerusalem after his awakening on the Damascus road), understood this easier than the other talmidim is, therefore, not surprising. That those of us, including Kefa, who have not had his training would find his writings hard to comprehend is also not surprising.

15 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Master *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; **16** As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2Pe.3.15-16)

Please note that Paul wrote letters to the same audience to whom Kefa wrote, and that 'unlearned and unstable' men had done exactly the same thing to Sha'ul's writings as they had to Tanakh. **Q&C**

Paul says that the 'mystery' was told in the writings of the prophets. Here are just a few examples:

The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. (Isaiah 11:13)

For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto Y'hovah Eloheanu. (Jeremiah 31:6)

16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these? 19 Say unto them, Thus saith Adonai Y'hovah; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. 20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21 And say unto them, Thus saith Adonai Y'hovah; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their Elohim. 24 And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever. (Ezek.37.16-25)

Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. (Hosea 7:8)

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. (Zechariah 9:13)

And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in Y'hovah.

(Zechariah 10:7)

Yeshua therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. (John 11:54)

The 'mystery' is revealed according to Torah and made known to EVERY nation so they can obey in faith (cf. 'The Jewish View of Faith' in the introduction's historical context on pg.7).

To Elohim only wise, *be* glory through Yeshua haMosiach l'olam va'ed. Amen. Q&C

This ends my study of Romans, which is not meant to be a full treatment of what Sha'ul was teaching, but to be food for thought and discussion in a weekly/bi-weekly Bible Study. I sincerely hope that it has been as much a blessing to the reader/hearer as it has been to the author.

Y'vorechecha Y'hovah v'yishmorecha
Ya'er Y'hovah panav'lecha v'yichunecha
Y'sah Y'hovah panav'lecha v'Y'sem lecha Shalom.

(Num.6.24-27)

B'Shem Yeshua Moshiyenu, Sar Shalom.

¹ This historical background is originally found on the Yashanet website's Romans study. It can be found at www.yashanet.com/studies/romstudy/index.htm Used by permission.

² When we see an '*i think*' in italics it means the author is engaging in speculation or an educated guess. He COULD be wrong But he DOUBTS it!

³ Partial definition of Belial from Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, ©1828, hereinafter W1828.

⁴ W1828, 1st definition, 1st clause.

⁵ Mas. Berachot 33b

⁶ Ben Mordechai, Galatians, 2005 Millennium 7000, pg.67

⁷ As cited in, The Bahir: Translation, Introduction and Commentary, by Aryeh Kaplan, Samuel Weiser Inc., York Beach, Maine, 1979, p. 156

⁸ W1828, 2nd definition

⁹ W1828, 2nd def., 2nd clause.

¹⁰ Yashanet.com Romans study on Rom.5.20

¹¹ Yashanet.com Romans study, ch.6 intro.

¹² Yashanet.com Romans study, ch.6.4, commentary

¹³ OSN = my personal shorthand for 'Old Sin Nature'. Likewise, NN = New Nature. These correspond to the yetzer hara, or evil inclination, and the yetzer tov, or the good inclination.

¹⁴ Pg.51, paragraph 4, above- dealing w/8.3-6.

¹⁵ Pg.62, top of page

¹⁶ Aramaic English New Testament, ©2008 Andrew Gabriel Roth, Netzari Press, Jerusalem, Israel, used by permission

¹⁷ Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 2003; reprinted from Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, Massachusetts ©1906.

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