Introduction

Since God is the eternal, sovereign, self-existent Creator of all things, He can use and dispose of everything that exists as He pleases. To say that God is sovereign is to say that God rules over His creation; that is to say, He is not only the source of all things, He is the governing authority of all things. He is simply GOD, VERY GOD. As the apostle Paul said, “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things” (Rom 11:36). All things exist for “God’s sake” — why such logic is difficult for some believers to accept is somewhat puzzling, because the greatest philosophers of history have come to the same conclusion as Scripture. It is hard to understand how one can ultimately conclude that the Eternal Creator is not sovereign — to do so is to either not understand that God is the only Eternal Reality in the universe, or to make Him less than He really is (which all of us do in varying degrees, because none of us, as finite creatures, have the capacity to comprehend infinite, eternal realities). Everything that came into being through Him is “temporal” — the difference between that which is temporal and that which is eternal is “incomprehensibly infinitesimal,” i.e., it is impossible to compare the two, because they are infinitesimally different. Fortunately, the God of creation is absolutely holy, pure and righteous; so everything He does is good and right and perfect, never wrong, impure or unjust. Because God is infinitely wise (omniscient), infinitely powerful (omnipotent) and infinitely good (perfectly loving), we cannot accuse Him of being unfair in His dealings with humanity; therefore we should not be repelled by or afraid of this truth; rather, we should rejoice in it and render to Him our undivided worship. In His sovereignty, God created everything with a glorious purpose in mind — nothing made was ever made for no reason; though our finite minds cannot fully comprehend it (cf. Is 14:24; 46:9-10; 55:11; Jer 18:1-12; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:5, 11).

How can God choose individuals to belong to Himself, and at the same time make a bona fide offer of salvation to all people everywhere? How can we reconcile these two truths? The fact is that we can’t — to the human mind these two suppositions are in conflict. But the Bible teaches both doctrines, so we need to believe them, content to know that the difficulty lies in our minds and not with God. These twin truths are like two parallel lines that meet only in infinity… since we are finite creatures we are completely incapable of reconciling them. Some try to reconcile sovereign election and human responsibility by saying that God foreknew who would trust the Savior and that those are the ones whom He elected to be saved (cf. Rom 8:29; 1 Pet 1:2); but this overlooks the fact that God’s foreknowledge is determinative — it is not just that He knows in advance who will trust the Savior, but that He predetermines this result by drawing certain individuals to Himself (Jn 6:44). God has planned the end from the beginning (cf. Is 46:9-11; Prv 19:21; Is 14:24; 22:11; 25:1; 40:8; Eph 1:11; Rev 21:6; 22:13); that is simply what it means to be the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent God of creation. It is important to understand that though God chooses some men to be saved, He never chooses anyone to be damned; that is, the Bible does not teach divine reprobation (that’s the terminology theologians use). Again, since these truths are infinite and eternal, and our minds are finite and temporal, these two teachings are simply not reconcilable in the human mind — it would be akin to putting all of the water in all the oceans of the world into a tiny thimble; such a reality is simply not possible.
The fact is the entire human race was doomed to destruction by its own sin, and not by any arbitrary decree of God. If God allowed everyone to go to hell (which He could justly do), people would be getting exactly what they deserve (Rom 3:10-12). The question is, “Does the sovereign God of creation have a right to select a handful of otherwise-doomed people (completely sinful) to be a bride for His Son?” The answer, of course, is that He does. So what it ultimately boils down to is this — if people are lost it is because of their own sin and rebellion; conversely, if people are saved it is because of the sovereign, electing grace of God. To the man who is saved, the subject of God’s sovereign choice should be the cause of unceasing wonder, because the believer looks around and sees people with better character than his, better personalities than his, and better dispositions than his, and asks, “Why did God choose me?” Obviously you and I didn’t “merit” being chosen. Perhaps the following metaphor is helpful here — suppose there is a “prison” somewhere in the universe that contains over five million people, all of whom are guilty of cold-blooded murder… now suppose that the Supreme Commander of the Universe decides to arbitrarily set one dozen of these inmates free, and you just happen to be one of the fortunate few who are set free. Will you complain that others should also have been chosen? or will you simply marvel at the fact that you were chosen? As far as those who were not chosen, will they see the fact that your being chosen was “unfair” when “who you were” had absolutely nothing to do with your being chosen? Would your response throughout your incarceration not have been like that of the thief on the cross who said to the other thief, “Are we not receiving what we deserve for our deeds?” (Lk 23:41). Do you actually think there will be people in hell thinking that they were treated unjustly? that they were undeservingly sentenced to hell? Have you not read what Paul wrote to the Philippians, “that one day every knee shall bow from all eternity and confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father?” (Phil 2:10-11). In the final analysis, no one will enter into eternity without fully concurring with the truth: every unbeliever will receive his just punishment — there will be no need whatsoever for an “appeals court.” For those of you who are the chosen of God, carefully reflect upon “the price that was paid” by the Supreme Commander of the Universe to set you free; because of His love for you, and His desire to make you His own child, He suffered His own Son to die a horrible death of crucifixion… such love is beyond human comprehension. With that in mind, maybe the words of Charles Wesley’s hymn, “Amazing Love! How can it be that Thou My God shouldst die for me?” will be more meaningful to you. None of us will walk worthy into heaven because of anything we did… thus all praise and glory will go to God and the Lord Jesus. No doubt our response will be like that of the twenty-four elders (redeemed sinners) of Revelation — after they confess the truth of God’s holy deeds, “they will fall down before Him and worship Him, and relinquish their crowns of honor by casting them at the feet of Him who alone is ‘worthy’ of glory and honor and power” (Rev 4:10; cf. Ps 33:6-9; Ps 136:1-26).… we too will unquestionably cast our crowns at His feet, fully acknowledging our complete unworthiness to be so privileged and honored to forever serve Him and stand in His presence — “How Can It Be?” Can you even imagine God “rewarding you” for some work you did here in this life? Will you not feel shamefully humble because you had not surrendered “everything to Him” in this life, rather than the pettily little things that you did? How can it be that God will actually say to us when we stand before Him in glory, “Well done thy good and faithful servant” (Mt 25:21ff)? Beloved, let God be GOD, and stop questioning the integrity of His ways and trying to reconcile those things which are simply beyond us; His love and His ways are incomprehensible (cf. Is 55:8-9; Rev 4:11; 5:12; 19:1, 5-6).

There are several dangers to be avoided in connection with this subject. There is the danger of not believing that God in His sovereignty has chosen you (if you are indeed a believer); to the degree that you struggle with believing this, to that degree will you continually battle with doubt and the need to prove yourself to God. There is also the danger to somehow think that in some way
you were responsible for your salvation (by being good, or making promises, etc.); again, such a perspective will result in your struggling with certainty of faith and insisting on proving yourself to God. Likewise there is the danger of denying any responsibility at all in the process of salvation — you must turn from your sin (repentance begins with the full acknowledgement of one’s sinfulness) and believe in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross for you (1 Pet 2:24) — without faith in Christ it is not possible to please God (Heb 11:6). Remember, we walk by faith, not by sight (1 Cor 5:7); faith comes by listening to and studying God’s Word (Rom 10:17). Only by believing God’s inerrant Word can we hold these doctrines in their proper biblical balance.

In Chapters 9-11 we hear Paul’s answer to the Jew who asks, “Does the gospel, by promising salvation to the Gentiles as well as Jews, mean that God has broken His promises to His earthly people, the Jews?” Paul’s answer covers Israel’s past (chp 9), present (chp 10), and its future (chp 11). These three chapters contain a great emphasize on divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Romans 9 is one of the key passages in the Bible on the sovereign election of God; and Romans 10, with equal vigor, balances that truth with the responsibility of man. In these three chapters, Paul explains God’s future plans for the Jews (i.e., the Israelites). God had guided and instructed the Jews throughout their history, but when their Messiah came into the world most Jews refused to receive Him. Due to the fact that Paul was also a Jew, he felt great pain in his spirit in watching his own people reject Him. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, so he explains how God’s plan for the Jews also agreed with His plan for the Gentiles.

Since chapter 12 easily follows chapters 1-8, chapters 9-11 may seem like an interruption, but they don’t interrupt Paul’s thought — he had explained the gospel in chapters 1-8, and now in chapters 9-11 he discusses why his own people (the Jews) did not accept the salvation of the gospel. Obviously Paul wanted to explain the situation to the Jewish and Gentile believers who comprised the church in Rome. Both Jewish and Gentile Christians may have had wrong ideas about each other’s importance to God, so he felt the need to explain it.

Following is a verse by verse commentary on Romans 9-11… when quoting the biblical text, you’ll notice some words are in “italics” (read the text below on Rom 9:1-5) — the reason for this is that the italicized words in the New Testament language of Greek are “emphatic;” therefore, be sure to give “extra emphasis” to them in the various contexts in which they are found. I have also “Capitalized” every pronoun that refers to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit — which should help the reader interpret the passage correctly. It should be noted, this study utilizes the New American Standard “text.” Furthermore, because this is a verse-by-verse expositional study of Romans, this is not material you want to speed read or casually browse over — it requires that you carefully and prayerfully reflect upon the text and the corresponding commentary. You may need to read some sections more than once.

CHAPTER 9 — Israel’s Past (9:1-33)

God’s Blessings for the Jews (9:1-5)

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have a great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen
according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (Don’t forget, all “italicized” words are emphatic!)

Verse 1 – Paul wants his readers to understand that he is truly sincere, so he makes three statements that will help persuade them. He is speaking the truth because Christ is in him. He is not lying. Though we cannot always trust the human conscience, Paul has the Holy Spirit as a witness. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (cf. Jn 15:26; 16:13).

Verses 2-3 – Paul is so sad when he thinks about his fellow-countrymen, because they have rejected their Messiah. Perhaps he remembered what Moses prayed — the Israelites had sinned when they wor-hipped a gold calf… Moses thought that God might not forgive the Israelites, so he asked God to punish him instead, to remove his name from the book of life (Ex 32:32). Paul, like Moses, was willing to suffer God’s punishment for their sake as well. If possible, Paul would be willing to suffer their punishment so that they could receive God’s salvation — this statement shows how deeply Paul wanted the Jews to trust Christ. His affection for them was so great that he did not even care about himself, but appealed to God on their behalf. He would submit to be treated as accursed & disgraced, and even for a time experience the deepest horror and distress, if he could rescue his people from the destruction that was about to come upon them for their obstinate unbelief. To be insensible to the eternal condition of our fellow-creatures, is contrary both to the love required by the law, and the mercy of the gospel. In and through it all, Paul was well aware that nothing could separate him from God’s love (Rom 8:38). He knew the Jewish people had to trust Christ in order to receive God’s salvation. This is the answer that God gave to Moses: “I will remove from My book the name of the person who has sinned against Me” (Ex 32:33). Though our prayers may be powerful, they do not change the principles of how God operates. His mercy is great, but He will only save people when they put their trust in Him.

Verses 4-5 – Paul makes a list of the special ways that God has shown kindness to the Jews:

- He had adopted them as His sons — “Israel is my first born son” (Ex 4:22; cf. Hos 11:1).
- The “Shekinah Glory” was the evidence that God was present with His people. It descended on the tent that the Israelites used for worship in the desert (Ex 40:34), as well as the temple that Solomon built (1 Kg 8:10-11). In the most holy place in the temple, God’s glory was over the ark.
- The main covenant that Paul refers to is the covenant with Abraham. God made a covenant with him that he would have a son and many descendants (Gen 17:4-19)… would give them the country called Israel… and would show His kindness to all nations through Abraham and his descendants. When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, He made an agreement with Moses and the Israelites (Ex 24:8)… and later promised King David that He would establish his royal family forever (Ps 89:34ff).
- The Law — God had told His people how to obey him.
- The worship in the temple — the book of Leviticus gives all the rules for the priests and for the ceremonies. When Paul wrote to the Romans, the Jews were still using the temple to offer sacrifices.
- The promises — God promised Abraham that by one of his descendants He would show kindness to all the families on earth (Gen 12:3), and promised a King from the line of David (Is 9:6-7).
- Paul speaks of “the fathers” — i.e., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and the twelve sons of Jacob.
- Christ was born a Jew… of the tribe of Judah… and of the lineage of David (Mt 1:1-3; Jn 7:42).
God’s Choice (9:6-13)

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; 7 neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “through Isaac your descendants will be named.” 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as the descendants. 9 For this is a word of promise: “At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only this, but there was Rebecca also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,

Verses 6-9 – If God made promises to Israel as His chosen people, how can this be squared with Israel’s present rejection, and with the Gentiles being brought into the place of blessing? Paul insists that this does not indicate any breach of promise on God’s part — just because a person is born into the nation of Israel does not mean that he is an heir to the promises; it is not physical descent that counts, but spiritual descent that counts (i.e., those who exercise faith in God as Abraham did). So a physical descendant of Abraham might not be a real Jew in the spiritual sense — the real descendants of Abraham are those who believe God’s promises, as Paul explained in Romans chapter four (cf. 4:13-16).

Verses 10-13 – Paul gives a second example of God’s choice. Isaac’s wife Rebecca gave birth to two babies at the same time, Jacob & Esau. Before they were born, God said that the older son (Esau) would serve the younger son (Jacob). God’s choice made no reference whatsoever to their character; He made His choice before they were born, before they could act in good or bad ways. Esau’s descendants were called the Edomites (or Edom), and Jacob’s descendants were called Israelites (of Israel). The Edomites served Israel at various times during her history (cf. 2 Sam 8:13-14). The words from Malachi which refer to Israel and Esau, emphasize God’s choice — in Hebrew, the expression “I have hated Esau” (Mal 1:1-3) literally means, “I have no relationship with Esau;” whereas God did have relationship with Jacob. So just as Jacob’s heavenly Father “loved him,” so Jacob had “filial love for His heavenly Father” — such love, however, did not exist with Esau. The aforementioned shows that Jacob was the object of God’s fatherly love from all eternity, whereas Esau was not. Throughout his writings, Paul often emphasises that nobody can earn salvation by their own efforts; he repeats this principle in verse 12. Our salvation depends completely on God’s kindness; it is a free gift (Eph 2:8-9) — we can either accept that gift or refuse that gift.

God’s Right to Act as He Chooses (9:14-24)

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God is there? May it never be. 15 For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 So then it does not on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who shows mercy. 17 For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.” 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19 You will say to me then, “Why does He find fault? For who resists His will?” 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use,
another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for His glory, 24 even us, whom He has called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Verses 14-16 – God does not choose a person because of his ancestors, or because of his deeds. Paul stresses the fact that God is not unfair — He is both righteous and perfect — God told Moses that He is kind to people, that He acts with mercy and love when He deals with people (Ex 33:19). He does not deal with them as they deserve; rather, He shows His love to them as He chooses.

Verses 17-18 – The Israelites used to be slaves in Egypt — the Pharaoh (ruler of Egypt) continuously refused to let the Israelites go. God sent Moses as a prophet to Pharaoh, to tell him to free them, but still Pharaoh refused. He was unwilling to change his decision. Pharaoh made his heart hard against Moses and the Israelites. In the end, God let his heart grow increasingly hard. In verse 17, Paul refers to Exodus 9:16. God used the situation with Pharaoh for His own purposes… He overcame Pharaoh’s strong army, and freed His people. The news of what God had done spread throughout the entire region. Scripture contains a number of passages that warn people not to have the same attitude that Pharaoh had. Isaiah knew that the hearts of unbelievers would become hard (Is 6:9-10). Jesus used the very words of Isaiah when the Jews refused to believe in Him (Jn 12:39-40). God is not being unfair when he makes a person’s heart grow increasingly hard, because it is the result of their own sinfulness.

Verse 19 – Paul’s insistence on God’s right to do what He pleases raises the objection that, if that is so, ‘How can He find fault with anyone, since no one has successfully resisted His will?’ To the objector, man is a helpless pawn on the divine chessboard; nothing he can do or say will change his fate! Paul goes on to show that such thinking is seriously wrong.

Verse 20 – Paul reminds people that God is their Creator. Finite man, loaded down with sin, ignorance, and weakness, is no position to talk back to God, or question the wisdom or justice of His ways. Paul is not talking about people who are sincere in asking questions because they want to know the truth; he is talking about people who have no desire to obey God — they are simply looking for an excuse to oppose God’s authority. It becomes man to submit to Him, not to reply against Him.

Verse 21 – Paul uses Isaiah’s illustration of the potter and the clay to vindicate the sovereignty of God — the potter picks up a handful of clay, put it on his wheel, and fashions a clay pot from it, as is his right (cf. Is 29:16; 45:9). Paul says, some pots may be beautiful, other pots may be ordinary… some pots are made for honourable use, and other pots for unclean use. In short, God has the right to deal with people as He chooses, and He is not obligated to explain to anyone what or why He does what He does. People should respect God. Since when does that which is created have a right to question the One who creates it? In truth, God’s decisions are always right, and His judgements are always perfect. The amazing this is that we stubbornly argue to the contrary in our minds because of our fallen, diabolical natures. Remember, God is not arbitrarily dooming anyone to hell — they are doomed by their own wilfulness and unbelief.

Verses 22-24 – Paul pictures God as facing a seeming conflict of interest — on the one hand He wants to show His wrath and exhibit His power in punishing sin… on the other hand He wants to bear patiently with vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. He has chosen to delay judgement, and give men more time to repent. Vessels of wrath are prepared for destruction by their own sin and rebellion, not because of some arbitrary decree of God. Conversely, God is preparing for glory the people who have received His mercy. There is no unrighteousness in any of God’s Divine dispensations — sinners fit themselves for hell… it is
God who prepares saints for heaven. These people (be they Jews or Gentiles) will see God’s glory, and will share it themselves (Rom 8:17-18).

The Creator’s Plans (9:25-33)

25 And He says also in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people’ and her who was not beloved, ‘Beloved.’” 26 And it shall be in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people.’ there they shall be called sons of the living God.” 27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; 28 for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly.” 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a posterity, we would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.” 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by the works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

Verses 25-26 – Paul quotes two verses from Hosea to show that the call of the Gentiles should not have come as a surprise to the Jews. The prophet Hosea had a wife named “Gomer” who was not loyal to him; he did not believe he was the father of her second and third children, so he named the second child Lo-ruhamah, whose name means “unpitied” — this signified that Israel would no longer be pitied but would be sent into captivity (by the Assyrians)... the third child he named Lo-ammi, which means “not my people” — this signified that God no longer recognized Israel as His own. So these children were signs that Israel had not been faithful to God, though there would come a time when God again would be able to call Israel “My people.” When that time would come, God would show real love to them again (cf. Hos 1:6, 8-9; 2:23). Paul saw Hosea’s words as a prophecy that the Gentiles would also be people whom God loved. Paul saw that this was already happening by means of his own work among the Gentiles.

Verses 27-29 – In these three verses, Paul discusses the rejection of all but a remnant of Israel. Isaiah predicted that only a small minority of the children of Israel would be saved, even though the nation might grow to be quite large (Is 10:22). God has promised many wonderful things to the Jews, and He will do all the things He has promised, but that will only happen after terrible troubles are experienced throughout the whole earth. Few people will remain then to receive the benefit of God’s promise (Zech 13:8-9). Isaiah wrote this at the time when an army from Assyria was attacking Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel)... because of their sin — God was using Assyria to punish the people in Israel... only a few of them would remain (cf. Is 10:22-23). When God destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, their punishment was total; everybody from those cities died except Lot and his two daughters. Their punishment was final, so the people from Sodom and Gomorrah have no descendants. However, God would not deal with the Israelites in the same manner. Though their evil deeds had become very severe at the time of Isaiah, and the prophet warned them that they would suffer terrible punishment, God still had a plan for them, so their punishment would not be total or final. They would have descendants (Is 1:9). Isaiah gave his son the name, Shearjashub (Is 7:3), meaning “those who remain will return.” The name was a sign to the king and to the people — if they trusted God, some Jews would remain free to return to their country. The apostle Paul saw Isaiah’s words as a prophecy that many Jews would not trust God; only a few would accept His Son and avoid judgement... yet by them, God would ultimately carry out His promise to save the Jews. It
is a wonder of Divine power and mercy that there are any saved — for even those left to be a seed, if God had dealt with them according to their sins, would perish with the rest. It is only by grace whereby any of us are saved.

Verses 30-31 – What is the conclusion of all this as far as this present Church Age is concerned? Paul goes on to contrast Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles were not looking for a way to have a right relationship with God, but when they discovered the gospel, they accepted it by faith… by contrast, most Jews thought that they could earn their way to heaven, they thought that God would accept them because of their good deeds — they expected justification by observing the precepts and ceremonies of the law of Moses. But because perfection was simply not within their reach, they could never receive a right relationship with God. They needed to accept the gospel by faith, as the Gentiles were doing. The gospel is for everyone, both Jews and Gentiles; nobody can earn salvation by means of their own efforts.

Verses 32-33 – Most Jews simply refused to believe that justification (being made righteous) is by faith in Christ, but went on stubbornly trying to work out their own righteousness by personal merit — they stumbled over the stumbling stone (The Messiah of God). Paul says the message about the cross was like a stone (1 Cor 1:23). A large stone can be useful… it can become a strong base for a building (Is 28:16; Ps 118: 22)… but such a stone is not useful to a person who does not recognize its value; they simply trip over it (Is 8:14). Jesus used these words about Himself (Mt 21:42; also cf. 1 Pet 2:4-8). The person of humble mind believes the message about the cross of Christ and benefits from it, but the proud mind refuses to believe it. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul said, “The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness (emphatic!), but to those who are being saved it is the power of God (emphatic!)” (1 Cor 1:18) — he then goes on to say that “God was well-pleased (emphatic!) through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1:21)… and that “God has chosen the foolish things (emphatic!) of the world to shame the wise” (1:27).

CHAPTER 10 — Israel’s Present (10:1-21)

The Law and Faith in Christ (10:1-13)

1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 2 I bear them witness that they have a zeal of God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 of ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; 10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 The scripture says, “Whosoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; 13 for “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”
Verses 1-2 – Paul repeats his great desire that his own people would accept their Messiah. He knows how much the Jews wanted to serve God from his own experience, for he himself was a Pharisee (a strict Jew). At that time, Paul thought that the Christians were wrong about God. So Paul, eager to please God, arrested many Christians (Phil 3:6). But he learned an important lesson — it is not good to be eager and zealous if one does not have knowledge (Prv 19:2). The Jews built on a false foundation, and refused to come to Christ for free salvation by faith; countless numbers in every age do the same in various ways.

Verses 3-4 – The Jews were trying to please God, but they did not know how. They thought that they had to obey all of God’s laws, and only then would they become righteous before God. They were ignorant of the fact that God imputes righteousness on the principle of faith and not works; a man can no more achieve righteousness by means of his own efforts than a blind man can make himself see. Only by believing in Christ can one become righteous. The purpose of God’s law is to reveal sin and show people that they need Christ (Gal 3:24; cf. Rom 8:3); it was given to lead men to Christ; it wasn’t given to save men. Trying to win God’s favor by our own efforts is simply not possible, because one cannot obey the Law perfectly. The Law came to an end in Christ; it is no more a rule of life than it is a means of righteousness … hence we need the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.

Verse 5 – Moses said, “Only a man who keeps God’s law will live by it” (Lev 18:5). He was explaining that people had to obey God’s law completely in order to have a right relationship with Him through the Law. Apart from Christ himself, no one has ever fulfilled the law — Christ must fulfill the law in us; we cannot fulfill it by our own efforts.

Verses 6-7 – People receive a right relationship with God by faith in Christ, and the truth of Christ is not difficult to find. Paul thinks about Moses’ words (Deut 30:12-14) — people do not have to search for it in heaven or in the depths of the sea. There is no need to search for Christ — He has already come down from heaven as a man, and has risen from dead, so there is no need to look for Him in the grave.

Verses 8-11 – The message that the apostles preached was about trusting in Christ and His resurrection; that is, it was about faith. God saves people who have faith in Christ; it is thereby that we establish a right relationship with God. Christ did everything that the law requires to make people righteous; hence, when we place our trust in Christ we receive the righteousness of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9). Paul said in his letter to the Galatians, “If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly” (Gal 2:21). By confessing that “Jesus is Lord,” we are declaring that Jesus is God; a belief that is essential for Christians to declare. When we truly believe in our heart that Jesus was raised from the dead — that’s faith — we become brand new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). It is not sufficient to simply say the words; they must be said with faith, believing. The words “Jesus is Lord” was the earliest form of creed in the Christian world. People would declare in public, “Jesus is Lord” at their baptism. Afterwards, they would continue to tell other people about their faith (1 Pet 3:15). Christ will never disappoint anyone (Is 28:16). He will save everyone who trusts in Him.

Verses 12-13 – Christ is Lord of both Jews and Gentiles. Christ offers salvation to everyone. He saves everyone who asks Him. Paul uses words from Joel (2:32) to emphasise this — “Whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved.” Peter used these same words at the end of his sermon on the day called Pentecost (Acts 2:21).

Paul’s Response to Jewish Excuses (10:14-21)

14 How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?
And how shall they preach, unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? The Lord said through Moses, “I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, by a nation without understanding will I anger you.” And through Isaiah He boldly says, “I was found by those who sought Me not, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”

Verses 14ff – Nobody can come to faith in Christ unless that person has heard about Him, and people cannot hear about Christ unless someone tells them, so God sends people out to tell them the good news. A person must have faith in order to please God (Heb 11:6) — to hear the message of salvation and disbelieve that message is to call God a liar (which obviously does not please Him). The opposite of faith is unbelief; essentially unbelief is a matter of hearing the truth about Christ and “choosing not to believe it” — unbelief is not a matter of being ignorant of the truth; as Jesus said, “If you were totally blind to the truth, you would have no sin” (Jn 9:41). Sadly, many people choose to “not believe the message” when they hear it, because they love darkness rather than light (Jn 3:19). In these verses, Paul is thinking about the reasons people choose to not believe; especially the Jews, which Paul himself was. God had given many benefits to the Jews, yet most of them refused to accept Christ. Paul identifies five reasons why people do not believe —

1. Verse 15 – As explained above, someone can only show unbelief after they have heard a message. Paul quoted Isaiah 52:7 to show how the people had heard God’s message. The person in that passage was bringing the good news of deliverance to the Jewish people who were in exile — they could return to Jerusalem from Babylon where they were held captive — but many simply chose not to do so.

2. Verse 16 – Not everyone believed the “good news” even after hearing it. Paul showed that this was true in Isaiah’s time. Isaiah had prophesied as much when he asked, “Lord, who has believed our report?” (Is 53:1) — when the announcement of the Messiah’s First Advent was heralded, not many responded to it. The reaction of most people was unbelief.

3. Verses 17-18 – Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ. The Jews could not say that they had not heard the message. Paul quotes Psalm 19:4, “Their words have gone out to all the world” — here he describes the universal witness of the sun, moon and stars, which “declare the glory of God” (Ps 19:1). Paul uses these words to emphasize the fact that the Jewish people have heard the gospel message, even though many of them lived in foreign countries around the Mediterranean Sea. Paul knew that they had heard the gospel; he himself had preached it in many cities.

4. Verses 19-20 – Someone might argue, “Even though they may have heard the message, they might not understand it.” Paul answers with words from the two main parts of the Hebrew Bible, the law and the prophets. Through Moses, God said that He would make the Jews jealous of the Gentiles (Deut 32:21). When Israel rejected her Messiah, God sent the gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved. Paul had already used Hosea’s message (Hos 2:23) about people who were not God’s people (Rom 9:25). Nobody had taught the Gentiles about God — so they were people who “did not understand.” Paul adds a prophecy from Isaiah (65:1) — “God would show Himself to people who were not looking for Him,” that is, He would save people who were Gentiles. Paul had already explained how God saved Gentiles because
of “their faith,” yet many Jews did not have faith; instead they showed unbelief. God offers righteousness as a free gift, but they wanted to become righteous by their own efforts, which is impossible (Rom 9:30-32).

5. Verse 21 – The answer to all these excuses was stated in Isaiah (65:2): “I have stretched out My hands all day long to a disobedient and obstinate people.” Most Jews did not truly hear or understand the gospel because of their sinful attitudes; because of their unbelief, they would not obey the gospel. All during their history, God had appealed to the Jews like a father holding out His hands, ready to receive them… but they would not have it (cf. Mt 23:37). Instead they proudly wanted to achieve salvation by their own efforts. God offers salvation as a free gift to everyone who trusts Him; that is the only way to receive it.

CHAPTER 11 — Israel’s Future (11:1-36)

The Results of the Jews’ Failure to Obey God (11:1-12)

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be, for I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 “Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking My life.” 4 But what is the divine response to him? “I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.” 9 And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a retribution to them. 10 Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever.” 11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression be riches for the world and their failures be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

Verse 1 – God had wonderful plans for the Jews. He sent their Messiah, who is Jesus. He offers them grace, salvation and righteousness. But the reaction of most Jews was unbelief; they refused to accept His generous gifts. It might seem that God’s plans for the Jews had failed, but Paul shows in this chapter that God’s plans have not failed… in fact, God has an even more wonderful plan for the future of the Jews. Paul shows in two ways that God has not ended His relationship with the Jews. First, Paul is a Jew himself, a descendant of Abraham, and of the family of Benjamin — though this was a small family, the first king of Israel came from it. Paul had zealously acted against God before he became a Christian, but God forgave him. Likewise, God can forgive other Jews as well.

Verses 2-4 – Second, Paul reminds the Jews about the answer that God gave to the prophet Elijah. The queen made plans to kill Elijah… the people no longer worshipped God… they destroyed God’s altars… numerous prophets had died because of their faith. Elijah thought that he was the only person in Israel who was still loyal to God, but that was not true. The Lord told him that there were still 7000 people who were loyal to God, and had not worshipped the false god, Baal (1 Kg 19:14-18).
Verses 5-6 – Even as in the time of Elijah, there were still Jews who were loyal to God. God had chosen them because He loved them; they did not deserve His love. They could not receive salvation because of their own deeds; it is only by God’s gracious choice. God gives gifts to people who do not deserve them.

Verses 7-8 – In Paul’s time, there were two groups of Jews — one group showed faith; they were the people whom God chose; they were saved by God’s kindness and grace. The second group showed unbelief; they were unwilling to trust and obey God. Paul combines two passages to show what happens to people in that second group — they do not believe the gospel, and are not even able to hear or understand it. First Paul uses Isaiah 29:10 — “The Lord has made you sleep, and has closed your eyes.” Their hearts were hardened by God because they resisted the truth. God abandoned them to a state of stupor in which they became insensitive to spiritual realities; spiritual indifference results in hardness of heart. Paul then uses Deuteronomy 29:4 — “Even today the Lord has still not given you a mind that understands; it is as if your eyes cannot see, and your ears cannot hear.” Because they would not hear the pleading voice of God, they were smitten with spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness — this terrible judgment continues to this very day.

Verses 9-10 – Paul goes on to use words from the psalmist David (69:22-23) — he asks God to act against His enemies... they are like people who sit at a feast and feel happy and safe, and do not realize that they could be attacked at any moment. Paul associates that passage with the Jews who refused to believe God’s good news. Paul suggests that they feel happy and safe, but their selfish satisfaction is like a trap that will ultimately cause great pain. The day will come when they cannot see (know) the truth at all; then, they will suffer. They will be like blind people; they will be like a person who bends over with a great load on his back — dispersed among the nations, they would find no rest for the sole of their feet; instead the Lord would give them a “trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul” (Deut 28:65); wrong attitudes cause great spiritual trouble.

Verses 11-12 – Many Jews refused to believe the gospel. Paul has explained about the terrible punishments that they will suffer because of their unbelief. But that is not the end of God’s relationship with the Jews; God still has a plan for them. Paul emphasises that the Jewish people will recover from their troubles... they will again be the people whom God has chosen. But in the meantime, God offers salvation to everyone who will accept it (including Gentiles). Because Israel has sinned, salvation has come to the Gentiles. In the Book of Acts, the author Luke records 4 occasions when Paul began to preach to Gentiles. Since the Jews refused his message of salvation, Paul offered it to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 19:8-9; 28:28). The Jews would see how God had brought blessings to the Gentiles, thus causing the Jews to be jealous and turn to God themselves. Their sin had brought unspeakable blessings to the entire world; so there will be an even greater blessings for everyone in the end. The Jews will return to God. The number of Jewish believers will be complete, and Jews and Gentiles will rejoice together because of what God has done.

Paul Warns the Gentiles (11:13-24)

13 For I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 For if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grated in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You
will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.” 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

Verses 13-15 – Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, the non-Jewish world. He was teaching them that righteousness comes by means of faith in Christ. He knew his fellow Jews were also eager to become righteous, but they insisted on accomplishing it by their own efforts; such a method, however, was simply not possible. When the Jews would ultimately see that God accepted believing Gentiles, they would be provoked to jealousy and would want to come to faith in Christ — it is then that they will question their weariness and the ineffectiveness of their theological ideals. Though Paul was sad that the majority of his fellow-countrymen had refused God’s way of salvation, the resultant effect was the rest of the world had now been given the opportunity to have a relationship with God; so when Israel was set aside as God’s chosen, earthly people, the gentiles were brought into a position of privilege with God. The failure of Israel in rejecting Christ will make their eventual acceptance as vivid and wonderful as the resurrection that all believers will experience; it will be as if they had come back from the dead. It will be during the Millennial Reign of Christ, that the Jewish people will finally come to recognize that “Jesus is the Messiah of God;” His very Son — “In that day, the Lord will pour out on the people of Israel the Spirit of grace, and they will look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son” (Zech 12:10ff).

Verse 16 – Paul now uses two metaphors to show that God would not turn away from the Jews permanently. The first one had to do with a “piece of dough” — in the book of Numbers (15:17-21), we read that a piece of dough was consecrated (made holy) to the Lord as a heave offering (a voluntary gift offering), as a symbol that the entire lump of dough belonged to Him. The basic idea is this — when God accepts the part, He sanctifies the whole. Applying this to the history of Israel, when God accepted the founder of the nation, Abraham, in so doing He set apart his descendants (Isaac and Jacob) as well, in spite of their sins or failings. This means that God must accept the rest of the lump (the nation of Israel). The second metaphor had to do with the branch of a tree; the root of a tree affects the whole tree — “the root” here probably refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were the ancestors of the Jewish nation; their descendants were the branches in Paul’s time. God made a covenant with Abraham through whom He would bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1-3), and would be the God of Abraham’s descendants (Gen 17:7). As Abraham’s descendants, the Jews would benefit from the promises of God’s covenant.

Verses 17-24 – Paul continues to think about a tree. There were very many olive trees in the country, so an olive tree became a description of the Jewish nation: “The Lord called you a healthy olive tree” (Jer 11:16). Paul goes on to describe a technique called “grafting” to make a point: Gentiles have supernaturally been connected to the family of God; that is, they have been grafted into the tree (v.17). The unbelieving Jews were like fruitless branches that the Gardener removed from the tree... and the believing Gentiles were like new branches that the Gardener grafted into the tree to receive strength from the root. Paul warns the Gentiles “not to boast and be arrogant” about their new position as a branch in the tree... they were not to have a wrong attitude towards the Jews; after all they were not the ones who supported the root, it was the root that supported them (v.18). Paul did not want the Gentiles in Rome to have the wrong
attitude towards the Jews. The Christian faith came from the root of the Jewish faith. Paul warned them, “If God had removed some branches, He can remove other branches as well” (v. 21). Only those branches that continue firm in their faith will remain in God’s kingdom (Heb 3:14). Just as God broke off branches of His people Israel for their unbelief, so God will break off the Gentile branches because of their unbelief. It should be noted, this is not a reason for Gentile Christians to worry that they will lose their salvation; God is able to protect them (Rom 8:28-30; 1 Th 5:23-24; Jude 1:24)... they now belong to God’s family... He has chosen to be His special people... they are His royal priests... they now belong to His kingdom (1 Pet 2:9)... God has changed their lives completely (2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 2:10). God had been firm with the Jewish people who refused to trust Him, and had been kind to the Gentiles because of faith; it was not because of any good they had done. So the Gentiles must remain loyal to God... they did not deserve salvation... they only received salvation because of God’s kindness (v. 22). Long ago God chose the Jews to be His own special people... He made His covenant with them... and His promises still stand to this very day. Paul eagerly looked forward to that time when his own people, the Jews, would believe the gospel.

The Future for Israel (11:25-32)

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uniformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of their fathers; 29 for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. 32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.

Verses 25-27 – Paul tells his Gentile brothers and sisters about God’s future plan for the Jews. Many prophets wrote about that plan (cf. Is 60:1-14; Dan 12:1; Mic 7:11-12; Zech 8:1-23), so Paul was sure that God has a plan to save the Jews. Paul warns the Gentiles “not to become proud” in the original language it is translated, “Do not become wise in yourselves” (Prv 3:7). So Paul urges the Gentile Christians to trust God’s wisdom and to believe God’s plan. Many Jews who do not believe might behave like enemies, but Christians are to love them as friends, because God loves them (v. 28). God wants Christians to impress the Jews by means of their Christian love for God. Then the Jews too will want to receive God’s kindness (v. 31). That is God’s plan to save the Jews (v. 26); they will not always oppose God. When the full number of Gentiles has come into the kingdom, God will then save all Israel; that is, He will save all the Jews that remain (Zech 13:8-9). Paul uses words from Isaiah to support this idea: “The Savior will come from Zion (Jerusalem)” (Is 59:20). This may refer to the time when Jesus came. Zion was the place from which the gospel came. But God only saved the first of the Jews at that time (Rom 11:16); His future plan is for those Jews that remain. He will bring about His plan when Christ returns the second time. So Paul was thinking also about Christ’s return — it is then that God will take away the sin of Israel (Is 27:9). The prophet Jeremiah said that God had promised a new covenant (31:31-34)... Ezekiel says at that time that God will give them a new heart and put His Spirit in them, that they might walk in obedience before Him (Ezek 36:26-27). People will want to obey God, because he has taken away their sins. At the last supper, Jesus spoke about this new covenant — His death would be the beginning of the new covenant. God’s promise would become true (Mt 26:28). People receive the benefit of this covenant when they place their
faith in Christ. The Jews will also receive the benefit of this same covenant when they experience God’s kindness and place their faith in Christ.

Verses 28-29 – Because of unbelief, many Jews opposed the first Christians. Those Jews acted as if they were enemies. But God loved the Jews. He had chosen them to be His people. He would never forget the promise of blessing that He had made to their ancestors. God always fulfills His promises (Num 23:19).

Verses 30-31 – In the past, the Gentiles did not obey God. Now, because the Jews had not obeyed him, the Gentiles receive God’s mercy. As the result of God’s mercy to the Gentiles, the Jews themselves will receive God’s mercy.

Verse 32 – Paul has shown that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles. They all have sinned (Rom 3:9), and can all receive God’s salvation (Rom 10:12-13). Paul says that all people are like prisoners; they are prisoners of disobedience who are unable to obey God. Until they receive God’s salvation, sin controls their lives. The scriptures say that the whole world is like a prisoner. This is because sin controls everybody in the world (Gal 3:22). There is only one way out of this prison — God’s mercy can set free everyone who trusts in Him.

A Song of Praise to God (11:33-36)

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Paul has explained the gospel in the first eleven chapters of his letter to the Romans. He has written about God’s great plan for both Jews and Gentiles... and has written about God’s great love, which people can never deserve. So he ends this part of his letter with a song to praise God.

Verse 33 – Paul’s praises God for two things: His wisdom and His decisions. It is impossible for a person to understand God’s ways. The word “wonderful” shows that God’s wisdom is far greater than the wisest thoughts of any wise person. His judgements are better than the judgements of the wisest human judge. A human judge might know about a person’s actions... but only God understands that person perfectly. God knows the real reasons for an action; as such, He can judge thoughts as well as actions (Heb 4:12).

Verse 34 – Paul quotes Isaiah when he says, “Who has known the mind of the Lord, or has become His counsellor?” (Is 40:13). The two statements remind us that “God’s ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts” (Is 55:8).

Verses 35-36 – In verse 35, Paul refers to God’s words to His servant Job — “Who has first given to God that it might be given back to him again?” (Job 41:11). God cannot owe us anything. Whatever we might give to Him has come from him. We are simply “stewards” of all God’s possessions. David realized this: “Everything comes from You. We have given to You only what comes from You” (1 Chr 29:14). God is the Creator of all things. God spoke and the world and everything in it came into existence. Everything that exists is from God, through God, and to God. He was the beginning, and He will be the end. All glory belongs to God alone. People should not be proud and live life as though they do not need God, because everything we have or need comes from God — should He choose to withhold it, we will never receive it. It is amazing how our diabolical flesh insists on living with “absolute autonomy.” The truth is, to live life
as if there is no *Pre-eminent Reality* in the universe, and to believe that the concept of God is simply a “delusional necessity for wimpy, weak individuals,” is akin to physicists denying the very reality of mass… oceanographers denying the reality of water… and biologists denying the reality of life; such deductions are sheer madness and fatuous lunacy; as God Himself has said, “Only a “*fool*” says there is no God” (cf. Ps 14:1; 53:1);… yet that is precisely the thinking that governs the minds of so many arrogant, mental-midgets in this fallen world.

How semi-intelligent people can deduce that all things came into existence without an intelligent source, is absolute insanity; yet here we are, living in the most advanced culture in the history of the human race believing precisely that that indeed is the case… and people wonder why we have so many problems in this world. **Albert Einstein** said, “The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation… His religious feeling takes the form a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.” It is sad commentary that one must quote “the genius of man” (Einstein) to even awaken a sense of true reality in the mind of an unbeliever; yet that is precisely what I have done. They won’t listen to one word from God. Beloved, when the “foundation” lacks integrity, the building collapses; yet in spite of that fact, human beings repeatedly erect another building on the same foundation after the structure has collapsed! Such thinking inspired Einstein to say, “To do something over and over again, and expect a different result, is sheer madness;” yet fallen man does it over and over and over again. As the old song by Peter, Paul & Mary goes, “*When will we ever learn?*” Sadly, the human family won’t learn; it is too inoculated with darkness (cf. Jn 3:19; 8:12; 12:46; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:18; 5:8; 6:12; Col 1: 13; 2 Pet 1:19; 1 Jn 1:5). Paul closes these three chapters of his letter with a benediction exhorting all of us to always praise God — for who He is, and for all He has done.