

5:1: *Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;*

This chapter opens with a conclusion (“*therefore*”). This conclusion is based upon the first four chapters, especially the end of chapter 4. Paul’s conclusion may be broken down into three main points: (1) All are in need of “*justification*” (this is because all have sinned); (2) Justification is by faith instead of meritorious works and/or flawless law keeping; (3) Justification must come through Jesus Christ (4:25). Justification (*dikaioo*) is a verb which has a legal sense to it, and it occurs most frequently in this book (for all its occurrences in this book see 2:13; 3:4, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30, 33). Justification means the saved are freed from the penalty of sin and are the recipients of grace and other spiritual blessings.

Being justified by a system of faith (and this justification is our initial conversion as well as our on-going Christian life) is described in many ways. Illustrations of this are found in the following chart, and this information proves that Bible writers often selected (often for the sake of emphasis) just one element in the salvation process (grace, faith, baptism, confession, etc.).

We are saved by:	Text:
“God”	Mk. 10:26-27
“Christ”	Jn. 3:17
The “name of Jesus”	Acts 4:12
“Jesus’ words”	Jn. 5:34
“Jesus’ life”	Rom. 5:10
“Faith and baptism”	Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21
“Receiving the word and being baptized”	Acts 2:40-41
“Striving to enter the narrow door”	Mt. 7:14; Jn. 10:9
“Calling on the name of the Lord”	Rom. 10:13
“The words of Peter”	Acts 11:13-14
“The words of Paul”	1 Thess. 2:16
“Grace”	Acts 15:11
“Jesus blood”	Rom. 5:9
“Receiving, standing in and holding fast the gospel”	1 Cor. 15:1-2
“Loving the truth”	2 Thess. 2:10
“Listening to and believing the truth”	Eph. 1:13
“Losing our lives”	Mt. 16:25
“Obedience”	Heb. 5:8-9
Through “Jesus’ intercession”	Heb. 7:25
“Humbly receiving the Word of God”	Jas. 1:21
An “active faith”	Jas. 2:21-24
“Turn from our sinful ways”	Jas. 5:19-20
<i>We</i> “snatch people from the fire”	Jude 23
“Godly sorrow that leads to repentance”	2 Cor. 7:10
“Working out our own salvation”	Phil. 2:12
“Take heed to self and teaching”	1 Tim. 4:16
We use “God’s ‘milk’ to grow to salvation”	1 Pet. 2:2

We are <i>forgiven</i> by:	New Testament text:
“Seeing, hearing, understanding and turning”	Mk. 4:12
“Loving much”	Lk. 7:47-48
The “blood of the new covenant”	Mt. 26:28
“Repentance and baptism”	Acts 2:38
“Repentance & prayer” (for Christians)	Acts 8:22
“Belief in Christ”	Acts 10:43
“Grace and blood”	Eph. 1:7
Entering into Christ and His “kingdom”	Col. 1:13-14
“Forgiving others”	Mt. 6:14

We are <i>justified</i> by:	New Testament text:
“Grace”	Rom. 3:24
“A system of faith instead of law”	Gal. 3:28; Rom. 5:1
“Jesus’ blood”	Rom. 5:9
“Works and not faith alone”	Jas. 2:24
“Our words”	Mt. 12:37
“Belief”	Acts 13:39
“Death to our old life”	Rom. 6:6-7

In addition to justification, Christians enjoy “*peace*.” This blessing, which is described in the present tense (“*have*”), comes “*through our Lord Jesus Christ*.” Since Christians are at peace with God, there is no fear of receiving wrath from God (2:5). If Christ had not paid the price for sin, God would be storing up wrath for us. Without justification, God would require us to give our souls as payment for sin. Now, instead of paying with our souls, a way out has been provided (2:4). This escape from sin also allows us to have fellowship with deity.

In spite of what Paul wrote, many do not have peace. Many have been convinced that they will miss heaven or that their salvation is uncertain. Scores of Christians wonder from day to day if they will spend eternity in heaven or hell. Sometimes they feel lost and sometimes they feel saved. This kind of outlook is both odd and wrong. Imagine a Christian who tells others about Jesus—the Son of Man who is also the Prince of Peace. These believers tell about the Prince of Peace, but they have little to no peace themselves. Is this sensible?

McGuigan (p. 160) wrote: “To offer Jesus as the one who rode upon a donkey speaking peace to the world (Zechariah 9:9ff) and then to grind out our lives in doubt, frustration and anxiety is worse than stupid. It is a bald-headed man trying to sell hair-restorer. It is a 450 pound, five feet six inch man speaking to people about dieting. It’s a man wasting-away before our very eyes from some horrible disease while he professes he has the sure cure.”

5:2: *through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

The pronoun “*whom*” refers back to Jesus. It is only because of Christ that we have access to grace. According to Paul, this access is gained by “*faith*.” This means God places a demand upon mankind to receive heaven’s grace. This demand (requirement) is *faith*. In some editions of the Greek text, a definite article appears before faith (“*the* faith”). Another definite article appears before grace (“*the* grace” in Greek). Both articles (or even just the one before grace) points to the same truth found in Jude 3 (there is a system of faith or a body of doctrine which must be used by those who desire salvation). Those who use

the system of grace and faith (which as noted in the commentary on 1:5 is not faith alone) have access to the Christian *hope*.

The *grace* (*charis*) Christians enjoy is described as “*wherein we stand*” (*histemi*). As people stand on a road or on a floor, so Christians stand *on* and *in* the grace of God. This expression shows that saved people enjoy a state of grace. The tense of *we stand* is perfect; this indicates that saved people have stood in God’s grace in the past and are continuing to stand in His grace at the present time.

Unless we decide to leave this grace and abandon the *faith*, we will always be in it. When we continue in heaven’s *grace*, God does not charge sin to our account (4:7-8). Another facet of standing in the grace of God involves our *position*. McGuiggan (p. 161) wrote, “We ‘stand’ in this grace. We don’t sprawl, lounge, or slumber in it. In the Bible, people who obtained grace labored and toiled for Christ; they suffered and died for Christ as they stood for Christ. Ephesians 6:10 & 14 speak of the characteristic position of saints, they ‘stand.’ The angel told Peter (Acts 5:20): ‘Go...stand, and speak!’ The standing here is a blessing from God, of course, and so it is only by the grace of God we can do this. It does remind us however that the saint is ‘stander.’”

Being a “*stander*” is sometimes difficult. McGuiggan (p. 162) tells of a young nurse who was “preparing, for the first time, to assist a top-ranking surgeon in the northeastern states of America. During the course of this surgery, a dozen sponges were used inside the patient. When the surgeon finished he quickly removed the sponges and said, ‘Sew him up!’ The nurse knew that only eleven sponges had been removed so she nervously said, ‘We used twelve sponges and I can only account for eleven.’ The ‘king kong’ of surgery snapped back, ‘We got them all; sew him up.’ The young nurse again said, ‘We used twelve sponges; I only have eleven. We need to find the other sponge.’ The surgeon then snarled, ‘Nurse, I am going to tell you for the last time. We got them all. Suture!’ This time the nurse yelled; ‘We’re not sewing anybody up until I find the other sponge.’ The super-surgeon smiled, looked down at the floor, lifted his foot, and there was sponge number twelve. He murmured, ‘You’ll do.’ Christians are people who need to stand not only in the grace of God, but stand up in this life.”

In addition to standing in the grace of God, Paul gave a second reason for a Christian’s happiness. God’s people rejoice in the “*hope*” they have; this hope involves the “*glory of God*” (2b). One day Christians will share in God’s glory. This promise is designed to encourage us (see 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1).

The hope we are to have is well expressed by Barclay (New Testament Words, p. 76): “The Christian hope is not simply a trembling, hesitant hope that perhaps the promises of God may be true. It is the confident expectation that they cannot be anything else than true.”

A Christian’s hope should remove haunting fears concerning the future judgment. Saved believers have a hope that allows them to joyfully look forward to salvation. Hope is the Christian’s answer to anxiety, uncertainty, and worry about things in this life and/or the status of their soul.

5:3-4: *And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; 4 and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope:*

Our hope is not limited to the *glory of God* (2b). Paul said the Christian hope is even present in times of tribulation. The hope possessed by Christians never fades. Even when things look extra dismal, it is present. In fact, when times are especially bad there is a lot of good news (Rom. 8:17 and 8:28). For the Christian this good news is so wonderful he or she can “*boast*” (*kauchaomai*), a word that in this book occurs only in chapters two and five (2:17, 23; 5:2, 3, 11). Here, the verb is in the present tense and Spicq (2:299) captures the word’s sense: “So one ‘glories not only at being destined for a blessed eternity but also in all that leads to it and allows it to be obtained: tribulation (Rom. 5:3), weakness, infirmities.”

Most would consider blindness to be a curse and a severe tribulation. How did Helen Keller view this problem? What about the prisoners who spent months or years living in German camps and had their bodies covered with vermin? Could this confinement have been a blessing? Could being covered with parasites be a good thing? Many have noted that the prisoners covered with vermin were greatly blessed in that the guards avoided them. Many women avoided sexual abuse because of bugs.

In life, too many people are confused as to what is good and what is bad. Many consider a million

dollars to be good, but this is not always true. Beauty is often considered a great blessing and the lack of it is frequently considered to be a curse. Is this really true? How many young women have cried over having an appearance that causes men to leer at and lust for them? How many young women have found their beauty to be the springboard for a career that cheapened them? (This material is adopted from McGuiggan, p. 164).

If non-Christians can find some good in bad circumstances, God's people can do the same thing. Good can come from bad things and circumstances. Also, many of the bad things that happen to us have a purpose (see 1 Pet. 1:6-7).

The 5th chapter of Romans affirms that suffering can be good. Our "*tribulations*" (*thlipsis*) in life are a tool to create "*patience*" (steadfastness). After people develop *patience*, they are on the road to achieving "*approvedness*" (this word—*dokime*—means acceptance before God; a character that has been proven). In some ways a Christian's life is similar to that experienced by Job. Our faith is tried and tested so that in the end all will know that it was genuine.

Tribulations (notice the plural) are also described a little later in this book (8:35; 12:12) as well as in 2:9. Literally, this word meant "pressure" or "crush," but Paul used it in a figurative way to denote "that which presses upon or burdens the spirit" (Trench, p. 202), much of which comes from the world (Jn. 15:18; 16:20). Another key word is "*knowing*," a perfect tense verb. By using this tense Paul said these Christians had known this in the past and continued to know it. This point was a well established and accepted fact. A further demonstration of this point is found in the word "*worketh*" (*katergazomai*), a word that puts more emphasis "on the end result of the action rather than on the actual act" (CBL, GED, 3:302).

If people would realize that pain and affliction have a purpose, it would be possible to endure unpleasant circumstances and rejoice in the face of problems. Knowing that hardships and heartaches are leading towards a better place allows Christians to cope with the problems of life. This is a great benefit enjoyed by those who are saved.

Other key words in these two verses that merit special consideration are *steadfastness*, *approvedness*, and *hope*. "*Steadfastness*" (*hupomone*) is also used in Rom. 2:7; 8:25; 15:4-5. Ancient writers were very familiar with this term and used it to describe those who endured, perhaps in spite of great fear, "for the beauty of the deed" (Spicq, 3:415). Whether under poor or hard circumstances, or whether enduring the passing of a long period of time, this word describes perseverance and faithfulness, and in the New Testament this term is only applied to Christians (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:405). A good and true story illustrating this word comes from the 1900's. Sir Ernest Shackleton, a famous British explorer, led an Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition to Antarctica in December, 1914. A hundred miles before reaching the coast of Antarctica, his ship, *Endurance*, became locked in surface ice. The frozen ocean pulled the ship away from the continent as well as crushed it in November, 1915. Having lost the ship the survivors began to walk 400 miles, across the ice, with a few of the ship's lifeboats and salvaged provisions. The group finally arrived on Elephant Island—a barren and frozen place. It had been 497 days since the crew had walked on soil.

Using one of the lifeboats, six men from the group began a trip back to where the trip had started (an 800 mile trip over some of the worst seas known to man). After 17 days passed the crew returned to their point of origination. Their return home was almost a year and a half from the time they had originally left. The six men found a Chilean vessel which helped them rescue the rest of the crew left on the island (not one of those left behind had died). The men in this story had to wear the same clothing (unchanged) for months. They endured frostbite and had to eat their sled dogs as well as penguins. Sub-zero temperatures afflicted them, but they persisted.

Approvedness (*dokime*), as noted above, means a proven character (Spicq, 1:360). Other verses which use this term (and thus describe testing someone) include 2 Cor. 2:9 and Phil. 2:22. Verse 4 ends with a reference to *hope* (*elpis*), a common word and theme in the New Testament. Instead of describing a "vague or a fearful anticipation," this term always has "the expectation of something good" (Brown, 2:241). The Christian hope is "always centered on Christ and on God" (ibid, p. 242). Hope protects the Christian as a helmet protects a person's head (1 Thess. 5:8). Just as a ship rests safely once it is correctly

anchored, so the Christian's hope is safely moored with the Lord (Heb. 6:18).

5:5: *and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.*

The hope of salvation that Christians have is 100% sure. God's people will not be *put to shame* (i.e. find that their hopes have all been wrong, that God doesn't exist, that heaven is not real, etc). Disappointment is not what Christians will receive at the end of their lives, and the same is true even now because "*shame*" (*kataischuno*) is a present tense verb. Translators of the KJV rendered it "*ashamed*," and while this is not a bad translation, the sense is best expressed as "*does not disappoint*" (Thayer, p. 331). Those who lived in the first century and adhered to the plan found in the New Testament were not disappointed in life. Neither were they disappointed after they died. Such is still true for anyone who faithfully serves God. Those who inherit the kingdom of God will receive more than they ever imagined in this life and the next (Eph. 3:20).

One of the proofs we have for the certainty of our hope is the "*Holy Spirit*" (5:5). This part of the passage has been explained in different ways, but the following verses seem to give the best explanation of Paul's thought.

- Eph. 1:13-14 - The Spirit functions as a down payment.
- Rom. 8:16 - The Spirit bears witness with our spirit.
- Eph. 4:30 - The Spirit seals Christians.
- Rom. 8:9 - Without the Spirit we cannot be a Christian.
- Rom. 8:23 - The Spirit is only given to those who will be redeemed.

None of these passages teach that the Holy Spirit now offers any kind of miraculous ability or direct leading. Instead, the giving of the Spirit is God's way of saying we are His children. If we have the Spirit of God, we must be the children of God, for God's Spirit is not given to the devil or the devil's children. God gives the Spirit to make a *down payment* on us. The Spirit is our assurance that if we remain faithful to God we will be taken to heaven. If we fail to remain faithful, the down payment will be of no use and will be withdrawn (Ps. 51:11; 1 Sam. 16:14).

God's "*love*" (*agape*) for us is so great it has been "*shed abroad in our hearts.*" Careful students of Scripture will notice that this love is shed abroad *in* (not *into*) the Christian's heart. The preposition *into* (which is *not* used) would indicate that God puts His love into our hearts. The preposition *in* (which is the one Paul used), *dia* in Greek, suggests that God's love *already exists* in a Christian's heart (life). The fifth verse shows that God loves His people. This is a fact. This fact is further explained by a difference in the verb tenses described in the next paragraph.

When Paul referred to the Holy Spirit he said, "*which was given to us.*" This entire expression is from a single word (*didomi*) which is a common verb in the New Testament. Writers often used this word to describe giving (other instances of this term being used in Romans include 4:20; 12:3; 14:12). Here, this verb is in the aorist tense, a tense meaning the Holy Spirit was given at a definite point and time—the time of our baptism in water (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). Another important word is "*shed*" (*ekchuno*). Jesus used this same verb when He said His blood would be *shed* for many (Mt. 26:28), but here the word means "the overflowing love of God shown in Christ's death" (Kittle, abridged edition, p. 220). Since *shed* is in the perfect tense, God's love has been shed in the past and continues to burn brightly in the heart of every Christian. Proof of and for this is *the Holy Spirit*—God's "down payment" (see the commentary on Eph. 1:13-14). It is also through the Holy Spirit (His word, Eph. 6:17) that God's love is made known (Eph. 3:4-6). Verse 5 also shows that every single Christian is very important to God. Another place where *ekchuno* (shed) is used is Jn. 2:15 (Jesus "*poured*" out the coins belonging to money changers).

5:6-8: *For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a*

righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

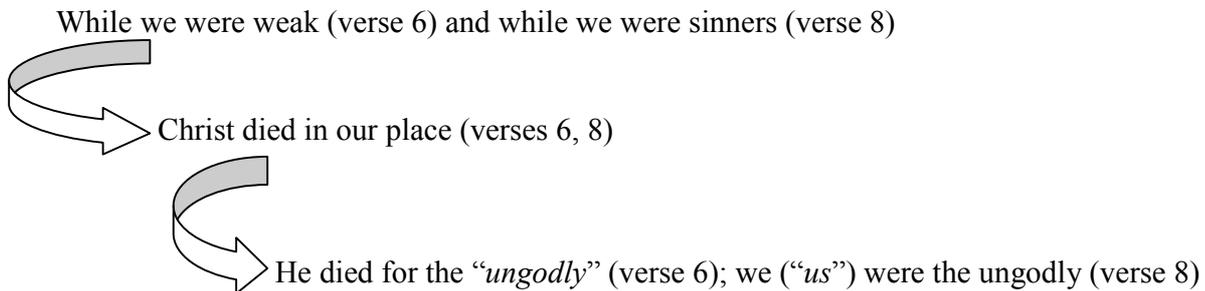
Since Paul revealed the *fact* of God's love for the saved, he was ready to present information about the *character* of God's love (verses 6-8). He said God's love was extended to the world when humanity was "*weak*" (*asthenes*), a term that here denotes "man's moral inability" (CBL, GED, 1:466) and "the condition of unredeemed humanity, which is separated from God" (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:171). This *weakness* is related to the preceding four chapters. In chapters one, two, and three, Paul showed that man has always been powerless to justify himself. While man was in this kind of state, God reached out and offered a way for him to be saved and justified. W. E. Vine (1:361) defined *weak* as "*strengthless*", but this does not mean man was in the kind of state described by Calvinism (i.e. he was incapable of doing anything and God did it all). Calvinism says men are totally depraved and God saves them without their consent. **This was not Paul's point.** *Weak* and *totally helpless* (and *totally helpless* sums up Calvinism) are not synonymous. There is a vast difference between the two. By using a present tense verb Paul implied that man was not able to save himself; he needed help, and this aid had to come from a divine source.

In "*due season*" (at the right time, Gal. 4:4) Christ came to the earth and died for the "*ungodly*" (for a further explanation of this expression see the commentary in the following paragraphs). The *ungodly* includes everyone since all have sinned (3:23). The preposition translated *for* in verse 6 (*huper*, Greek) meant *as a substitute*. Christ died in our place. An excellent parallel text is Jn. 11:50-51. The word rendered "*died*" (*apothnesko*) is a common word for death (see how it is used twice in verse 7). It is applied to animals that die (Mt. 8:32, "*perished*") as well as vegetation (Jude 12). Jesus died as things and people die, but His death resulted in some very different and wonderful consequences.

In verses 7-8, Paul showed why the circumstances of Christ's death were unique. Before discussing this, something must be said about the "*righteous man*" in verse 7. This is *not* righteousness in the sight of God; it is righteousness in the eyes of the world. Many often consider another human to be righteous because they see a person who is kind and full of good works. Paul understood this attitude, and in this context, he described righteousness from man's standpoint. We may consider someone good and righteous based upon what they do, but God's viewpoint is that all sin (3:23) and this makes all unrighteous (3:10).

The 7th verse has two words that describe human character: *righteous* and *good*. Some expositors see very little difference between these two terms but Vincent (3:60) makes this distinction: "The righteous man does what he ought, and gives to every one his due. The good man 'does as much as ever he can, and proves his moral quality by promoting the well-being of him with whom he has to do.'"

If a *righteous* (or *good*) man were going to be put to death, how many would stand up and say: "He is a good man. Do not kill him. If someone must be killed, take me. I will die so this good man can live"? How many of us would give our life so a good man could be freed? It is uncommon for people to exchange their life for the life of someone who is good. We might risk our life or we might exert great effort to save the life of another, especially if the person is kind and helpful, but willingly dying for someone else is rare. Paul used this fact to show that God is very different from men. The love of God caused Christ to die in our place. This sacrificial gift was given when humanity was *not* good. Jesus died for bad and evil people (sinners). Humans will seldom give their lives to save someone they consider good or a friend, but Jesus gave His life for immoral people as the word "*scarcely*" (*molis*) shows. According to the Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (2:438), this term means "*hardly/not easily*." Thayer (p. 417) says "*very rarely*." A second term showing man's reluctance to die on behalf others is "*peradventure*" (*tacha*), an adverb that expresses "a low probability of something happening or being done" (CBL, GED, 6:257). A third expression of this point is conveyed with the word "*dare*" (*tolmao*); Thayer (p. 627) says this means "*bring one's self to*." In contrast to man's love we have a clear demonstration of God's love which we can diagram.



“This comparison shows that the reason we were weak is that we were sinners, and under the condemnation of God’s law. Hence, we need Christ’s death as our ‘propitiation’ (3:25). The ungodly are the same as ‘us’ in verse 8. Before being justified by faith we were among the ungodly” (Owen, p. 33). In spite of this, God “*commended*” (*sunistemi*) His love for mankind (this is a present tense verb so His love continues). Thayer (p. 605) says this term means “*to show, prove, establish, exhibit.*” God did this on the cross and He continues to show in many ways His love through Christ (in verse 9 it is said the saved are “*justified*” and verse 10 adds that the redeemed are “*reconciled*”). The type of love required for these actions is *agape* (the all encompassing love also described in Jn. 3:16 that always wants the best for people and acts because someone or something has value). A wonderful illustration of *agape* love is found in Rom. 5:8: God’s love and man’s status as a sinner are both described in the present tense. It was as if there was a battle between man’s on-going sin and God’s on-going love, and heaven’s love has won that war. Our soul can be saved if we comply with the conditions set forth in the Scriptures.

The expression *in due season* is very interesting. Two of the words that describe *time* in the New Testament are *kairos* and *chronos*. The word *kairos* is used in verse six and is translated *in due season*. The word *chronos* is found elsewhere (see Gal. 4:4 for an example), and it described time in the sense of minutes. *Kairos* can describe time in the sense of a decisive moment, and if the term can be understood as having that meaning in verse 6, Paul meant Jesus came at the decisive moment in time to redeem man. Trench adds that *kairos* denotes *the critical nick of time*. We may never fully understand why Jesus came when He did, but heaven viewed His coming to be the right time and just in the nick of time. See Rom. 13:11 for a fuller commentary on these two terms.

These three verses remind me of a story from the 1800’s. At a slave market in 1845, shoppers looked at a male slave who had been stripped to the waist. A potential buyer noticed he had scars all over his back and said to him, “You must have been a mighty mean slave.” The slave respectfully replied, “No, sir. My master would come home drunk and beat me without reason.” The abused slave then began to beg the man to buy him and the man did. Years later Lincoln freed the slaves and the ex-slave began to make a life for himself. When he learned that his last owner had died, he returned for the funeral. Upon seeing his ex-master in the casket he said, “Master, I loved you. I was beaten, bruised and scarred, and when no one loved me or would have me, you made me yours.” When we were weak, ungodly, and loveless, Christ died for us.

5:9: *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath (of God) through him.*

This verse takes us back to what Paul said at the beginning of this chapter: God’s people can be “*justified*” (*dikaio*), the same word used in Rom. 3:20! It is possible to completely remove sin. This can be done even though we still sin after becoming a Christian. Also, we can have justification at the present time (“*now*”). In this verse, Paul affirmed that our source for justification is Christ’s “*blood*.” Without the blood of Jesus, justification would be impossible (Heb. 10:4). Christ’s blood is the basis for our

justification, but the benefits of it must be accessed. This access comes by faith that is obedient (5:1).

If Christ had not shed his blood, the only thing that we could and would experience is “wrath” (verse 9b). However, since the precious blood of the Lord was shed, Christians can be and will be saved from punishment. Christians are people who are *at peace* with God (verse 1) and have no fear of condemnation (8:1).

5:10-11: *For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; 11 and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

When people are not Christians, but they have reached the age of accountability (Ezek. 18:20), their relationship with God is summed up by this text. Non-Christians are “enemies” (*echthros*) of God, a term that has several shades of meaning in the New Testament and is even applied to death (1 Cor. 15:26) and Satan (Mt. 13:39). The reason for man becoming God’s enemy is expressed by a single word—*sin* (compare Isa. 59:1-2).

The word *enemies* (notice the plural) is much stronger than the other words used thus far in Rom. 5, but the term is parallel to *sinner*s (verse 8) and *weak* (verse 6). Every non-Christian who is accountable to God for his or her actions can be described by all these words. The hostility between God and man is so great that it can only be ended when there is “reconciliation” (*katallasso*). This *reconciliation* can only come through Christ. Those who are unsaved must take advantage of Christ’s death. There must be a participation in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (more will be said about this in the commentary on Rom. 6:1-5).

The meaning of *reconciliation* is somewhat different from justification, but the result is the same. A good example of reconciliation comes from 1 Cor. 7:11. Reconciliation causes estranged people to again come together. Thus, the end result of justification and reconciliation is identical. We might say the act of justification is the basis for our spiritual reconciliation. Justification and reconciliation are the means heaven uses to cancel God’s wrath. If we are not reconciled to God, we will be punished. It may be insightful to consider all the other places in the New Testament where the word rendered *reconciliation* is used (1 Cor. 7:11 applies it to a husband and wife; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19, 20 applies it to Jesus).

Because of what Christ has done for us, there are plenty of reasons to be happy. This was Paul’s point at the end of this paragraph (verse 11). Christians should “rejoice” in “God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jesus paid the price for all our spiritual blessings so our praise and appreciation should go *through Him*.

In most other places the word *rejoice* (*kauchaomai*) is rendered “glory” or “boast” (in the book of 2 Corinthians this term is used with great frequency). Here, the word, which is in the present tense, includes things like the “pardon for sins, intimacy with God, access to eternal blessedness; 5:2—depositories of better promises than those made to Israel” (Spicq, 2:299). It is as if “we owe it to Christ to glory” (ibid). Other items we should rejoice over are listed by Lanier (p. 31):

- Our hope (verse 2)
- Tribulation (verse 3)
- Christ’s death (verse 8)
- Justification by Jesus’ blood (verse 9)
- Salvation from the wrath to come (verse 9)
- We are saved because Jesus lives (verse 10)
- We have been reconciled to God (verse 10)
- God (verse 11)

If God was anxious to save us when we were enemies (verses 7-8), how anxious must He be to continue the justification process since we have been saved?

At the end of verse 11, the word *reconciliation* (ASV) is a better translation than “atonement” (the KJV

rendering). Many KJV study Bibles have the word *reconciled* in a footnote. *Reconciliation (katallage)* is a noun whereas *reconciled* is a verb. In its noun form the word's meaning from Classical Greek is fascinating and certainly appropriate for Christianity: "the restoration of the original understanding between people after hostility or displeasure" (Brown, 3:166).

Introduction to 5:12-21:

The next verse (12) in this chapter is difficult. One of the best ways to approach the text has been suggested by Dick Sztanyo, one of my former teachers. The following comes from his class notes: "Read vs. 12 and 18, omitting the intervening material which is really a parenthetical statement. This gives an overall picture of Paul's basic argument here. Verses 13-17 are Paul's answers to possible objections."

Sztanyo is right in his approach to the text, but his allegation that verses 13-17 are answers to objections is hard to accept. Cranfield (p. 111) seems to offer a better explanation: "Paul begins to draw his parallel between Christ and Adam in verse 12, but breaks off at the end of the verse without having expressed the main clause of his sentence, because, realizing the danger of his comparison's being very seriously misunderstood, he prefers to indicate as emphatically as possible the vast dissimilarity between Christ and Adam before formally completing it. Verses 13 and 14 are a necessary explanation of the verb 'sin' at the end of verse 12; and verses 15-17 drive home the dissimilarity between Christ and Adam. Then in verse 18 Paul repeats in a briefer form the substance of verse 12, and now completes it with the long-delayed main clause. Verse 19 is explanatory of verse 18, bringing out as it does the connecting links between Adam's misdeed and the condemnation of all men, and between Christ's righteous conduct and men's final justification unto life. Verses 20 and 21 refer to the part played by the law in God's purpose. The effect of the gift of the law to Israel was to make sin abound - to turn men's wrong-doing into conscious and willful rebellion by confronting them with the clear manifestation of God's will; but at the very place where sin most fully and most outrageously abounded (in Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ), there grace abounded more exceedingly and triumphed gloriously. The relevance of the reference to the law at this point lies in the fact that it is the law which makes manifest the full magnitude of sin and so also at the same time the full magnitude of the triumph of grace."

In studying these verses note the change in the personal pronoun. In the first eleven verses, Paul used the first person plural. In verses 12-21, he used the third person plural.

5:12: *Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned: —*

Paul expended a great deal of effort to show how man is saved (this is by faith and not by a system of law). This explanation allowed him to here summarize and explain the reasons behind salvation and justification by faith. The rest of this chapter deals with the fall of the human race and the redemptive plan God enacted (adopted from Owen, p. 34).

Another point is that "In Adam' there is only condemnation and (spiritual) death, and 'in Christ' there is acquittal and life eternal. A person is 'in Christ' through faith (not because faith is meritorious!), and without faith in Christ he is 'in Adam'. 'In Adam' is the man who stands on his own performance and apart from faith. 'In Adam' is 'out of Christ'. To be 'in Adam' is to be represented by Adam and to be 'in Christ' is to be represented by Christ" (McGuiggan, p. 169).

This section of Paul's letter is frequently misused. People have used the material from verse 12 and following to affirm that God holds people responsible for Adam's sin. Some describe this as *Original Sin*. This doctrine is inconsistent with Paul's point and it conflicts with other passages (Deut. 24:16; 2 Chron. 25:4; Ezek. 18:4, 20). Another helpful reference is Gen. 8:21. Man's heart is called evil **from his youth** instead of **at his birth**.

A chart from Roy Deaver's notes (appendix C) helps clarify some of what Paul wrote.

VERSE	SIN OF ADAM	CONSEQUENCES	DEATH OF CHRIST	RESULTS
12, 18	As through one man	Death passed unto all men	One act of righteousness	Justification
15	By the trespass of the one	Many died	Gift by the grace of God	Did abound unto the many
16	Of one	Condemnation	The free gift	Unto justification
17	By the trespass of the one	Death reigned	Grace and gift of righteousness	Reign in life through Christ
18	Through one trespass	Condemnation	One act of righteousness	Justification
19	Through one man's disobedience	Many were made sinners	The obedience of the one	Made many righteous

The “*one man*” referred to in verse 12 is *Adam*, the first man. Before Adam, there was no sin in the world; everything was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). However, Adam and Eve changed everything. The first humans introduced sin into the world and this sin introduced man to death. In the Greek text a definite article (“*the*”) precedes both “*sin*” and “*death*.” While an article is not always significant, here it seems Paul used them to say something like “these destructive *powers*” (Lenski, Romans, p. 362).

Careful students of the Bible will also notice that Paul seems to have made a mistake in his Old Testament history. It was not Adam who committed the first sin; Eve was the first sinner. Why did Paul say *Adam* when Eve was the first one to transgress? Paul’s argument would not have been clear if he had used Eve. Paul needed to form a contrast between Adam and Christ, so he used Adam instead of Eve.

The *death* Paul mentioned has caused a great deal of controversy and debate. One school of thought says the word *death* in this passage was used as Paul normally used it, so it describes *spiritual* death. It is true that Paul used this word to describe spiritual death (see Rom. 6:23 and Eph. 2:1, 4-5). Those who adhere to this view argue that before people are *reconciled* (Rom. 5:10-11), they are spiritually dead (Rom. 5:12).

Others argue that the word *death* in Rom. 5 is *physical death*. Those who support this explanation appeal to 1 Cor. 15:22. The argument for this view goes something like this: If the death described by Paul is spiritual, the consequence of Rom. 5 must be universal salvation (If *all die*, *all* are *made alive*). Unless we are prepared to affirm that everyone will go to heaven, the *death* must be understood as *spiritual death*. Spiritual death comes to all when sin is committed and charged to a person’s account (Rom. 3:10, 23).

We must favor the view that says this death is spiritual, but we must also acknowledge that physical death is a consequence of sin. Both kinds of death resulted from the sin in the garden. The death that Paul described in this verse (1) was the result of sin and (2) has been passed to all men (Jews and Gentiles).

Now we can begin to see the contrast. As one person introduced the destructive power of sin, so one person (Jesus) introduced the saving grace of God. Adam and Christ were used by Paul to represent the whole human race. The following verses contain some generalizations to further clarify Paul’s point. The important lesson to draw from verse 12 is that *sin has consequences*—serious consequences (compare Isa. 59:1-2).

5:13: *for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

The expression “*until the law*” is explained by verse 14—“from Adam to Moses.” Sin existed (the imperfect tense of *was* describes continuous action) before the Law of Moses was given. Sin was found in the lives of the first two people, Adam and Eve. Sin was found in the life of their child (Cain). The people who were destroyed in the flood wallowed in sin. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty of sin, and many more examples can be given. Sin existed before Moses’ law and people were held accountable for it. The existence of sin proves that *there was law* before the time of Moses. Mankind has always had some type of law, for without law there can be no lawbreakers (1 Jn. 3:4, KJV). The 13th verse takes readers back to the information in 2:14-15.

Two points can be made from what Paul wrote: (1) All ancient people had law, and this law allowed God to charge those in the world with sin. (2) Since sin was in the world death *reigned* over people. There was *death* in both senses (spiritual and physical) because God’s laws were violated.

Paul also said “*sin is not imputed when there is no law.*” This is a little more complicated. Perhaps we can better comprehend the statement by asking two questions: (1) *When is sin not charged to people?* Answer: **When there is no law.** (2) *Has there ever been a time when law did not exist?* Answer: **No.**

We must remember that no one has ever been saved by a system of law because justification by law requires perfection. Paul’s point in this section of this chapter was this: Since no one has ever been saved under a system of law, it is also true that no one has ever been charged with sin under a system of law. If this sounds odd, perhaps an illustration will clarify the thought. We have never been charged with violating the laws in first century Palestine. Why not? We have never been under that system of law. Because God’s people have never been subject to a law system *for justification*, they have not had sins *imputed* (charged to their account under a system of law). This was even true under the Old Testament era (Rom. 4:7-8). In regard to the word *imputed* (*ellogeo*), this is a present tense verb which occurs only here and Phil. 18. Outside the New Testament, first century writers used this term in secular business dealings which were of a commercial nature. The term means “to lay to account” (Kittle, 2:156).

5:14: *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.*

In verse 12, Paul said that a consequence of sin is *death*. That is, because people sin they die. Here Paul added that death “*reigned*” (existed) from Adam until the time of Moses. Death existed during this period because sin existed. Though this sin was not like Adam’s (his was the violation of a direct command, Gen. 2:17), it still resulted in death. For other verses that use the word *reign* (*basileuo*), see Mt. 2:22 (Archelaus *reigned* over Judea) and Lk. 1:33 (Jesus *reigns* over Jacob’s house). This term occurs again in verses 17 and 21 of this chapter as well as Rom. 6:12. Writings of the so-called *church fathers* used this term to describe the Holy Spirit; secular writers associated it with pagan gods. For a long time sin reigned, but Jesus has broken this power and now He *reigns* (1 Cor. 15:25). *Reign* in 1 Cor. 15:25 is identical to the term in Rom. 5:14. Another key word is “*likeness*” (*homoioima*), a term that only occurs here, Rom. 1:23; 6:5; 8:3; Phil. 2:7; Rev. 9:7. As the term implies, it denotes something similar, but not necessarily something identical. When Rom. 5:14 is compared with its use in Rom. 6:5, it becomes immediately evident that mankind will follow the way of the world or Jesus Christ.

The preceding information tells us that people were condemned long before Moses’ law was given. Moses’ Law was not the start of man’s condemnation, though it did make the condemnation much easier. The Old Testament law was like a giant ship anchor. It was placed upon the necks of those who were Jews, and once it was there, people were condemned by sin and they understood their terrible condition (7:13).

Another point about Adam is found at the end of verse 14: he was a “*figure of him that was to come.*” This means that Adam was the *type* and Christ was the *anti-type* (see the chart below).

Sztanyo noted that in the Old Testament there are several places where one man was brought in to take the place of another man who failed to complete a job. Examples of this include Joshua and Moses. At later times in Biblical history, there are the examples of David and Saul as well as Elisha and Elijah. The

example in Rom. 5 consists of Christ and Adam. Adam failed to keep things on track, so Jesus came to fix what was broken. Paul carefully developed this contrast in verses 15-19.

ADAM	VERSE	CHRIST
Trespass	15, 18	Act of righteousness
Many died	15	Many received grace
Judgment	16	Free gift
Condemnation	16, 18	Justification
Reign of death	17	Reign of life
Disobeyed	19	Obedied
Many made sinners	19	Many made righteous

As this chart shows, Adam and Christ represent two different groups of human beings. Paul used this same technique in 1 Cor. 15:45-49.

Towards the end of this verse Paul used a word which is translated “*transgression*” (*parabasis*), a word that is also found elsewhere in this book (2:23; 4:15). Trench (p. 245) noted how this term denoted the “overpassing of a line.” “In the New Testament this ‘line’ is always the will of God as expressed in His law” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 5:44). Furthermore, in the New Testament this word is not associated with “sins of omission or ignorance, but of those transgressions which are intentional and obstinate violations of known commandments.”

A final word at the end of this verse is “*figure*” (*tupos*). When used as a noun it originally described a “mark left by a stroke.” When used as a verb it means “to strike.” In the English language *tupos* is the basis for our word *type* (those who have used a typewriter know that a typing element “strikes” a ribbon against paper and an image of a letter is made). Here, the word has a special meaning that means “Adam was the figure or type of the One who was to come, i.e., of the second Proto-Human.” For more information on this term see the commentary on First Thessalonians 1:7.

5:15: *But not as the trespass, so also (is) the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.*

In verses 15-17 we find some of the parallels (which are at times parallels of contrast) for Adam and Jesus (notice how many times the word “*one*” is used between verses 12 and 19). The first parallels are found in verse 15. Paul spoke of the “*free gift*” (which came through Christ), and the “*trespass*” (which came through Adam). These are not listed on the chart, but they further show that both men brought something into the world. Adam introduced something that was ugly and damning to the human race. Christ introduced something beautiful and redemptive for mankind.

The first part of verse 15 makes it clear that Jesus and Adam brought two completely different things to mankind. At the end of verse 15, another contrast is offered. Through Adam *many died*. Through Christ and the *gift of grace*, Paul implied that *many have been made alive*.

A careful study of this section emphasizes both God’s grace and man’s wickedness. Great grace is seen in the two-fold description in verse 15 (“*the grace*” and “*the gift by the grace*”). Man’s wickedness is seen in Paul’s use of several different terms for sin (“*sin*,” verse 12; “*transgression*,” verse 14; “*trespass*”—a word meaning *a false step*, verse 15; “*disobedience*,” verse 19). When writing about these matters Paul also stressed that God’s grace came through “*one*” source: Jesus Christ. Perhaps to stress even more the great grace of God, Paul said it “*abounded*” (*perisseuo*), a word meaning “be more than enough, be left over, be present in abundance, be abundant, abound, excel” (Brown, 1:728). Because of

God's grace, "no one and nothing is beyond its reach" (ibid, p. 730).

Verse 15 can be used to argue that the *death* discussed by Paul is spiritual (see verse 12). Another consideration that suggests this death is *spiritual* is that Christianity makes these people "*alive*." Since men and women are not now returning from the dead, all are not made alive *in the physical sense*. Thus, spiritual death must be what Paul meant.

The "*many*" who "*died*" (*apothnesko*) are also described as *all men* in verse 18. Paul's words must be understood within their context (this context describes adult Jews and Gentiles). The *all men* and even the *all* in 3:10, 23 does not include infants or those adults who are incapable of knowing right from wrong. Those who do not know right from wrong are "*in the kingdom*" and are safe from eternal condemnation (Mt. 19:14).

Although not really related to Paul's argument, it is interesting to note that *free gift* comes from a single term (*charisma*) which is used two different ways in the New Testament. It describes the salvation available in Christ (here, verse 16, Rom. 6:23), as well as the supernatural gifts given to Christians in the early church (Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 12:4, 9, etc.).

5:16: *And not as through one that sinned, (so) is the gift: for the judgment (came) of one unto condemnation, but the free gift (came) of many trespasses unto justification.*

This verse is easier to understand if we remember that Paul gave yet another contrast. Adam's single sin brought the penalty of spiritual death. Jesus brought the gift of salvation that takes away sins if men will take advantage of His sacrifice. Adam's contribution to humanity was ugly; Christ's contribution will always be glorious. This again presents a clear and vivid contrast between Adam and Christ.

The main difference between verses 15-16 is this: Verse 15 emphasizes that *sin brings death* and *grace brings life*. Verse 16 stresses that one man's sin brought condemnation, and God's grace through Christ allows for justification even after many sins have been committed. Grace outshines sin (adopted from McGuiggan, p. 178).

It is difficult to detect in English translations, but the word "*gift*" in this verse is different from the term in 15b. Here Paul used a word (*dorema*) that denoted a "gift or present freely bestowed on someone." Gingrich and Danker (p. 210) add that "*the gift (of grace) is not like the effects of one man's sin*." In the New Testament this word for *gift* occurs only here and Jas. 1:17. Concerning the word translated "*free gift*" in 16b (*charisma*), see the commentary on Rom. 5:15.

If all this information were not enough to make the point, Paul spoke of "*condemnation*" (*katakrima*), a word meaning "Divine condemnation" (Brown, 2:265) which is another way of saying "damnation" (ibid). This term occurs only here, verse 18, and Rom. 8:1 (be sure to see how it is used in Rom. 8:1). God's judgment upon sin was certain and severe, but all now have hope through Christ.

Another very important word is "*trespasses*" (*paraptoma*). This term first occurs in Rom. 4:25. It occurs several times in this chapter (twice in verse 15, once in verses 16, 17, 18, and 20). It also occurs in Rom. 11:11-12 where it is rendered "*fall*." Thayer (p. 485) says in Romans 4 and 5 this term denotes "*a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness; a sin, misdeed*." Paul's repeated use of *trespass* reveals several significant truths; Brown (3:586) describes these as "the first sinful act at the beginning" (verse 15) which "brought in its train a mass of sin and woe" (verses 18, 20) as well as "death" (verses 15, 17). The process was so severe "that even before his physical death man was in the power of death" (compare Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13).

At the end of the verse Paul spoke of "*justification*" (*dikaioma*), a word also found in verse 18. While this term can express several different ideas in the New Testament, here it "incorporates the various aspects of the Christ-event: His life, death, and resurrection. In this passage the focus is on the substitutionary death of Jesus, the antithesis of the fall of Adam" (CBL, GED, 2:144).

5:17: *For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, (even) Jesus Christ.*

Adam's sin has allowed death to "reign" over the human race. We face physical and spiritual death because of sin. We may say that at the present time death is king of the hill (Heb. 2:15) for all who are not Christians. Death ceases to be king for those who become Christians because they have "reign in life through Jesus Christ." Those who are *in Christ* are able to overcome the spiritual consequences of sin, and they overcome physical death in the sense that they will be raised to inherit eternal life. Death is no longer an unbeatable enemy. It may win a battle when it claims our life, but it will not defeat the Christian in the war for the soul. For information on the word "trespasses" (*paraptoma*), see the commentary on verse 16. Concerning the word *reign* (*basileuo*), this same term is used of an *earthly ruler* in Mt. 2:22, *sin* (Rom. 6:12), and *Jesus Himself* (1 Cor. 15:25). It is also found in verse 21. Here, it is used twice, and its dual use shows that the *reign of death* can be defeated if we accept the *reign* offered by Christ.

Describing God's grace as "abundant" (*perisseia*) caused Paul to use a term found only here, 2 Cor. 8:2; 10:15; Jas. 1:21. In each of these places it refers "to something above or beyond the normal. It suggests 'the element of excess and fullness that overflows the set bounds. In this process of overflowing, the existing standards and rules are transcended and what was comparable becomes incomparable'" (CBL, GED, 5:160). We have access to God's grace right now because "receiving" is a present tense verb. Notice too that our ability to overcome the consequences of sin is only possible "through" (ASV) or "by" (KJV) **Christ**. This is absolutely consistent with other verses like Jn. 14:6.

5:18-19: *So then as through one trespass (the judgment came) unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness (the free gift came) unto all men to justification of life. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*

There are two options for mankind: sin and justification (for information on *justification* see the commentary on verse 16). These are the only two choices available to those who are accountable, and these choices were both introduced by a single act. "One trespass" (*trespass* is defined in the commentary on verse 16) introduced sin and eternal destruction into the world. On the other hand, *one righteous deed* (the life of Jesus) introduced justification and salvation to humanity. Adam messed things up and the Lord straightened things out. By following the course taken by Adam, men become sinners. By following the course paved by Jesus (obedience to God's will), people can become acceptable to God. It should be noted that verse 19 says sinners are **made**, not **born**. Sin is not inherited (compare Ezek. 18:20). Saying that sinners are "made" (*kathistemi*) is both intriguing and somewhat difficult. "Since much of Romans seems to draw on a legal or courtroom model, it is possible that this means God declared them to be sinners (because they had actually become sinners). No matter how we may try to excuse ourselves, it is God's verdict that we are sinners" (CBL, GED, 3:206). The word rendered *made* occurs twice in verse 19.

"Condemnation" (*katakrima*) in verse 18 is the same term used in verse 16; both here and there it denotes "divine condemnation, including its execution" of punishment (Kittle, 3:952). In verse 19 the word "disobedience" (*parakoe*) describes a kind of disobedience that comes from a "volitional unwillingness to hear" (CBL, GED, 5:64). Spicq (3:29) says it "expresses above all a refusal to listen, turning a deaf ear." Adam knew what was right, but he refused to do it. Aside from this verse, the word rendered *disobedience* can only be found in 2 Cor. 10:6 and Heb. 2:2. A term opposite *disobedience* is "obedience" (*hupakoe*), a word occurring 15 times in the New Testament, and seven of these occurrences are in this book. Jesus was perfectly obedient to heaven's will. If we profess to follow Christ, can our obedience be any less? God says *no*; our obedience must be complete, and this involves both "word and deed" (see Rom. 15:18 where the word translated *obedience* again occurs).

5:20-21: *And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: 21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul said a lot about Adam and Christ. His readers would have started to wonder how the Law of

Moses fit into the picture, so it was time for Paul to answer this question. He said the Law of Moses was added (“*came in*”) so that sins might “*abound*” (the more laws the more violations). “The Law does not make men sinners, for sin was already in the world, but it does make them transgressors” (W. E. Vine (1:366)

It is easy to overlook, but the word rendered “*came in*” (*pareiserchomai*) means “*come in* as a side issue, of the law, which has no primary place in the Divine Plan” (Gingrich and Danker, p. 624). Today, many glorify the law or certain parts of the law (such as the Ten Commandments), but the law was never the “big part” of heaven’s plan. Rather, it was simply a tool to help increase and demonstrate man’s sin and thus cause God’s grace to continually grow (compare 3:24; 5:6-8). God’s grace is so magnificent Paul referred to it as “*abounding more exceedingly*” (*hyperperisseuo*), a single term that occurs only here and 2 Cor. 7:4 in the New Testament. Here, it means “*Grace was present in even greater abundance*” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:399). Brown (1:730) offers some wonderful thoughts on Paul’s discussion of grace and this section of Rom. 5, two of which are noted here. The glory of the law no longer exists “because of splendor which surpasses it, inasmuch as the dispensation of condemnation is surpassed by the dispensation of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:9f.)” Sin abounded through Adam and those that followed him; through Christ there is grace that cannot be exhausted. For information on the word “*trespass*,” see the commentary on verse 16. Information about the word *abound* (*pleonazo*) can be found in the commentary on 2 Thess. 1:3. In this verse it means “*be present in abundance, multiply*” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:102).

Verse 21 suggests that the situation described by Paul (*sin or death reigning over us*) is no longer a problem (for information about the word *reign* see the commentary on verse 17). It is now possible for *grace* to reign over us, and for us to *have eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. It is also possible to have *sin and death* reign over us (verses 17, 21).

What Paul said is the basis for a question that will be answered in 6:1-8:17. This question is, “if the multiplication of sin through law gave grace more opportunity to ‘do its stuff’ doesn’t it logically follow that we should sin that grace may abound?” (McGuiggan, p. 81).

Introduction to the next section (6:1-11):

Owen offers a summary of 6:1-11 and 15-23 on page 37b: “Having established in the previous chapters that God’s plan is the gracious justification of man through faith in Christ, Paul now seeks to show that God still demands obedience from Christians. Christians cannot live lives of sin because they have died to sin (6:2). Those who are converted to Christ turn their backs on sin, considering themselves to be dead to sin as far as sin is concerned and alive as far as God is concerned (6:11).”

Barclay’s comments about Paul’s imaginary opponent are again helpful (pages 82-83 of his Romans commentary).

The Objector: You have just said that God’s grace is great enough to find forgiveness for every sin.

Paul: That is so.

The Objector: You are, in fact, saying that God’s grace is the greatest and the most wonderful thing in all this world.

Paul: That is so.

The Objector: Well, if that is so, let us go on sinning. The more we sin the more grace will abound. Sin does not matter, for God will forgive anyway. In fact we can go further than that and say that sin is an excellent thing, because sin gives the grace of God a chance to operate. The conclusion of your argument is that sin produces grace; therefore sin is bound to be a good thing if it produces the greatest thing in the world.

Paul's first reaction is to recoil from that argument in sheer horror. 'Do you suggest,' he demands, 'that we should go on sinning in order to give grace more chance to operate?' 'God forbid,' he answers, 'that we should pursue so incredible a course as that.'"