

These notes are in a rough form and have not been proofread. I apologize for misspellings, for lack of proper capitalization, for thoughts that are not flushed out, grammatical errors, etc. -Craig

Romans / The Gospel – Introduction and Overview

Romans is the epistle that systematically explains the doctrine of the gospel. (Rom 1:1, 16).

If one were to describe how a car works to a child, one might use an animal to illustrate, saying, “Just like a cheetah eats food and the food makes him able to run fast, so a car eats gasoline and the gas makes the car go fast.” But the simple language of an illustration would not be used if one took a course on how a car works.

The same is true of the how the gospel “works.” Other books of the New Testament mention the gospel, highlight a part of the gospel, explain the gospel in brief, or picture the gospel. But the book of Romans is like a course devoted to the subject, and it is more formally laid out. The book of John, for instance, is filled with stories and illustrations of the gospel, but the book of Romans, in contrast, is a logical, systematic laying out of the details of the gospel, complete with technical rigor.

This is why some say, “Master the doctrine of Romans and the language of John.” When we talk to the lost about the gospel, we would usually want to speak like John—using simple words, expressions, and pictures to try to make the lost understand salvation. But while speaking John, we can be thinking Romans along with its technical detail. (On the other hand, a situation might arise where the lost might just need to hear the development in Romans—let us depend on the Spirit of God to know what to say when!)

The key verse is 1:16, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

Here the matter of not being *ashamed* does not so much mean that Paul was not shy and bashful about the gospel, rather that he was not worried that the gospel would not hold up when it matters. For instance, when the guards over Christ’s tomb made up a story, “when we slept the disciples came and stole the body,” cross examination would ask, “If you were asleep, how did you know it was the disciples that stole the body.” They would then be ashamed of their argument, because it crumbled under the weight of the probing questions. The gospel is not like this. The New Testament often has this use of “ashamed,” for instance in Rom. 10:11 where the one who believes on Him will never be ashamed,” that is, let down.

1:17 points out that in the Gospel God’s Righteousness is seen. That is, in the Gospel we see that God was right about everything He did. He was right when He had wrath against mankind, He was right when He “gave them over,” He was right when He declared the world guilty before Him, He was right when He saves apart from the law, He was right when He dealt with Israel as He did, He was right when He judges sin even when good came from it, etc.

The chart handed out (with two major columns) gives a parallel view of the first two great sections of Romans. The two sections being the “The Wrath of God” (1:18-5:11) and the “Wreckage of Adam’s Sin” (5:12-8:39). The diagram is self explanatory and should be mastered. A verse that links the two sections together is 5:10, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

An example that makes the chart make more sense is to imagine a kleptomaniac who stole 1,000 from the state. She has two big problems: 1) the wrath of the state, which might include heavy fines and jail time, and 2) the problem that by nature she has a strong desire to steal. If one were to solve either problem, the other would remain. A full salvation would address both problems. So it is with the Gospel, our SINS (acts) incur the wrath of God, but we have a second problem, namely, our SIN (nature), which needs God’s salvation as well.

The rest of Romans is outside the scope of these notes, but we just mention that chapters 9-11 deal with Israel’s Disobedience, while 12-16 deal with The One Body (12:5). While the first two sections of Romans end with grand statements about the love of God, these two sections end with doxologies concerning the wisdom of God.

Romans 1:18-3:20

This first section of Romans begins with a long court scene where all of mankind is on trial. In fact the language used is legal language as would be heard in a courtroom. The Prosecutor is God, the defendant is man, the verdict is guilty, and the sentence is death. Romans 1:18-3:20 gives the details of this bad news for mankind.

The conclusion of the passage is more than simply all have sinned. That could be said in one verse. The section is so long because of two reasons:

- 1) Man is shown not only to have committed sins, but to be GUILTY of committing sins. This is why 3:19 says, *that all the world may become guilty before God.*
- 2) God has to be shown to all to be right when He comes to His conclusion (3:4). This is why 3:19 says, *that every mouth may be stopped.* There will be no honest disagreement with God's verdict.

One example of the difference between sinning and being guilty is this: If I ask you to bring me my bag of money I left in the other building, and you do it for me, only to find out that I lied, since the money belonged to the camp, should you be held guilty of stealing that money? You indeed took it, but actually I should bear the guilt; you had no way of knowing anything else.

DEFINITION: **Righteous** is simply being right (or being "in the right"). In a car accident where you proceeded forward on a green light only to be hit by a driver running a red light, you would understand that you were right, or in the right, or "righteous." The word **just** is exactly the same as righteous (and "justice" is the same as "righteousness").

DEFINITION: **The righteousness of God** can mean one of two things:

- 1) That God is in the right
- 2) The perfect, unchanging standard of what right is. Anything short of that is sin. It is defined by the unchanging God Himself, and was exemplified in the life of Christ.

These chapters in Romans will indicate that mankind has no excuse like that. There WAS knowledge so that all are guilty. In order to establish guilt, three witnesses are brought forward by the prosecutor to show knowledge and thus show guilt.

- 1) The witness of creation (1:19-32)
- 2) The witness of conscience (2:1-16)
- 3) The witness of the law (2:17-3:8).

Each witness gives a greater degree of knowledge, as each displays to a greater degree that perfect standard, the righteousness of God.

The law is not perfect in showing the righteousness of God (see Matt 5:21-22, 27-28), but the law is perfect in condemning every man.

In addition to three witnesses, cross examination reveals knowledge within people. For instance, in 2:1 when men judge each other, they are revealing that they know the difference between right and wrong. Thus man is tripped up in his own words, as he tries to make himself look good by judging another, he reveals that he himself knew what he was doing when he did the same thing.

2:14-15 is similar when the Gentiles either accuse behavior, "that was wrong," or excuse behavior, "I can understand why he had to do that in this extreme case." In either case they reveal that there is a law written in their hearts. Though as Gentiles they may not have a written law, they have a conscience.

Let us now examine the three witnesses:

1) **The witness of creation:** (1:19-32) Creation may reveal little about God, but it indeed reveals some things about God. Enough anyway for someone to realize they were created by a superior God. They can know that they are superior to animals, plants, and rocks, and the God that made them must be more superior than even themselves. Thus they cannot imagine their creator to be on the level of animals, plants, or rocks. (See Paul's use of this argument on Mars Hill, Acts 17:24-29).

Verse 23 says they *changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds, and four footed animals and creeping things.* This is directly against the knowledge of creation—*His eternal power and godhead* (v 20).

But even with knowledge of God people did not glorify him as God (1:21). They were not thankful. This is important since, in the original, the root word in "thankful" is the word "grace." Thus people would not acknowledge to God their dependence on his grace. That is, they would not recognize before Him that their very source of life and means of life both come from His generous gifts.

In vv 24, 26, and 28 we read that God “gave the over/up.” God allowed them to run rampant with their sinfulness into various heinous sins. It seems there could be various reasons for His doing this:

- a) Because that is what man wanted, and God granted them their wicked desire
- b) Because that is how they would see the ugliness of sin. (For example, if Naaman had only a small spot of leprosy, it might have been tolerable or even cute. But when the leprosy spread, a leper sees the magnitude, seriousness, and ugliness of the condition.
- c) Because others can be warned by God’s actions against them.

2) **The witness of conscience:** (2:1-16) We cannot charge God with being against these people and making it impossible for them. Verse 4 says that God’s goodness would lead one toward repentance, but verse 5 goes on to say that it is their impenitent heart that is causing the wrath against them to increase.

Verses 6-11 form an ABCCBA structure. Even though they say that God will render eternal life to one who continues to do good (v 7) it does not necessarily mean anyone will get to heaven that way. It could be understood to mean IF someone did that, God would be a fair judge and grant them eternal life. But it will turn out that nobody fits into that category. A different way to understand these verses is that they describe people like Cornelius (Acts 10). He responded to what little light he had. God saw to it that he eventually received eternal life (in this case through sending Peter to him to give more light).

God will judge a person based on the amount of light (understanding and knowledge) the person had. This is a key principle in understanding the way God judges, and verse 12 gives us the principle: For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.

This principle of judging based on conscience for those without the law is seen clearly in Amos chapters 1 and 2. Here The LORD judges nations for sins but never quotes the law to them. He judges them based on moral understanding their consciences would have given them. But when it comes to Judah (who had the law) He judges them saying, *Because they have despised the law of the LORD and have not kept His commandments.*

3) **The witness of the law:** (2:17-3:8) Being the representative people of God on earth, the Jews were in a privileged position. They were the possessors and teachers of God’s law. What happens often is that when we teach God’s side of an issue for so long, we tend to believe that we must be on God’s side of the issue. In actuality the law taught also condemned the teacher.

It also didn’t matter if good came as a result of a sin, the sin was still judged as wrong. When people cried out that the Lord Jesus should be crucified, it was still wrong, even though Christ’s death brought about enormous good.

3:10-18 are some of the saddest and most stinging verses summing up humanity. These verses describe man in his natural state. Thankfully, God has not left us in our natural state. So even though the verses say, *there is none who seeks after God*, it means if left alone, we would be exactly like that. But God does not leave us alone. He gives us light that we might see in order to be saved (John 12:35-36). Armed with that light (which comes to everyone according to John 1:9) countless people have sought the Lord. Deuteronomy 4:29 (as well as other places) will say that God will be found when He is sought for with one’s full heart and soul.

In order to see light, one needs to have light, not be blind, not have closed his eyes, and not have his eyes closed by God. God provides light. References to God’s closing of people’s eyes always comes after God was first rejected by the people. Seeing light does not mean salvation—people can see light and still reject the Savior.

In 3:20 it says that nobody will ever *be justified by the deeds of the law* and that *by the law is the knowledge of sin*. This is understood by thinking of the law like a thermometer. When one sees the thermometer is showing a body temperature too high, one does not get better by sucking harder on the thermometer. Rather one reads what the thermometer indicates and seeks to find medicine to get better. In the illustration the medicine would, of course, be the Savior.

Enough bad news—now the good news! A means of achieving the righteousness of God is introduced, and it doesn’t use the law! It is by faith in Jesus Christ. We can be justified!

DEFINITION: To **justify** means to declare that someone is right (righteous). It could be like a legal pronouncement or it could be a demonstration that someone is right. It does not mean to make right. In Luke 7:29 and Romans 3:4 God is spoken of as being justified. This use would not make sense if justification meant making someone right. (Man cannot make God right, but man can declare that God is right). So if you were in an accident and I came on the scene and said, “you were right,” then I have justified you. Of course it would mean more to you if the judge in the case said, “you are right,” in which case he would be justifying you. After all, who cares if I said you were right, but if the judge does it, you are legally free!

But the question arises, how can God justify the ones who believe in Jesus Christ? If justification means God declaring that we are righteous when in fact we are not righteous, isn't He lying. Wouldn't He be unjust in justifying us?

The answer lies in what Christ has done on the cross. Christ Jesus was a “propitiation.” We better define this word and then give an illustration to help.

DEFINITION: When it says Christ Jesus was a **propitiation** it means that He gave God the Father a basis (the means) to be able to show mercy to man while being righteous at the same time. An illustration will help us understand this:

If I work at a bank and a woman comes in (suppose I love her, to make the story good!), and she says she cannot pay her mortgage this month. I want to show her mercy, so I tell her, “go your way, your debt is forgiven, and all is right with you and your account.” Can I righteously do this? NO! Even though I love her, I cannot be righteous and forgive her debt at the same time.

However suppose a rich man comes to me and says, “I am putting a large sum of money into an account for you to use. When someone comes in who cannot pay, and you desire to have mercy on them and forgive their debt, then you can take money out of this account and apply it to cover the debt you forgave.” This man would have propitiated me. This means he would have provided a basis by which I could declare the woman's account right (and forgiven) and yet I can still be right in so doing!

Of course, in this story, I represent the Father, the rich man represents Christ Jesus, and the customer represents the sinner who has faith in Jesus Christ. The “account” that Christ set up is big enough to propitiate God for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2). Note that propitiation is not something Christ does for us, but for the Father.

This also shows why God was righteous in his dealing with people the way He did in the Old Testament. He knew the propitiation was coming.

In 3:31 it says that we “establish the law.” Some people think Christians weaken the law. This is not true. The Christian can say that EVERY transgression of the law will be punished. Because of the work of Christ, the sinner does not have to pay it himself (if he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ), but the law's demands for penalty will have been met.

Chapter 4

Two Old Testament characters are brought up now, Abraham and David. In keeping with the courtroom scene and legal terminology used so far in the book, what is being cited here is legal precedent or case law. The idea is explained in the following example:

If a homosexual couple married in the United States and this marriage was challenged in court, and if the case made it to the supreme court where the marriage was upheld, then the next day thousands of homosexual couples would get married. If anyone challenged one of these marriages in court, the couple would simply have to cite the single case where the supreme court upheld that one marriage. The argument is that if the court honored that one marriage, they must honor all similar marriages. (This example is used with the understanding that God does not recognize such a union).

In a similar way, Paul now shows Abraham was justified by faith. And according to case law, if the court of heaven recognized Abraham as justified by faith, well then I can be justified by faith as well, and so can you!

Abraham lived before the law, David lived after the giving of the law. But in both cases, the individuals were justified apart from works. The principle of Romans 4:4-5 is universal.

Rom 4:4 states this: if a person works, the paycheck they receive is not grace given to them—no, it is owed to them. Similarly, if someone worked to earn their salvation, then salvation would not be of grace but of debt (owed to him).

Rom 4:5 then says that to the one who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. This is an extremely powerful verse, because many people think that salvation is somehow a combination of works and grace. But this verse explicitly uses the words, does not work.

Of course believing itself can be thought of as a work (Jn 6:29) but it is not a work of merit. That is, it does not earn a person even a tiny bit of salvation. A beggar should not stick his hand out, receive a hamburger, and then say, “I earned this hamburger, since I worked for it by sticking my hand out.” Nope, the burger was a free gift of grace; the “work” of sticking out his hand doesn’t count for anything in terms of earning it.

Now the question arises, “What is faith?”

DEFINITION: Having **faith** in God is relying upon what God says. **Believe** is the exact same word as faith in the original, except one is a noun and the other a verb.

Important things to note about faith and about this definition:

- 1) Faith is a response to a hearing. (Rom 10:17 a literal reading: “Faith comes by hearing, hearing God speak.”) See also Acts 27:25. If I was digging for treasure and said I have faith there is treasure here (with nothing else to go on) I would be using the word incorrectly (that might be fantasy, but not faith). But if I had a letter from a friend that said there is treasure there, and I am relying on the report and digging, I am exercising faith. (The treasure may not even be there, but I am using the word faith correctly!)
- 2) The level one will be able to have faith in someone is related to how well they know them. Thus our faith in God can be increased as we know Him more.
- 3) Faith can be perfectly logical. I looked at a map with a 12 year old girl. On the map it looked like Greenland was much larger than the United States (it really isn’t, but it looked that way on the map). I asked her which was bigger, and she observed the map and said that Greenland was. When I told her the US was bigger she said “Oh, ok.” I asked her “really now, deep down inside, which one do you think is bigger?” Her answer was Greenland and when asked why it was she thought that, she said, “Because you told me it was.” Now this was faith, but was it logical? Yes! Even though her observation said Greenland, she also logically and reasonably weighed the evidence that I was a scientist, I also saw the map, I wasn’t trying to tease her, she didn’t know lots of things, etc. to come to the conclusion that she would rely upon what I said. That is faith and it was perfectly logical for her to do so!

In 4:3, we see the statement, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*. The “believed God” part of this statement seems to be expanded in vv 18-22. Verse 18 starts with *who* (Abraham) and verse 22 ends with, *it was accounted to him for righteousness*. In between we see Abraham relying on what God said, even though it meant that God would have to bring life out of a dead situation.

We also believe in the God that brings life out of a dead situation:

- 1) We believe he raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (v 24)
- 2) We believe he can bring life into ourselves, though (spiritually) dead.

Chapter 5

5:1-11

5:1 says, *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. We spent time in our lesson sharing items from our lists of benefits that follow on from this truth—things which are true of every true, justified, believer. The things are listed in vv 1-11.

One, for instance, is that tribulations now have some meaning and purpose. Even times when we cannot see the very specific purpose of them, we can now understand that God is using them to produce endurance in our Christian life. It is one of the tools that God uses to ensure we continue on in faith (Christ’s intercession is another means).

The logic in vv 6-10 is interesting. In verse 10 we read that we will be saved by His life. This is introducing the next section where God works in our lives practical holiness. But how do we know He will finish the job? What if He gives up on us part way through when He finds we are not seeming to be the best of students. Well v 10 reminds us that when we

were saved (reconciled to God) we had been enemies. Now that we are no longer enemies, won't He continue to save us? Verses 6-8 remind us that it was when we were sinners (at our worst, if you will) that Christ died for us. If He was willing to save us at our worst, He will certainly not quit when we are His own.

Note:

We have been saved from the penalty of sins

We are being saved from the power of sin

We will be saved from the presence of sin

Verse 10 uses the word "reconciled." Before we were saved, we had something against God and God had something against us. We (incorrectly) didn't like God and God (correctly) held wrath against us. But Christ solved both of these problems to bring us together. He demonstrated God's love (5:8) and by His life showed us what God was really like, and He also satisfied the wrath of God against our sins. He is the One who put one hand on our shoulder and one hand on God's shoulder and said, "Now you two—be reconciled."

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SECTION 2 of the book of Romans, 5:12 -8
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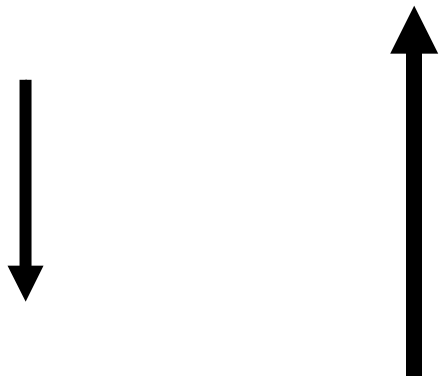
We now come to the second great section of the book of Romans, namely 5:12-8:39. Recall the story of the kleptomaniac. She was under penalty, but she also had a problem within herself of having the strong urge to steal. The matters of penalty have been addressed in the first section of Romans, but now the gospel will reach to our other great problem—indwelling sin (sin nature, much like the kleptomaniac's problem). The problem is identified from its source:

Romans 5:12-21 are commonly admitted as difficult verses. I give my view that when 5:12 says all sinned (when Adam sinned) it is not talking at all about guilt, but effect. We are not held guilty for Adam's sin, but we are affected by it.

Think of a woman who is pregnant and takes drugs. The woman gives birth to the little girl who is born with a drug problem. The woman is put in jail for her crime of drug abuse. We would not say the child should be put in jail because she "took drugs" while in the mother. That would be holding the child guilty of her mother's crime. But we can say to the girl (assuming the girl understands us!) "Look, you have a problem that needs to be dealt with, because when your mother took drugs, you took drugs." Here we are not saying she is guilty for the act, but that it affected her. Likewise, when Adam sinned, we sinned (not the guilt of it, but affected by it).

The fact that we have been seriously affected by Adam's sin shows up in the fact that all physically die. Death came by Adam and passed to all. From Adam on, death reigned even in those who had not committed in their lifetimes the transgression Adam committed. But Adam did not just pass along to us a body that dies (which is evident), but we also were born with a sin nature.

What then follows is a contrast between Adam and Christ. Note the two arrows:



We make three observations:

- 1) They are the same (similar)
- 2) They are in opposite directions
- 3) The second is larger than the first

This is exactly the contrast between Adam and what he provided and Christ and what He provides. The passage will go on to describe how Adam is a picture of Christ (like observation #1), that Christ brought good instead of bad (observation #2) and that the good Christ brought is much more than the bad Adam brought (observation #3).

When Adam sinned, mankind suffered loss. Although there was not obligation on God's part, Christ restored what Adam lost, but even went further! We are better off today than we would have been had Adam not sinned! For example, our citizenship is in heaven, not on earth. We are Christ's bride, we will sit on the throne with the Lord, etc., etc.

This matches the trespass law of the Old Testament. When one trespassed against another (say he ruined a \$25 tool) he not only had to pay the \$25 back, but add another \$5 to it (20 percent) and thus pay back \$30. So also, the Lord restored more than Adam lost.

Further we note that the Father also lost something in the Fall. He lost worshipers. But Christ restored worshipers to the Father and added more! Adam could worship God as Creator, but we worship Him as Creator but even more as Redeemer (see the "new song" Rev 5:9-10).

So we conclude that where sin abounded, grace super-abounded!

Flock and Fold (John 10:1-5, 16)

(Before continuing with Romans, an illustration from the book of John will be helpful for understanding what we will encounter later in our study).

The way to begin to decode this story is to see first that Christ is the Shepherd. In the story the shepherd comes to the fold to the door and speaks to the sheep. The sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd. He leads out his sheep, which come to him, and he goes before them. He has other sheep not of that fold to bring (v 16) and there will be one flock (not fold) and one shepherd.

A flock is a group of sheep that gather around a shepherd. It is not walls that keep them in, but nearness to the shepherd that keeps them gathered. In contrast, a fold is an enclosure that holds sheep in. A shepherd will use a fold when he cannot be there himself. David, the shepherd, did this when he went to the battle with Goliath. 1 Sam 17:20 says David left his sheep with a keeper before he went away.

The rest of the illustration is understood as follows:

The sheep in the fold is Israel. The fold is the system of law (Judaism) that they were kept in. The sheep that respond to the shepherd are the true Israelites (not just physical Israelites, but true believers in God). The sheep in the fold that do not come are unbelieving Jews. The "other sheep" (not of the fold, v 16) are Gentiles. Christ will lead his own sheep out of Judaism and to Himself and gather also sheep of the Gentiles, and there will be one flock and one shepherd. (It also seems the doorkeeper is John the Baptist, but that is more than we need for this lesson).

This understanding fits with Scripture: Gal 3:23, Gal 3:19, and Eph 2:11a, 13-15.

The sheep that belonged to Christ were true believers in God before Christ even came. God gave them to His Son. Examples of such people are Anna, Simeon, Joseph, Mary, Zachariah, Elizabeth, etc. We read that God gave them to His Son in John 17:6.

John 17:8 goes on to say how the transfer happened. The Lord spoke the words of His Father, and thus the hearers knew surely that He had come from God. They then followed Him.

An example of this happening can be seen with Nathaniel (John 1:45-49). He was an "Israelite indeed" (a true believer in God) before he met the Lord. But he was predisposed to not believe on the Lord Jesus. Only a few utterances of the Lord later, and Nathaniel was proclaiming Him as the Son of God and King of Israel. Before this, he was God's, but he quickly became Christ's.

What if someone who was really God's heard Christ but did not come to Him? That would never happen. *All the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out* (John 6:37).

Others who are not true believers in God do not (immediately) come to Christ, but that doesn't mean they can't become His sheep later. In Acts 2, many who did not come to Christ earlier came to repent and believe on Him.

Back to thinking of a flock and a fold: It is important to see that the system that Christ leads His sheep into is a flock and not a fold. This is a picture of the environment of grace we have in Christ rather than law (fold).

The system of law involves no person, but rather a boundary. Law says "go this far and no farther," while grace says, "get as close to the Shepherd as you can."

This does not mean we have no commandments. We do. Christ even said, *If you love me, keep my commandments*. But the New Testament commandments have definitely taken on a different tone. Take giving for example. Under law one had to give 10 percent (at one instance, anyway; there were others). Note how this command is similar to the boundary of a fold—"this far and no farther." By contrast, in the New Testament, when it comes to how much we give, we simply read that *God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7).

Another difference is the way commandments are given. In the Old Testament it is rare to get any explanation with a command. The commands are given much like one speaks to a slave. But in the New Testament, there is often motivation, reasoning, or an example of Christ given that accompanies the things we are exhorted to do. Thus we are being treated as friends more than as servants because *the servant does not know what his master is doing* (John 15:15).

In some way, the Shepherd actually can gain benefit from enemies of the sheep being out there. Since the only security of the sheep comes from the Shepherd, the enemies make the sheep want to keep close by Him. In fact, the Shepherd will not allow the solution to the sheep's problems to be separate from Himself, as the next (semi-fiction) illustration shows.

I was in a chemistry class with a young woman that I liked. I was doing well in chemistry, but she wasn't. She would ask me questions and I answered them, which I was very happy to do, since I liked her and enjoyed her company! Now one day I got the idea that I could help her by writing on a few pieces of paper all the formulas she would need. That way whenever she needed to know something, she would have the answer at her fingertips. I got ready to write and thought—wait, you idiot! If you give her the solutions, she will take the papers and forget about you. So I stopped that idea. I would not allow the solution to be separated from myself. So with Christ, He will not allow the solution that leads to spiritual victory in our lives to be found anywhere but in Himself. The "secret" to spiritual victory, if it can be called that, is to be found only in an intimate, close relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Flock / Fold continued

Recall, the song is wrong. It should not be, "Oh the grace that brought me to the fold." It is more correct, "Oh the grace that brought me to the flock." But that sounds weird ☹

We now look at advantages of the system of a flock over a fold, that is, advantages of grace over law a system in which God will raise us in our Christian life.

- The fact that the law is a boundary-based system means our focus on the boundary actually entices us to want to break it. We can walk along fine, see a sign, "Keep off the grass," and then be focused on the grass and of course want to try it out!
- The boundary ends up being the thing we think about rather than the Shepherd (Christ)
- The fact that the law is command plus penalty means that our minds are forced to be focused on the boundary. We can walk along a plank lying on the floor with no problem. But put the same plank across two 10-story buildings and we have trouble walking across. Why? The immense penalty attached forces our mind on nothing else other than not making a false move. This ends up being detrimental to our progress.
- Focus on the boundary hurts our progress in the battle for the mind. If I say, "do not think of the number 13," you are bound to think of 13 as long as your mind is dwelling on the commandment. But if I say think of 36, add 12, and divide by 2, then your mind ends up not thinking about 13. How was this done? Not by dwelling on the commandment, but by focusing on something else. In Galatians 5:16 we read *walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*. It does not say to keep from fulfilling the lust of the flesh and then you'll be walking in the Spirit. In using the example, the verse would sound like this, "think of the number 36, and you'll end up not thinking about 13!"

- The law requires a certain amount, but when that is met, people have no reason to go any further. When a minimum is set, the minimum is all you'll get! A police officer giving a ticket was accused of just trying to meet his "quota." His response: "Oh no, they've done away with quotas some time ago. Now we can write as many as we want!"
- Under law we become frustrated and despair. We lose incentive to continue trying to proceed.
- The law simply gives the boundary plus penalty. In the flock there is a Shepherd who can give help (and new life, of course, which is essential for any progress!)
- There is an individual nature about my personal walk with the Lord. I must go to Him for help, and He may deal with me on an issue in an individual way. One man gave up playing chess to help his walk with the Lord—not a measure to be taken by everyone. A woman who can become consumed with crossword puzzles limits herself to one a day, a conclusion she reached before the Lord for her own particular life. In our own life we have questions. Sometimes we want to line up our CD collection from the most wholesome to the least and want to know where the boundary is that says, "on this side you can listen to them, on the other side you cannot." But such law does not exist. Answers to questions like that can be complicated, but certainly involve evaluating our own life with the Lord, individually.
- Grace allows us to return to the Savior immediately after failure. Our natural tendency is to hide at such time, but that is just when we need Him the most! We can understand the penalty has been paid, confess, and return without needing to give ourselves a time-out from the One who is the solution to our problems.
- One learning to become a diamond cutter would not learn if our teacher stood next to us with a baseball bat ready to strike if we damaged the expensive diamond. But a better system would be if one knew how many diamonds I would break and paid all the cost of my diamond-cutting education in advance. Then I can concentrate on the learning. When I make a mistake, I can appreciate the cost of the giver and be thankful, and set out and give it another try!
- Grace allows God's judgment on His own children to be delayed. He says that if we judge ourselves we would not be judged. This means that when we sin He will often do nothing as far as corrective action for a while but rather just watch. (Note: we will never experience the penalty of His wrath) If we correct the problem ourselves and return to Him, he does nothing. If after some time we are not judging ourselves, then He can step in to take measures to bring us back to Himself. Law understands no such flexibility.
- Law leads to pride and boasting and causes us to compare ourselves with others. Looking at the Shepherd causes humility. Compare Luke 18:9-14 (Pharisee and tax collector).

A nice story that displays a difference between law and grace is that of a housekeeper. She worked for a single man who gave her a list of duties to be done. In time, they fell in love and were married. The man, of course, got rid of the list, but the wife actually did all the list and more! This is a beautiful illustration of serving in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Rom 7:6).

The meaning of the illustration of the fold and flock actually appears several times in the New Testament. In Acts we see historically how the Lord "led them out" of Judaism. At the beginning of Acts, for instance, we see Peter and John going to the temple to pray. By the end of Acts this is not happening. Activity moves from Jerusalem on out. Also, at the start of Acts they are casting lots to find God's will (an Old Testament action), but in, for instance, the start of Acts 16 we see dependence on the Spirit of God in showing God's will.

In Hebrews 13:13 we see that the separation between the Lord and Judaism has gotten so far that one cannot be both with the Lord and in Judaism (pictured by Jerusalem). Which do we choose? The Savior of course—*let us go forth to HIM!*

Another time it appears is doctrinally in the epistles. In Galatians 4, the system of law is described as a child in a house who is being told what to do like a slave is. But a son (older) is not treated that way. The son being a picture of how we are treated under grace.

Romans 6-7a

We note that baptism is a picture of going into death, being buried, and being raised to life. It is a testimony of the gospel. We were so bad, that the answer was not to reform the old life, but to infuse a new life and regard the old life legally dead (and upon our physical death, the old life will be gone for good!)

A picture of baptism is in the way the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. They, in picture, went down into death and came up on the other side. They changed their position. It has been said, "It took God one day to get the people out of Egypt, but it

took Him 40 years to get Egypt out of the people.” This is exactly the difference between positional truth and practical truth. You see we will say something similar, “It took God an instant to get me out of SIN, but it will take Him the rest of my life to get the SIN out of me!”

Romans 6 begins this way. Our baptism showed that in our life before we were saved we were in a land called Adam, Sin, and Condemnation. Our baptism shows that we (just like the Israelites) left that land and went to live in a new land called Christ, Justification, and Life. Now to get from one to the other we went through death. The death didn’t actually hurt us, because Christ died as us. He really died, and we “pretend” that we were the ones that died. In legal language it reads that our old man died. This is NOT our old nature that died. Sad to say, that old nature came with us on the journey. But our “old man” died, meaning that legally, in the courts of heaven, our accounts of sins and punishments have been closed, since we are dead.

Now while we didn’t really, physically die, it is not the same when it comes to life. At the point of conversion we really did receive new life that wasn’t there before. The life is not just a legal thing like the death of our old man.

It is fascinating to realize that God could have removed our old nature from us at the point of salvation. If he did that our battles would be easier—they would be nonexistent! He chose not to remove it. It seems there is profit in the battles we have with our old nature. He left enemies among the Israelites so they would learn how to war (Judges 3:1-2). There is profit in the battle!

Now what God did for us positionally by bringing us out of the land of Sin, he wants us to make more and more true in our practical life (vv 11-13). Some preach verse 11 as a magic silver bullet that will solve all our problems of the old nature. They say that if only we would “reckon” we would make the old nature effectively nonexistent. This is not what is being instructed here. But what we can do is reckon (regard as true) what God has done. We regard as true what was already discussed including that we are dead legally and thus not in fear of the punishment of sin. (The understanding of that freedom from punishment is very practical, as it makes us realize the environment of grace, as our next point will show).

So what provisions have been made so far for our holiness: 1) God has seen to it that we have died legally. 2) God has given us new life that wasn’t there before, so we can now live differently than before.

We next see yet another provision God has made for us in verse 14: *For sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under law but under grace.* Yahoo! All the things that we have looked at in our last two studies about fold and flock, law and grace—all the benefits of the grace system are ours. Aren’t you thankful that God has chosen to raise you under grace and not law! Have you ever thanked Him for that in your prayers?

Verse 15 asks then, shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? The answer given in vv 16-23 is that although our sins currently have no penalty, they have consequences—sometimes very serious ones. Suppose you tell your boy not to eat certain apples while you are gone, and if he does you’ll give him a spanking. (You know the apples are not ready yet and will get him sick). You return to find out that your boy is sick in his room from eating the apples—you might forgive him and withhold the punishment, but the consequence of sickness remains. One solemn consequence that is mentioned is that one who commits sins can become enslaved.

Chapter 7 starts by explaining how we were legally separated from the system of law. A husband/wife relationship is used in the passage to illustrate. Death breaks the marriage relationship. Now it is not that the law died, but we died (legally). So we can be married to another (namely to Christ). Because of that, we can serve in newness of the Spirit, not in oldness of the letter. (Recall the illustration of the housekeeper who became a wife and the different way she served in the two relationships).

Romans 7:7-8:39

7:7-14 This is Paul’s experience before he was saved. He notes that he was doing pretty well (“alive”) once, but when the commandment came, the very commandment tickled his sin nature to want to do evil. Comparatively speaking, that element of sin inside of him was “dead” (dormant) until then. Although there was nothing really wrong with the law, there was something wrong with him so that when the two came together, it led to his sinning.

We are worse than the worse thing we have ever done. We must understand this about ourselves. Our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We have not seen all the fruit that can come out of our utterly wicked selves often simply because of limited opportunity.

7:15-25 This seems to be some of Paul’s experience after he was saved. I think it is fair to say we have all had experiences like this in our Christian lives. It looks like failure, but there actually was some good that came out of the experience. Verse 18 shows that through this Paul learned by hard experience that in himself (that is in his flesh) there dwells no good thing. That is valuable! All was not lost in his failures. Further in v 24 it shows that this experience drove him to seek safety and deliverance from the Lord. (Recall how sheep would be driven to the shepherd for safety in the flock illustration).

Now the average of our countings of words in various translations came out as follows:

	I, me, my	Spirit, Christ, God	RESULT
Chapter 7	49 occurrences	8 occurrences	Failure
Chapter 8	3 occurrences	47 occurrences	Victory

We see in this what will turn out to be an important ingredient in victory. Taking the mind off self and onto Christ. Happily, the environment of grace allows for exactly that! Recall that the formula in Gal 5:16 is walk in the Spirit, and you will [end up] not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. It is most often the case that we should not center our lives around “I” and try to attack the problem head on, but focus on Christ and walking in the Spirit only to find out that we end up not fulfilling the lust of the flesh. It has been said that Satan will try to get us to think everything of ourselves, or he’ll try to get us to think nothing of ourselves—it doesn’t matter, as long as we’re thinking of – ourselves! Note how many times the Lord Jesus spoke of the Father’s love for Him (several) versus the number of times He spoke of His love for the Father (only once, John 14:31). We can learn to do the same.

8:1-4 In Christ (in this new land we’ve been brought into (Ch 6) in the environment of grace) there is no condemnation. This allows, among other things, *for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to make me free from the law of sin and death*. The law of gravity makes a brick return to earth when thrown up, since it is more dense than air. A bird is more dense than air, but it does not return to earth when thrown. Why? There is another law in the bird, the law of life that allows it to overcome the law of gravity. So the new life God has given us, and the Spirit of God gives us a “law” that can overcome the law of sin and death.

Note also how verse 4 mirrors Galatians 5:16. The righteous requirements of the law end up being fulfilled in the one who was not under a system of law! Fascinating! The system of the flock works better than the fold!

8:5-13 The contrast in these verses is between a saved and lost person, not between a poor Christian and a super one. All believers are given the Spirit from the moment of conversion. We see this since verse 9b says, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. That is, unless we have the Spirit, we are not a Christian at all. In Acts there were instances when there was a delay between conversion and receiving the Spirit, but by the time of the book of Romans, Paul makes it clear that every believer has the Spirit. Eph 1:13 also emphasizes that it is (literally) having believed or upon believing that we are sealed with the Spirit.

8:14-17 The difference between a child and a son: Being a child of God emphasizes the fact that we are born of God. Being a Son of God emphasizes either that we are treated as mature (as opposed to little children) or that we behave like God. The latter meaning is understood when James and John were called the “Sons of Thunder.” It was not that Thunder had a baby (Children of Thunder??) but that they exhibited the characteristics of Thunder.

8:18-25 When Adam was created, He was created above creation. When he fell, God maintained that He would still be above creation, but fallen man would not (could not) reign over unfallen creation. Creation fell under him, of no fault of its own. “Cursed is the ground for your sake.” Roses bore thorns, for example, evidencing the effect on creation.

Creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God (when creation can be put back). I wonder what I will be like when I will be revealed for what I am. I think if you saw me now the way I will be, you will probably worship me! Hey, John fell down to begin to worship an angel that he saw in heaven ... twice!

God’s plan of salvation includes the redemption of my body, but that is future. He is not redeeming it now. If the Lord does not come, my body will see death before being raised up incorruptible.

they are, in fact, deserving of punishment and not just thinking that I'm a sinner, but that's ok since I'm only human. Still others will have to change their minds about what they want their lives to be like—after all, receiving Christ will mean Christ will change them, and they will not receive Christ if they have not changed their minds as to what they should become like (that is, changing their minds about sin).

So sometimes Paul will say both repent and believe, and sometimes he will say believe (because one will have had to repent to truly believe). Interestingly, the book of John never uses the word “repent.” But in order to believe on the Son (which John uses frequently) one would have had to have changed his mind about several things.