

LEXHAM
INTERPRETER'S
TRANSLATION

ROMANS

Greek-English Interlinear | Paraphrase | Study Notes

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον | Κατὰ Μάρκον | Κατὰ Λουκᾶν | Κατὰ Ἰωάννην
Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων | **Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους** | Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' | Πρὸς
Κορινθίους β' | Πρὸς Γαλάτας | Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους | Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους
Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς | Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς α' | Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς β'
Πρὸς Τιμόθεον α' | Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' | Πρὸς Τίτον | Πρὸς Φιλήμονα
Πρὸς Ἑβραίους | Ἰακώβου | Πέτρου α' | Πέτρου β' | Ἰωάννου α'
Ἰωάννου β' | Ἰωάννου γ' | Ἰούδα | Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου

Michael F. Bird

*Praise for Lexham Interpreter's Translation
and Michael F. Bird*

“Michael Bird is a master at rendering the New Testament into English. In this resource he captures both the apostle’s meaning and his tone—a rare feat. The result is a translation that helps readers approach familiar texts with fresh eyes.”

—**Sandra Glahn**, professor of media arts and worship, Dallas Theological Seminary; author of *Nobody’s Mother: Artemis of the Ephesians in Antiquity*

“This is the next best thing to taking a course with Michael Bird on the Greek text of Romans. Bird’s English translations are striking, his comments on the Greek are reliable, and his theological annotations are insightful. Bible readers with knowledge of Greek will be sharpened, and those without will benefit from Bird’s career-long exegetical knowledge and wisdom.”

—**Nijay K. Gupta**, professor of New Testament, Northern Seminary; author of *A Beginner’s Guide to New Testament Studies*

“The Lexham Interpreter’s Translation by Michael Bird will prove helpful to pastors and other serious students of the Bible. Bird’s interpretive paraphrase of the Greek New Testament with detailed footnotes are ‘a modern Targum’ from a seasoned and faithful scholar. Those who struggle with Greek will be helped by the interlinear text that is provided.”

—**Robert L. Plummer**, Collin and Evelyn Aikman Professor of Biblical Studies, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; coauthor of *Beginning with New Testament Greek*

LEXHAM
INTERPRETER'S
TRANSLATION

ROMANS

Greek-English Interlinear | Paraphrase | Study Notes

Excerpts from Romans 1 & 3

Michael F. Bird



LEXHAM
ACADEMIC

Excerpts from Romans 1 & 3
Lexham Interpreter's Translation

Copyright 2025 Michael F. Bird

Lexham Academic, an imprint of Lexham Press
1313 Commercial St., Bellingham, WA 98225
LexhamPress.com

You may use brief quotations from this resource in presentations, articles, and books.
For all other uses, please write Lexham Press for permission.
Email us at permissions@lexhampress.com.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are the Lexham Interpreter's Translation.

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (MSG) are from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are from the New American Standard Bible®. Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Scripture quotations marked (NET) are from the NET Bible®, copyright 1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked (NJB) are from The New Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1985 by Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd and Les Editions du Cerf, and used by permission of the publishers. Scripture quotations marked (NRSV) are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (RSV) are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1952 [2nd edition, 1971] by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Excerpts from Romans 1 & 3 ISBN 9781683598404
Romans Print ISBN 9781683598145
Romans Digital ISBN 9781683598152

Lexham Editorial: Derek Brown, Mandi Newell, Abigail Stocker, Katrina Smith
Cover Design: Joshua Hunt
Typesetting: Abigail Stocker

Reading the New Testament Afresh: Text, Paraphrase, and Notes

There is no shortage of modern English Bible translations. An inspection of the website Biblegateway.com reveals that there are 59 different English translations and editions of the Bible. While that might sound like quite a lot, truth be told, the list provided is not exhaustive, since there are other translations of the New Testament not included on the website (e.g. J. Moffatt [1922] and D. Stern [1989]). The fact is that when it comes to English translations of the Bible we are spoiled for choice and have something of an over-supply. Among the many translations available my personal preferences, for both academic and personal use, include the NRSV, CEB, CSB, ESV, and NIV. I've even been fortunate enough to have been involved in the initial translation of one biblical book for the CEB and updating the text and notes for one biblical book for the NRSVue. While most translations are supervised by a committee, there are also some very good translations by individuals.¹

The primary goal of this volume (or project) is not to produce another English translation, even though the final product will use two

-
1. N. T. Wright's *New Testament for Everyone* or *Kingdom New Testament* is a fresh and elegant translation, exemplifying Wright's particular knack for putting things memorably, and oscillates between being highly literal to being almost midrashic. Then there is David Bentley Hart's *The New Testament*, which is a work by a theologian immersed in the classics of Greco-Roman literature, translating the text into the language and atmosphere of antiquity. Scot McKnight too has produced his *The Second Testament* which showcases his lifetime of work in New Testament exegesis and aspiring to draw us into the world of Jesus and the apostles.

new translations of the biblical text to accomplish its goal. I have no interest in competing with the NIV or the KJV. I regard the task of putting the Bible into contemporary English as competently fulfilled by the various array of translations already available. Rather, my aim in this volume is read aid and interpretation. I want to offer a special type of textual project as a deliberate and intentional explanation of the New Testament text by way of a concurrent translation and paraphrase. What that means is, first, to make the New Testament feel distant and weird via a literal and wooden translation married closely to the Greek text, and then second, to make the New Testament clear and relatable through a creative paraphrase.

Any responsible Bible translator will tell you that all translation involves interpretation. One does not simply map Hebrew and Greek words against their English equivalents. If you did, you would get nonsense statements like, “These things but of them while speaking him stood in midst of them and he is saying to them, peace be with you” (Luke 24.36). Bible translation is something of a textual, lexical, semantic, educational, and pedagogical science. Translators have to make decisions about the form of the text, choose meanings from the semantic domains of Hebrew and Greek words, make decisions about grammatical ambiguities, decide on syntactical and discourse level structures, and decide how to render something into comprehensible English. This is why translations differ over things like whether to translate *Christos* as “Christ” or “Messiah”; translating *dikaiosynē theou* as “the righteousness of God” or “the righteousness from God”; or regarding *pistis christou* as “faith in Christ” or “the faithfulness of Christ”, etc. Every translation is permeated by interpretation.

Now literal translations like the KJV and NASB try to minimize the interpretive element and leave the ambiguities apparent so that readers can sort them out themselves (but even then, some interpretive gloss is simply unavoidable). Dynamic equivalence translations like the NIV and NRSVue tend to go thought-for-thought rather than word-for-

word and so offer a mixture of literal and interpretive renderings. Paraphrases are rather free and liberal adaptations of the text, as with *The Message*, in order to offer a contemporary and colloquial representation of the text that is really an interpretation overlaid upon a translation. Given that account of translation and interpretation, let me explain what I am up to in this project when I talk about a literal and cultural transportation via translation.

First, this volume offers a literal—weirdly literal in places—translation of the New Testament to make it seem deliberately foreign and distant; in other words, to de-familiarize readers with the text. For example, whereas you might think of a “Pharisee” as just your run-of-the-mill religious hypocrite, I want you to think of Pharisees as participants in a Judean sectarian movement concerned with manufacturing the conditions for Israel’s restoration to divine favour through a regime of priestly level of purity adherence and motivated to re-establish Israel’s regional hegemony. Or else, if you think “justified” means “just-as-if-I-never-sinned” I want you to read “righteoused” in the sense of being declared to be in a right covenantal relationship with YHWH where your sins are forgiven, and you have a place in the church irrespective of whether you’re Jew or Gentile. Or again, in many places I’ve translated *nomos* not as “law” but as “Torah” to indicate that it is the Jewish law or the Mosaic legislation that is being discussed. More specifically, whereas *erga nomou* is ordinarily rendered as “works of the law,” I’ve even translated it as “regulations of the Torah” to specify and explain the significance of the phrase. I’ve also transliterated rather than translated most names such as *Iēsous* for the normal “Jesus” and *Paulos* for “Paul” which I expect will really weird some people out. Thus, the purpose of the literal translation is to render the Greek into language that, at one level, simply reflects the underlying Greek, but also draws readers away from their assumption about what the text is talking about, that tests their traditions, fractures their familiarity, and exposes the propensity to assume that their world of cultural Christianity is basically the same

as the first-century world. I want to show you that the New Testament might not be referring to the stuff that you always supposed it did. In other words, I want to make the New Testament strange again!

Second, this volume also offers a creative and contemporary paraphrase of the text, not for the purpose of being cute and colloquial, but it aims through elaborate description to amplify the weird elements of the New Testament that stand out in the more literal translation. For example, I've paraphrased *erga nomou*, normally rendered as "works of the law," as "the Jewish way of life as set out in the Law" to highlight that it is not just religious rules or a legalistic ethos that Paul has in mind, but obedience to the entire precepts of Mosaic law that would make one effectively Jewish. Similarly, the NRSVue translates John 1.12–13 like so: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God." In contrast, I've provided a more elaborate and intricate version to highlight the aspect of divine sonship as something royal and to emphasize God's own role in begetting these believers in Jesus. In my paraphrase: "And yet, to those who did realize who he actually was, to those who understood from where he came and even believed in his name, to those persons he gave them one of the great privileges in the history of the cosmos, he made them princes and princesses of the living God. Royal children, not born from the normal gene pool, not conceived from the desires of a husband, but born from the very heart of God." It is an elaborate and thick description of the text, almost over the top, but it is intended to emphasize by expressive language the central concern of the text.

In a nutshell, what I'm attempting is (1) a literal translation of the text with a view to accenting the historical distance and cultural strangeness of the New Testament world; (2) a paraphrase with a view to closing that historical distance for modern readers; in addition (3) I've included some notes to explain some of the lexical, contextual, and interpretive factors that shape translators and their decisions. It is trans-

lation as interpretation, exploring the ancient text, and then repackaging it through a paraphrase for the present. Let me explain why I think it is needed or why I think it works.

First, this project is designed as an act of *preliminary interpretation* of the New Testament text. There are various layers of understanding that range from basic comprehension of the text (Okay, Jesus and his disciples entered a rural Galilean town called Capernaum, yep, got it) to a comprehensive grasp of the text (Knowing why does Jesus move about in itinerant fashion, knowing where Galilee is in relation to Jerusalem, knowing what is significant about Capernaum in its location and population, etc). Then there is an intermediate level of understanding between getting the basic gist of a text at one end of the spectrum and possessing a deep grasp of what is being described at another end of the spectrum. That in-between stage is where we realize what we do and do not yet understand; wrestle with what is familiar, what is foreign, what needs further explanation; and wonder how we can relate to the text to our experience of the world. This volume, through the literal-but-strange translation and the paraphrastic amplification of the text, is designed to show you what you might not quite have grasped about the New Testament world and to then offer some categories and language that might help you to better understand it. So this project is about moving beyond basic comprehension and yet stops short of offering an actual commentary. The purpose is a preliminary autopsy of the text, to orientate readers to the world of the text, and to provide readers with a primer on how they can appropriate the text for themselves.

Second, this project is designed to be a *paratextual reading aid*. This volume is not designed to replace your NKJV, NIV, NRSVue, or ESV, or whatever Bible you like to read at home, with your family, in church, or at seminary. It is designed to be read beside them as an interpretive aid. This volume is what you might consider a kind of exegetical first aid responder arriving on the scene when you confront an interpretive

problem or are trying to generally understand the New Testament. This book is, to use a medical metaphor, your exegetical paramedic not a substitute for seeing your regular biblical physician.

Third, this project *presents a tradition of interpretation* known as gloss and paraphrase. While this volume is neither a Study Bible nor a Commentary, it is an explanation by means of defamiliarizing readers with the text by showing its historical and cultural “otherness,” and then interpreting it for them by means of a creative paraphrase. There is a long tradition of this type of biblical interpretation. During the Middle Ages one of the most common forms of biblical interpretation was the gloss, where a copy of the Bible would have various glosses written in the margins, either notes or quotes from the church fathers to help explain the text. Then, during the early modern period (1700–1800s), one of the main ways of writing a commentary was to provide a new translation, with paraphrase, and notes for readers. The famous British philosopher, John Locke, composed a commentary of Paul’s letters comprised of a new translation, paraphrase, and notes that remains to this day quite insightful. Standing in such a tradition, this volume offers a literal translation, plus a paraphrase, plus notes, to provide a close reading and initial analysis of the text as a first step towards understanding the text before consulting any of the many commentaries for a detailed examination.

The Lexham Interpreter’s Bible is an act of interpretation, a literary and cultural transportation, analyzing the world back then and trying to explain it in the here and now. We do that, first, by making the New Testament feel distant and unfamiliar in a literal translation, and then, second, by making the New Testament comprehensible and relatable to us in the present with a creative paraphrase. Hope you enjoy it, benefit from it, and learn more about Jesus, the apostles, the gospel, the church, and the glory of God.

Abbreviations

Footnotes

GK	Greek
INT	Interpretation
BKG	Background
OT	Old Testament
NT	New Testament
TXT	Textual Criticism

Other Abbreviations

BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
CEB	Common English Bible
D-R	Douay-Rheims Bible
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
ESV	English Standard Version
EVV	English versions
Jos. Asen.	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
KNT	Kingdom New Testament (now known as the New Testament for Everyone)
LXX	Septuagint

MSG	The Message
mss	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
T.Dan.	<i>Testament of Dan</i>
T.Jos.	<i>Testament of Joseph</i>
T.Levi	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
Vulg.	Vulgate

**Letter to
the Romans**

ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ

- 1.1 Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος
 Paulos, a slave of the Anointed Iēsous, called to be a sacred emissary and
 εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ
 consecrated for the joyous proclamation of God.
- 2 ὃ προεπηγγείλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἀγίαις
 A message that God promised through his prophets in the sacred scrolls,
- 3 περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ
 concerning his Son, who was born from the seed of David's line
 κατὰ σάρκα,
 according to the flesh,
- 4 τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει
 who was installed as the Son of God in power
 κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν,
 through the resurrection of the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness.
 Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,
 Iēsous the Anointed One, our Lord.

1. **GK** Paul identifies as Christ's *doulos*, which denotes "slave"; if Paul wanted to indicate a generic "servant," he would have used *diakonos* (servant), *oiketēs* (house servant), or *paidos* (boy servant).

3. **GK** The phrase "born from the seed of

David" (*tou genomenou ek spermatos David*) is an idiomatic reference to descent from the Davidic lineage.

4. **INT** The participle *horisthentos*, from *horizō*, is ordinarily translated as "appointed" (NIV) or "declared" (NRSV)

Paul Introduces Himself to the Romans (Rom 1:1–7)

¹A letter from Paul, a slave of Messiah Jesus, called to be his special envoy, and specially commissioned for purpose of announcing the good news of victory that is both from God and about God. ²God had already promised this good news to the people long ago through his prophets in the holy books. ³A message that focuses on God’s Son—who in his human ancestry was born from David’s family, ⁴and who was declared to be the powerful Son of God by the Holy Spirit through the incipient arrival of the day of resurrection, which was ushered in through him—Jesus the Messiah, our Lord.

to avoid the connotation that Jesus was made/installed/chosen to be Son of God only after his resurrection.

However, usage of *horizō* in the NT refers to something concretely determined, appointed, fixed, or set (BDAG). Even so, the point here is not Jesus getting adopted as God’s Son at his resurrection. To the contrary, Jesus is already the Son of God by virtue of being the Son of David/Davidic Messiah in 1:3, and such a figure was widely regarded as a royal Son of God (see, e.g., Ps 2:7). The point is that Jesus’s divine sonship is expressed in a new way, “in power,” as God’s vice-regent in his exalted state. In other

words, divine sonship is transformed rather than triggered by the event of resurrection.

- 4. INT** Many translations (e.g. NIV, CEB, ESV) add a personal pronoun, “his,” so that Jesus is installed as the Son of God by “his” resurrection, even though no such pronoun is in the Greek text. Most likely, *ex anastaseōs nekron* (“from/by the resurrection of the dead ones”) is a generalizing plural and signifies that Jesus’s resurrection marks out the incipient beginning of the corporate resurrection of the last day (see John 11:24, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day”).

5 δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν

Through him we have received divine favor and a divine commission

εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

for the purpose of bringing all the gentiles to reciprocate this divine favor by

ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ,

exercising the allegiance of faith and by living for the sake of his name.

6 ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ

And you are among these gentiles as you are also called

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,

by Iêsous the Anointed One.

7 πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις·

To those in Rome, who are beloved by God and called to be God's holy people.

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ

Divine favor to you and peace from God our Father and

κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

the Lord Iêsous the Anointed One.

5. GK Gk. *charis kai apostolyn* is usually translated as “grace and apostleship” but could be a hendiadys, i.e., “grace-driven-apostleship.” In any case, grace and the apostolic office are brought close together.

5. INT Gk. *hypakoën pisteōs* is literally the “obedience of faith” and could designate “obedience to the faith” (objective genitive), the “obedience faith requires” (subjective genitive), the “obedience that comes from faith”

⁵ It is through Jesus that we have received the privileged post of being a divine envoy. Our aim is to bring about a faithful obedience among all the gentiles as a response to his kindness and for the benefit and the betterment of the name of Jesus in our world. ⁶What is more, you share in Messiah Jesus because you were called by him.

⁷So, to all of the believers in Rome, who are embraced by God’s love and called to a life of holiness, unrepayable kindness and peace to you from God our Father and from Lord Jesus the Messiah.

(genitive of result), the “obedience that consists of faith” (genitive of apposition), or “believing obedience” (attributive genitive). The words *pistis* and *hypakoē* are not synonyms but belong to the same conceptual domain of assent and allegiance. This is why I have rendered it as “allegiance of faith” and “faithful obedience,” respectively. Importantly, Romans is bracketed in 1:5; 15:18; and

16:26 with *hypakoēn pisteōs*. It is a major theme of the letter.

5. GK The word *ethnē/ethnos* can be translated in an ethnic sense as “gentile,” in a religious sense as “pagan,” or in a territorial sense as “nation.”

7. TXT Some mss omit “in Rome,” probably in an attempt to make it a truly catholic letter.

- 8 Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ
 First, I offer thanksgiving to my God through Iēsous the Anointed One
 πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ.
 concerning all of you because your faithfulness is known to the whole world.
- 9 μάρτυς γὰρ μοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου ἐν τῷ
 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the joyful proclamation
 εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνεῖαι ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι
 of his Son, is my witness to how unceasingly I remember you,
- 10 πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, δεόμενος εἴ πως ἤδη ποτὲ
 constantly in my praying and entreating, if perhaps somehow, sooner or later, I
 εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.
 may finally succeed by the will of God to visit you.
- 11 ἐπιποθῶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν ὑμᾶς, ἵνα τι μεταδῶ χάρισμα ὑμῖν πνευματικόν
 For I long to see you, in order that I might bestow some grace-gift on you in
 εἰς τὸ στηριχθῆναι ὑμᾶς,
 order to strengthen you,
- 12 τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶν συμπαρακληθῆναι ἐν ὑμῖν διὰ τῆς ἐν ἀλλήλοις
 and through this reciprocal exchange with you, we may mutually benefit by
 πίστεως ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ.
 each other's stewardship in faith, both yours and mine.

8. INT “First.” Paul never gets around to a further enumerated point.

9. INT Gk. *charisma hymin pneumatikon* refers to a spiritual gift of some kind, not merely a general blessing or benefit by

his presence.

12. BKG Gk. *symparakaleō* is normally translated “mutually encourage” or “mutually comfort”; however, given Greco-Roman customs pertaining to gift

Paul Explains Why He Hasn't Visited and the Purpose of His Ministry (Rom 1:8–15)

⁸ First, I give thanks to my God through Jesus the Messiah for all of you Roman believers because the news about your faith has been reported all over the world. ⁹ God, whom I serve with all my spiritual ability in the proclamation of the good news, is my witness, ¹⁰ and he knows how I never fail to mention you in my prayers. And I pray that now, somehow, God willing, that I might finally succeed in coming to visit you. ¹¹ For I earnestly desire to see you face to face so that I, as a specially chosen envoy, can share with you some spiritual gift that will make you firm and strong in your faith. ¹² That way we might work to build each other up in our common bond of faith.

giving, there is an unstated reciprocal exchange probably going on here. Paul wants to bless the Roman churches with this letter and his presence, and he hopes in return that they will reciprocate by sending him on his way to Spain with material and personnel support.

12. GK Gk. *pistis* is normally translated “faith” or “faithfulness,” but one meaning for *pistis* is “pledge,” “oath,” or “stewardship” (see Rom 12.3; Acts 17.31; 2 Tim 4:7). Paul has in mind that they will assist each other out of the faithful stewardship of their gifts, resources, and abilities.

- 13 οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι πολλάκις προεθέμην ἐλθεῖν
I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, that I often planned
πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἐκωλύθην ἄχρι τοῦ δεῦρο, ἵνα τινὰ καρπὸν σχῶ καὶ
to come to you (and was hindered until the present time), so that I may find
ἐν ὑμῖν καθὼς καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἔθνεσιν.
some fruit among you, just as I already have among the rest of the gentiles.
- 14 Ἑλλησὶν τε καὶ βαρβάρους, σοφοῖς τε καὶ ἀνοήτοις
I am a debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and
ὀφειλέτης εἰμί·
to the foolish.
- 15 οὕτως τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρόθυμον καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ
For such reasons, I am eager to be of service and to preach the joyful
εὐαγγελίσασθαι.
proclamation to you who are in Rome.

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not want you to have the wrong idea about me. I want you to know that—despite what some might think—I have genuinely tried on several occasions to come and visit you, but I have been hindered until now. I have always wanted to visit the city of Rome so that I could hopefully have a fruitful ministry among you just as I have had in the other gentile cities where I have worked. ¹⁴ You see, as part of my ministry, I am under certain obligations to minister to the cultured Greeks as much as to the inhospitable barbarians, to the wise as well as to the unlearned. ¹⁵ That is why I am as eager as a puppy to make a new friend to come and preach the good news to you folks in Rome.

- 16 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς
 For I am not dishonored by the joyful proclamation, for it is God's power for the
 σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι·
 deliverance of everyone who believes, to the Judean first and also to the Greek.
- 17 δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως
 For in the joyous proclamation, God's righteousness is unveiled, from faith
 εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.
 to faith, just as it has been written, "The righteous will live by faith."

16. GK Gk. *epaischynomai* means to experience shame, loss of honor, or reputation, so as to be ashamed of some event or action.

17. INT The “gospel” or “joyful proclamation” is implied by *in auto* (lit. “in it”) as the vehicle by which God’s righteousness is revealed.

17. INT Gk. *dikaïosynē theou* is “God’s righteousness” or “righteousness of God” and should be understood as a subjective genitive, God’s saving action, the rescue of creation and his covenant faithfulness to Israel (e.g., Ps 98:1–3). It refers principally to God’s saving righteousness for Israel (e.g., Isa 51:4–5) even as it acquits the individual transgressor (Ps 51:15). In sum, “God’s righteousness”

signifies the uprightness of God’s character and how he demonstrates his character as the judge of all the earth and in his faithfulness toward Israel in Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God, then, is the character of God embodied and enacted in his saving actions, which means vindication for his people and condemnation for the wicked.

17. INT “From faith to faith.” There are many proposals for the intended meaning: from God’s faithfulness to human faith, from Jewish faith to gentile faith, from Christ’s faithfulness to human faith. More likely it is simply emphasizing that faith is the instrument for experiencing God’s righteousness.

Paul’s Central Thesis (Rom 1:16–17)

¹⁶ I am not embarrassed by the good news; in fact, I am rather proud of it, and I’ll tell you why. The good news is the power of God for the rescue of everyone who believes, first for the Jews and second for the Greeks. ¹⁷ For in the good news, God’s plan to put the world to right is decisively revealed. In the good news his right-making power is manifested, completely and comprehensively by way of faith and only faith, just as someone wrote: “The righteous people are those who will escape the Babylonian crisis with their lives because of their faith in God’s very own faithfulness.”

17. INT The quotation is from Hab 2:4. The problem is that there is elasticity among the Hebrew, Greek, and NT renderings of this verse in the wording, with the addition or subtraction of pronouns:

MT/DSS	the righteous one by his faith will live
LXX (some mss)	the righteous one by my faithfulness will live
LXX (some mss)	my righteous one by faith will live
Rom 1:17/Gal 3:11	the righteous one by faith will live
Heb 10:38	my righteous one by faith will live

In Paul’s version it can be translated differently: (1) the righteous one by (on the basis of) faith will live; or (2) the righteous one will live (a life characterized) by faith.

- 18 Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ
 For God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven on all human impiety and
 ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,
 unrighteousness typified by suppressing the truth in unrighteousness,
- 19 διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς,
 because the knowableness of God is manifest among them;
 ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνέρωσεν.
 for God has manifested such knowledge to them.
- 20 τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν
 For since the creation of the cosmos his invisible attributes, his everlasting
 νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἴδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης,
 power and deity, are being perceived, inferred through what has been made,
 εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους,
 so that they are without excuse.
- 21 διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠύχαρίστησαν,
 For, though knowing God, they did not glorify him as God, nor offer
 ἀλλὰ ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ
 thanksgiving, but they became futile in their reasoning, and
 ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία·
 their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν,
 Possessing pretensions to be wise, they became dimwitted,

18. GK Gk. *orgē* does not mean unbridled rage but divine wrath, the response of God’s holiness to moral evil.

20–21. BKG Theologians see here the

basis for natural revelation, God’s self-revelation in the immensity, beauty, and order of the cosmos. This yields several debates, such as whether this

The Pagan World in the Grip of Sin (Rom 1:18–32)

¹⁸ In speaking of God’s saving justice, we cannot forget his punitive justice against evil either. For the righteous rage of God is even now being revealed from heaven against all who act without recourse to God and who descend into utterly wicked ways. ¹⁹ I’m talking about those people who suppress the truth about God because they cannot handle God, even though he is there as plain as day before them, as evidenced by the beauty of nature and in the design of the created order. ²⁰ Since the dawn of time, people have seen the invisible God by the fingerprint he left on his creation. Deep down they know about his eternal power and his divine nature, as it is written across the book of nature, and yet they willfully deny it and leave themselves without excuse for their escapist fantasy of pretending that God is not there.

²¹ Despite the fact that they had an innate awareness of God’s existence and attributes, they did not render to him the glory that he deserved as their God, nor did they offer any token of thanks for his providential care over them. Instead, they reasoned their way to unreasonable ideas about God and allowed their hearts to turn from the light of God to the darkness of a world without God. ²² They claimed to have religion and philosophy all figured out, yet they became stupefied by their disbelief.

“knowledge” is innate, like a seed of divinity hardwired into every person; whether knowledge is acquired by inference as we reflect on and reason

about the universe; and how efficacious such a revelation is given that humans in their sinful state suppress knowledge of God acquired through creation.

- 23 καὶ ἥλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνοσ and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an idol in the form φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετων. of corruptible man and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles.
- 24 Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν Therefore, God handed them over to the desires of their hearts for the αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς, defilement and the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.
- 25 οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὅς served the creature rather than the Creator, ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν. who is blessed for the ages. Amen.
- 26 Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας· αἱ τε γὰρ For this reason God handed them over to dishonorable passions; for their θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, females exchanged the natural use of sex for that which is unnatural,
- 27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας and similarly also the males abandoned the natural sexual use of the ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν female and burned with their desire toward one another, males with males ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἦν performing salacious acts and receiving in themselves the inevitable ἕδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες. consequence of their misdeed.

24. INT Paul emphasizes three times (1:24, 26, 28) that God handed humans over to the wickedness they desired.

24. INT The major effects of sin here are

not guilt but defilement and dishonor, which shows that Paul evaluates human rebellion and sin in a matrix of purity-impurity and honor-shame.

²³ These self-appointed experts sold off the truth of God in order to manufacture a convenient lie, a lie that led them to build miniature statues of gods made in their own image or else modeled after birds, beasts, and reptiles (as if these were real gods or could compete with the one true God of creation).

²⁴ So God gave them what they wanted. He gave them over to the sordid desires of their hearts, so they could contaminate and humiliate their soul, mind, and body to their twisted heart's content. ²⁵ People reached the pit of human existence to the point that they traded the truth about God for an ignoble lie that fed their appetite for incessant indulgence. They chose to worship and work for creaturely comforts rather than for the Creator, who made them and loves them (praise be to him from here to eternity and ten times infinity).

²⁶ So God gave them over to their debauched desires. Their women turned away from God's plan for human sexuality and indulged in sexual acts with other women, contrary to how men and women were designed to enjoy lovemaking. ²⁷ In the same way, many men turned away from God's intended pattern for sexual intimacy meant to be shared with women, and instead they got hot and horny for each other—I mean men getting it on with other men—and doing these things to themselves has such a harmful effect that the act itself proves to be its own punishment.

26–27. INT These are immensely controversial verses, and interpreters debate whether Paul is referring to only pederasty, to exploitive homosexual relationships as with slaves, to nonmonogamous homosexual activities, or to consensual homosexual relationships. Of course, one should remember that the word “homosexual,”

or even “gay,” did not exist in antiquity and is something of a modern invention. Debates about what is or is not “natural” existed in antiquity and persist in modern times. Importantly, divine wrath is said to be expressed in handing people over to commit same-sex acts, and divine wrath is not specifically located against same-sex desires.

- 28 Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐπιγνώσει,
And just as they did not think it fit to acknowledge God any longer,
παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν,
God handed them over to a warped mentality,
ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,
to do those things that should not be done,
- 29 πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ,
being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, evil;
μεστοὺς φθόνου φόβου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστάς,
full of jealousy, murder, rivalry, guile, malice; spreaders of rumors,
- 30 καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὕβριστάς, ὑπερηφάνους, ἀλαζόνας,
slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful,
ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς,
architects of evil, disobedient to parents,
- 31 ἀσυνέτους, ἀσυνθέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας
witless, faithless, heartless, merciless;
- 32 οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες, ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα
although knowing the righteous requirements of God, that those who practice
πράσσουντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ
such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same things but also
συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.
give approval to those who practice them.

31. GK The four words here exhibit assonance, i.e., they sound similar: *asynetous*, *asynthetous*, *astorgous*, *aveleēmonas*.

²⁸ If that were not bad enough, they did not think it proper to give God his due regard, so God gave them over to a debauched way of thinking ruled by a convoluted logic that led them to justify and do the sorts of things that no one in their proper mind would ever think to do. ²⁹ And now they are like jugs of sewage filled to the brim with rank injustice, moral rot, insatiable greed, engrossed with envy, plotting murder, engaged in endless wrangling, given to open treachery, a maelstrom of malevolence, loving violence, ³⁰ full of false accusations, haters of anything or anyone to do with religion, resolutely insolent, utterly arrogant, completely full of themselves, architects of evil, parents of perdition. ³¹ They have become a horde of senseless, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful subhuman creatures who have divested themselves of a true humanity. ³² They are aware, in some closed recess of their mind, of God's decrees against such beastly behavior and how those who act like brute beasts should be terminated like a brute beast. The tragedy is that not only do they persist in performing such perverse deeds, but they applaud and approve of those people who do them.

- 2.1 Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων·
Therefore, O man, who renders verdicts against everyone else, you are without
ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις,
defense, for in whatever matter that you condemn another,
τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων·
you condemn yourself for doing the same things you condemn others for.
- 2 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ
We know that the judgment of God accords with the truth and is on those
τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.
who practice such things.
- 3 λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὦ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων
But do you suppose this, O man, that when you pass verdicts
τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά,
on those who do such things and do the same things yourself,
ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;
that you will escape the judgment of God?
- 4 ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς
Or do you show contempt for the riches of his goodness and forbearance
μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ
and patience, seemingly ignorant that the goodness of God
εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;
leads you to contrition?
- 5 κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν
But because of your hardened and remorseless heart,
θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς
you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath
καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ,
and upon the unveiling of the righteous judgment of God.

1–11. BKG Paul begins a diatribe, a debate with an imaginary opponent. The opening section in 2:1–11 could

refer to any moralist, Greek, Roman, or Jewish, who is self-assured by their own judgmental attitude. However, as

The Jews Prove to Be No Better than the Pagans (Rom 2:1–29)

¹ Now, someone might like to think that this divine justice does not pertain to them. To such a person, whether a Roman moralist like Seneca who writes ethical treatises or even a celebrated rabbi like Shammai with an exhaustive knowledge of all things kosher, let me say this. You, O pious one, who likes to sit in judgment on others, you in fact have no excuse for your own behavior. You're a hypocritical critter who does the very things you criticize others for doing. ² We know full well that God's verdict against those people who do such wicked things is based on the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. ³ But in case you haven't noticed, you are not God! So when you, a mere morsel of a mortal, sit in judgment of others, and yet you do the same things you criticize, do you really think that you'll be able to escape before God's verdict against your hypocrisy catches up with you? ⁴ Or do you trash-talk the glittering gold of God's goodness, leniency, and tolerance? Are you so utterly oblivious to the fact that it is God's goodness, which you are inadvertently slandering, that leads you to a new and contrite perspective on life? ⁵ You have turned your heart to ice, you are racking up a debt of sin, and the bill will soon be due when God's ledger is revealed.

things press on, the context takes on a clearly Jewish ambience, so it becomes about (see 1:17) the Jewish teacher who judges and condemns gentiles—for the

sorts of things laid out in 1:18–32—yet is susceptible to the very things the teacher disapproves in others.

- 6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·
He will repay each one according to his deeds,
- 7 τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ
to those who by endurance in doing good seek for glory and honor and
ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον·
immortality, eternal life;
- 8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ
but to those who are steeped in selfish ambition and who disobey the truth
ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός,
and are cajoled into unrighteousness, wrath and rage.
- 9 θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία, ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ
There will be affliction and distress for every person
κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνοῦ·
who does evil, for the Judean first and also for the Greek,
- 10 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good,
Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι·
to the Judean first and also to the Greek,
- 11 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.
for there is no partiality with God.
- 12 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἥμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἐν
For as many who sin without the Torah will also perish without the Torah,
νόμῳ ἥμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται·
and as many sin under the Torah will be condemned through the Torah;

⁶ Remember that God gives everyone the just deserts for their actions. ⁷ To those who keep plugging away in good deeds and pursue a glorious and immortal world, he will give them an everlasting life in his everlasting world. ⁸ But to those who are engrossed in their own self-love and who jettison the truth and ferment injustice, he will give them the full weight of his fury and the full measure of his retribution. ⁹ There will be strife and struggle for every person who perpetuates evil; first for the Jews and then also for the Greeks. ¹⁰ But recognition and respect for everyone is good before God and man, for Jews as for Greeks. ¹¹ For God is not one to play favorites! ¹² Whoever commits evil without knowledge of the Jewish law, then apart from that law they will be condemned. And those Jews who commit evil under the jurisdiction of their own law, in that law they will be condemned.

- 13 οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ,
for it is not the hearers of the Torah who are righteous before God,
ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται.
but the doers of the Torah who will be righteous.
- 14 ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν,
For when gentiles, who do not by nature have the Torah, do the things
οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος·
pertaining to the Torah, they are a Torah unto themselves,
- 15 οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις
insofar that they demonstrate that the Torah's requirements are inscribed on
αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξὺ
their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their conflicted thoughts
ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,
either accusing or acquitting them,
- 16 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ
on the day when, according to my joyous proclamation, God will judge the
εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.
secrets of people through the Anointed Iēsous.
- 17 Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι
But if you call yourself a Judean and rely on the Torah and gloat
ἐν θεῷ
in God,

13. INT Many commentators have found these verses problematic, since Paul seems to suggest that justification by works is indeed possible, which would seem to contradict Paul's conclusion in 3:19–20 that no one will be justified by works of the Jewish law. So the main options are: (1) Paul is speaking only hypothetically; no one in reality can do the law sufficiently well enough to be justified; or (2) Paul is talking about those

who fulfill the righteous requirements of the Jewish law by the Spirit (see 2:25–29; 8:4).

14. INT There is debate as to whether *physei*, “by nature,” modifies *ethnē ta mē echonta* (“gentiles not having the law”) or *poiōsin* (“doing”). Contrast NIV: “Indeed, when gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law ...” with the KNT: “Gentiles don’t possess the law as their birthright, but

¹³The reason God is impartial is that it is not those who merely hear the legislation of the law who are right and just, but those who actually get down to the business of obeying the law will be declared in the right.

¹⁴ Consider this. When the pork-eating, idol-worshiping pagans, who did, not as it goes, receive God’s law as the Jewish people did, behave as the law commands, then these pagans become legally competent in their own way. ¹⁵ These folks—religiously pagan and ethnically gentile—show by their behavior that the obligations of the Jewish law have been inscribed with invisible ink onto their hearts. On the day of judgment, their consciences will bear witness that they acted rightly, though on such a day the unmasking of their thoughts will probably oscillate between indicting them and defending them. ¹⁶ That unmasking will take place on the day when God judges the things that people hide in the recess of their minds or in the caverns of their hearts, and it will happen through the appointed judge, being none other than Messiah Jesus, just as I teach in my account of the good news.

¹⁷ If you are recognized as a Jew, rest in the promises and precepts of the Jewish law, brag about God, and claim to know God’s will;

whenever they do what the law says...”

Paul’s point is that the gentiles do not by nature have access to the Torah/Law or its commands, so it is all the more remarkable that they find a way to get around doing it. It is probably best to read 2:14 in light of 2:25–29, about Christian gentiles who do/fulfill/complete the Torah.

16. INT Yes, judgment by Jesus is part of the gospel message.

17. BKG Some argue that the one who calls

oneself a Jew is not an actual Jew but a gentile Godfearer or proselyte, who reckons oneself to be a Jew by virtue of one’s adherence to Jewish ways or even by one’s conversion to Judaism. On the one hand, yes, this would allow us to see the audience of Romans as gentile, but on the other hand, the discourse in 2:1–3:20 makes more sense if Paul is putting Greeks/gentiles and Jews in the dock together before God’s righteous judgment.

- 18 καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα
and know God's will and approve the things that are superior,
κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου,
being instructed from the Torah,
- 19 πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν,
and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind,
φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,
a light to those in darkness,
- 20 παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπιῶν, ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν
an instructor of the imbecilic, a teacher of the infantile, possessing the
τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ—
embodiment of the knowledge and truth of the Torah,
- 21 ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις;
you, therefore, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?
ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;
You who proclaim that one shall not steal, do you steal?
- 22 ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις;
You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἴδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;
You who detest idols, do you pillage temples?
- 23 ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν
You who gloat in the Torah, through the transgressing of the Torah, do you
ἀτιμάζεις;
dishonor God?
- 24 τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν,
For "The name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you," just
καθὼς γέγραπται.
as it is written.

¹⁸ if you feel competent to decide what is or is not kosher (because you've evidently been rightly instructed in the law); ¹⁹ if you consider yourself to be a guide for the blind, think of yourself as a light in the darkness, ²⁰ a professor for the simple, a teacher of children, and possess the font of the knowledge and truth found in the law; ²¹ if you are all that, then let me ask you a few questions. Is your own teaching syllabus only for your students, or do you ever get around to sitting under your own teachings? As one who sermonizes against stealing, do you steal? ²² As who speaks against adultery, do you have a mistress? If you oppose the worship of idols, do you pilfer precious trinkets from temples? ²³ You who brag about the Jewish law, yet you bring God's name into disrepute when you fail to do what the law commands. ²⁴ For it is written in a holy book: "The name of God is being trashed among the gentiles because of your behavior."

- 25 Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης·
For circumcision indeed has profit if you practice the Torah;
ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖς,
but if you are a transgressor of the Torah,
ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.
your circumcision has become foreskinned.
- 26 ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσση,
So if the foreskinned man keeps the Torah's requirements,
οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται;
will not his foreskin be counted as circumcision?
- 27 καὶ κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ
And he who is naturally foreskinned and fulfills the Torah will condemn you
τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.
who, though having the letter and circumcision, are a transgressor of the Torah.
- 28 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν, οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ
For one is not a Judean by appearance, nor is it apparent in the circumcision
ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή·
of the flesh.
- 29 ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι
But one is a Judean who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart,
οὐ γράμματι, οὐ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.
by the Spirit, not by the letter; and approval is not from people but from God.

25–29. NT This is a remarkable argument, developing ideas from 2 Cor 3 about Spirit vs. letter, Gal 5 about Spirit vs. circumcision, and prepares the way for Paul's argument in Rom 8 about Spirit vs.

flesh. It is probably best to imagine Paul giving some kind of preview of the AD period, when there will be gentiles who have uncircumcised hearts and obey/fulfill God's law by their life in the Spirit.

²⁵ Circumcision only has value if you practice what the Jewish law commands. But if you violate the law's commands, then your circumcision means that you have effectively reattached your old foreskin and made yourself like a gentile. ²⁶ And, let me add, the reverse also holds true. If someone who is uncircumcised keeps the just requirements of the Jewish law, then will not his uncircumcised state be reckoned by God to be as good as a circumcised covenant keeper? Of course it will! ²⁷ That means that we are logically led to the following scenario: a person who is uncircumcised and yet fulfills the law's teachings will condemn you as a lawbreaker, even if you possess a copy of the law and even if you are circumcised. ²⁸ For being a Jew is not something that is merely external in appearance, nor is circumcision merely physical and outward. ²⁹ For there are those who are Jewish on the inside and circumcision is not according to the letter, but something wrought in the heart and performed by the Spirit. So, whether you're a Seneca or a Shammai or anywhere in between, remember this: praise does not come from people but from God!

26. INT There is a lot of debate about imputation in relation to justification, i.e., is Jesus's active obedience imputed

to sinners? The point here is that gentiles will have circumcision (i.e., covenant membership in Israel) imputed to them.

- 3.1 **Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου,**
 Therefore, what advantage does the Judean enjoy,
ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;
 or what is the advantage of circumcision?
- 2 **πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπων. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν**
 There are many advantages in many ways. First, the Judeans were entrusted
τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.
 with the oracles of God.
- 3 **τί γάρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν**
 What then? If some were unfaithful, does their faithlessness
τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει;
 disprove the faithfulness of God?
- 4 **μὴ γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης,**
 May it never be! Let God be found true, and every human being found a liar,
καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου
 just as it is written: “So that you will be vindicated in your speech
καὶ νικήσεις ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.
 and will be victorious in your verdicts.”
- 5 **εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν;**
 But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say?
μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν;
 That God is not unrighteous enough so as to inflict his wrath?
κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω.
 (I am adopting a human perspective here.)
- 6 **μὴ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;**
 May it never be! If so, how could God judge the world?

2. **GK** *Logia tou theou* (“oracles/words of God”) probably refers to the OT promises given to Israel, through whom God

would reach the nations.

4. **OT** This verse includes a quotation from Ps 51:4.

All of Us—Jews and Greeks—Are under God’s Judgment (Rom 3:1–20)

¹ Given all of those failings, is there benefit in being Jewish, or any point in circumcision? ² Well, lest I be misunderstood, indeed there is! For a start, the Jews have been entrusted with delivering the promises of God to the nations.

³ But (for sake of argument) what if some Jews turned out to be unfaithful to that covenantal vocation? Will their failure to be faithful mean that God himself has been unfaithful to his people? ⁴ Absolutely not! May God be proved right and everyone else be made a lying twit. Just as it is written in a holy book: “May you, our God, be vindicated when you speak and be victorious when you judge.”

⁵ But (for sake of argument) if our unrighteousness, that is, our failure to be faithful covenant partners with God, provides God with an opportunity to exercise his saving justice in delivering us, what would be wrong with that, one might say? It would mean that God has no right to get all apocalyptic on us since our sinning is merely giving him a chance to be merciful and generous (it’s a stupid argument, I know, but stay with me on this for a bit). ⁶ To that I say: absolutely not! If that were the case, if God were to let us go scot-free despite our failure, then how could God legitimately judge the world and bring it to account? God would be a divine hypocrite!

5. INT Paul sets up a kind of straw-man argument, a human rather than divine perspective on things, an erroneous

viewpoint to be knocked down. He uses a similar device in Rom 6:19; Gal 3:15; and 1 Cor 6:9.

- 7 εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν
For if by my lie the truth of God enhances his glory,
εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι καὶ γὰρ ὡς ἀμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι,
why am I still being condemned as an offender?
- 8 καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασίν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν
And why not say—as some slanderously accuse us of saying—
ὅτι Ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακὰ ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ;
“Let us do evil so that good abound from it?”
ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν.
Their condemnation is deserved!
- 9 Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως, προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε
What then? Are we advantaged? Not altogether, for we have already established
καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ’ ἀμαρτίαν εἶναι,
the charge that Judeans and Greeks alike are all under allegations of offense,
- 10 καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,
just as it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one,
- 11 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν·
there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God.
- 12 πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα,
All have turned away, together they have become worthless; there is no one who
οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός.
does goodness, not even one.”
- 13 τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν, ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν
“Their throats are open graves, their tongues deceive,
ἔδολιοῦσαν, ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν,
the poison of snakes is under their lips.”

8. INT Rom 3:8 and 6:1–2 are proof that Paul was accused of being antinomian, preaching a law-free gospel that did

not require complete depaganization or express the need for moral transformation.

⁷ Someone might try to push back and retort, “Well, God kind of needs my sin, because my moral failure gives him a chance to be merciful, so my sin can actually enhance God’s integrity and increase his glory. For if my falsehood makes God look good, then why would God throw a wrongdoer like me in the dock?”⁸ One might even say (and I get accused of saying this all the time): “Sin boldly, and see if anything good comes of it.” The twits who say such a thing really do deserve to rot in the deity’s dumpster of destruction.

⁹ What should we conclude about all of this? Do we Jews really have a get-out-of-judgment-free card? Sad to say, in the end, no, we do not. We have already made it clear in the preceding argument that when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, Jews and gentiles, everyone without exception, is enslaved to the pernicious power of sin.¹⁰ As it is written in a whole avalanche of scriptural texts:

“There is not one righteous man or woman, not a single innocent person to be found.¹¹ Nobody has any clue about God; there is a drought of spiritual seekers.¹² Everyone has deserted God; they have become as worthless as rotten turnips; there are no good Samaritans; good people are rarer than hen’s teeth.”

¹³ “Their throats are like a graveyard after midnight; their tongues speak of deceit like it’s their first language.”

“They use cobra poison for lip gloss.”

10–12. OT These verses include a quotation from Ps 14:1–3.

13. OT This verse includes a quotation from Pss 5:9 and 140:3.

- 14 ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀράς καὶ πικρίας γέμει·
“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”
- 15 ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,
“Their feet are swift to shed blood,
- 16 σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,
destruction and trouble are in their paths,
- 17 καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.
and they do not know the way of peace.”
- 18 οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.
“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”
- 19 Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ,
We know that whatever the Torah declares, it declares to those
ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος
who are under the Torah, in order that every mouth may be silenced
γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ·
and the whole world may be held liable to judgment before God.
- 20 διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,
For no flesh will be declared righteous before him by observing the Torah’s
διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.
requirements, for through the Torah comes the knowledge of offense.

14. OT This verse includes a quotation from Ps 10:7.

15–17. OT This verse includes a quotation from Isa 59:7–8.

18. OT This verse includes a quotation from Ps 36:1.

20. OT This verse includes an allusion to Ps 143:3.

¹⁴ “Their mouths are full of profanity and expletives.”

¹⁵ “Their feet run faster than a sprinter when there’s a chance to drench the streets with blood; ¹⁶ everywhere they go is a carnival of carnage; ¹⁷ they don’t know peace from violence.”

¹⁸ “They have no respect and no reverence for God.”

¹⁹ Now, we know that everything that the Jewish law talks about, it says to those who are under its jurisdiction, with the result that every mouth is sealed shut because there’s no right of reply, and the whole world is shackled in chains, put on trial, and awaiting the righteous condemnation of God the judge. ²⁰ Therefore, no one, and I mean no exceptions, no one will be made right with God by following the Jewish way of life as set out in the law. The law makes us conscious of our sin, but there is nothing in the law to release us from the power and penalty of sin. That is the miserable state we are all caught in, for the Jew first and the gentile too.

20. BKG *Erga nomou* is a debated phrase, often rendered “works of the law,” understood variously as everything required by the law, works done in a legalistic spirit, or else boundary markers separating Jews from gentiles, such as circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, and food laws. Strictly speaking, the phrase refers to the many and various requirements of the Torah; however, obeying the Torah will render one Jewish and facilitate a

person following the Jewish way of life codified in the Torah. It is the legal code for a particular ethnic group of Judeans and is concerned with their specified religious customs, social taboos, and manner of existence. In other words, “works of the law” is not about social separation from gentiles but does result in social separation from gentiles depending on how stringently one obeys or applies it.

- 21 **Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται,**
But now, apart from the Torah, God’s righteousness has been manifested,
μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,
being witnessed by the Torah and the Prophets.
- 22 **δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,**
God’s righteousness is unveiled through faith in Iēsous the Anointed One
εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν διαστολή.
for all those who believe; for there is no partiality;
- 23 **πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ,**
because all have offended and are shorn of God’s glory,
- 24 **δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι**
being undeservedly righteoused by his unmerited favor
διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ·
through the manumission that is in the Anointed Iēsous;
- 25 **ὃν πρόθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι**
whom God publicly displayed as the seat of sacrifice and is appropriated through
εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν
faith in his blood. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because
τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων
in God’s clemency he left unpunished the offenses previously performed,
- 26 **ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ**
for the demonstration of his righteousness at the present time,
ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα
so that God would be righteous and the righteouser
τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.
of the one who has faith in Iēsous.

21. GK The “but now” (Gk. *nyni de*) is not just logical but also temporal. God has acted in the present to reveal his saving power in Jesus.

22. INT On “God’s righteousness” or “righteousness of God,” see 1:17.

22. INT There is debate surrounding whether *dia pistis Iēsous Christ* should be translated as “through faith in Christ” (e.g. NIV, NRSV, ESV) or the “faithfulness of Christ” (NET, CEB). See similarly Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; and Phil 3:9, plus

The Righteousness of God in the Death of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21–26)

²¹ But that is not the end of the matter. Death and condemnation are not the last words. God has now revealed his saving justice, which comes as a shock and a surprise, because it is revealed entirely apart from the precepts and parameters of the Jewish law, and yet the Law and the Prophets paradoxically pointed ahead to it. ²² This saving justice is displayed through faith in Messiah Jesus for everyone who believes. No distinctions or exceptions can be made ²³ because everyone has done evil things and have been shunned from the glory of God. ²⁴ And yet believers are—without respect to their deservedness or worth—declared to be righteous based on God’s unmerited and unrepayable kindness as expressed in the redemption that comes through Messiah Jesus. ²⁵ He is the one whom God presented as the atoning sacrifice of mercy to propitiate his wrath and to expiate our wrongdoing when we put our faith in the blood of Jesus’s atoning death. In this way, God shows his justice by overlooking the sins we had earlier committed; ²⁶ in his merciful patience he demonstrates his righteous character and so proves himself to be righteous and to declare righteous those who have faith in Jesus.

discussion in Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009). Theologically speaking, the idea of being saved by the faithfulness/obedience of Jesus is perfectly valid (e.g., Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8). However, grammatically speaking, a genitive noun usually defines or restricts the head term so that “Christ” defines the manner or extent of “faith.” It does not determine the subject of the action, which must be decided by context. In addition, given the context, which majors on the theme of faith (Rom 3:22, 25–30), and

Paul’s use of *dia/ek* to indicate faith as the instrument for attaining salvation, a translation of “through faith in Jesus Christ” is far more likely.

- 24. INT** Or “declared righteous by grace.”
- 25. BKG** Gk. *hilastērion* can refer to the place of atonement, the mercy seat on the lid of the ark of the covenant (Exod 25:22; Lev 16:2; Heb 9:5), or to the concept of atonement as either expiation (removing sin) or propitiation (removing wrath).
- 25. GK** The phrase “in/by his blood” could either modify *hilasterion* (i.e., “propitiated by his blood”) or be the subject of *pistis* (i.e., “by faith in his blood”).

- 27 Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη. διὰ ποίου νόμου;
Where, then, is the boasting? It is cast out. Because of what Torah?
τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως.
A Torah of deeds? No, it is thrown out because of a Torah of faith.
- 28 λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον
For we consider that a person is righteoused by faith, without observing
χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.
the regulations of the Torah.
- 29 ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν;
Or is God the God of Judeans only? Is not God the God of gentiles too?
ναὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν,
Yes, God is God even of the gentiles.
- 30 εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεός, ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως
If God is one, then God will righteous the circumcised by faith
καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.
and the foreskinned through faith.
- 31 νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο,
Do we then cancel the Torah through this faith? May it never be!
ἀλλὰ νόμον ἰσχύνομεν.
Rather, we validate the Torah.

27. INT Gk. *kauchēsis* means “boasting” or “bragging.” There is debate about whether Paul is dismissing those who boast in individual effort (legalism) or in inherited Jewish privileges (Israel’s election). In light of Rom 4:4–5, 8; Eph 2:8–9; and Titus 3:5, we could say that legalism is definitely excluded. But in light of Rom 4:9–17; 10:12; and Eph

2:11–3:12, that reliance on election for salvation is excluded. See also Phil 3:1–11. Paul rejects effort and ethnicity for making a claim on God to be justified before him.

27. INT Debate ranges concerning whether *nomos* should be translated as “Torah” or “law” for the law of Moses or in a more general sense of “principle.” Paul might

God Justifies Jews and Gentiles by Faith (Rom 3:27–31)

²⁷ Where is the bragging in ethnicity or effort, then? It is categorically ruled out. By what law or principle is it ruled out? By a regulation pertaining to deeds-that-must-be-done? Absolutely not! Based on the principle of faith, it is eliminated as an option. ²⁸ For we reckon that a person can be declared righteous by faith without following the Jewish way of life as set out in the law. ²⁹ Or are you saying that one must first become a Jew in order to be a Christian, as would be the case if righteousness were based on doing the works mandated by the Jewish law? Surely we must ask in counterpoint: Is God not also the God of all the nations too? Yes indeed, he is God of the nations too! ³⁰ For there is one God who will declare the circumcised and uncircumcised to be righteous based on their faith. ³¹ So do we abolish or abrogate the Jewish law if we attain deliverance by faith? Absolutely not! For by our faith and faithfulness we validate and uphold the Jewish law!

be making a wordplay here based on how *nomos* can be “principle” but also be used to refer to the Jewish law.

28. BKG For *erga nomou* as “Torah’s requirements/regulations” or “Jewish way of life codified in the Torah,” see note on 3:20.

29. INT Many English translations sadly leave out the particle *ē* (“or”), which

indicates that Paul regards belief in justification by Torah/law of Moses as implying that God is the God of only Israel, not the God of the nations.

30. BKG That “God is one” is the most basic of Jewish confessions of faith; see Deut 6:4–6.

31. GK Gk. *katargeō* means “to render something null, ineffective, inoperable.”

- 4.1 Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν
So then, what are we going to say? Will we discover that Abraam
κατὰ σάρκα;
is our forefather according to the flesh?
- 2 εἰ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη,
For if Abraam were righteoused because of his deeds,
ἔχει καύχημα· ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς θεόν,
then he would have legitimate cause to boast, but not before God.
- 3 τί γὰρ ἡ γραφὴ λέγει; Ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ
For what does the sacred scroll say? Abraam believed God,
καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
and it was counted to him as righteousness.
- 4 τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν
The wages of the worker are not calculated according to their master's favor,
ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα·
but rather they are calculated based on what the worker is owed.
- 5 τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ, πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα
Yet to those who don't work but believe in the God who righteouses
τὸν ἀσεβῆ, λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην,
the impious, their faith is credited as righteousness.

1. INT There is debate surrounding whether Abraham is the subject or object of the verb *heurēkenai*, i.e., “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter?” (NIV) versus “So what are we going to say? Are we going to find that Abraham is our ancestor on the basis of genealogy?” (CEB). Given that the issue

seems to be whether Abraham is our forefather on the basis of genealogical descent and found favor with God by works or whether Abraham is our forefather on the basis of faith and was given favor by grace, it makes sense to seek Abraham as the object of the verb, i.e., “Have we found Abraham to be ...”

2. INT I have translated the verb *dikaioō*

Abraham: The Father of Everyone Who Has Faith (Rom 4:1–25)

¹ So what should we conclude from all this? Did we find that Abraham is our ancestor on the basis of genealogical descent or on the basis of faith?

² Because if Abraham were declared righteous on the basis of his deeds, then he would have had a genuine right to brag, though not before the Creator God! ³ So, what does the holy book say? “Abraham believed God, and his faith in God’s promise was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ⁴ This is illustrated by the principle that a worker’s wage is not paid to them on the basis of unmerited kindness but according to a debt that is rightfully owed to them. ⁵ Yet to the person who does not work but believes in the one who declares the irreligious to be righteous, their faith is credited as righteousness.

as “righteoused” and paraphrased it as “declared righteous” rather than the usual “justified.”

3. OT This verse includes a quotation from Gen 15:6, a crucial verse for this passage.

4. INT The word *logizomai* (“credit/reckon/impute”) appears eleven times across Rom 4 (see vv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22,

23, 24). It is ordinarily an accounting term for the calculation of debt or payment. Importantly, Paul talks about faith credited as righteousness or else righteousness credited. In both instances it is used to say that God justifies on the basis of faith without works of the law/Torah.

6 καθάπερ καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
Just as David pronounces a blessing on the person

ᾧ ὁ θεὸς λογιζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων·
to whom God credits righteousness without deeds:

7 Μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ ἀνομίαι
“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are pardoned,

καὶ ὧν ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ ἀμαρτίαι,
and whose offenses are removed from sight.

8 μακάριος ἀνὴρ οὗ οὐ μὴ λογίσηται κύριος ἀμαρτίαν.
Blessed are those whose offense the Lord doesn’t credit against them.”

9 Ὁ μακαρισμὸς οὖν οὗτος ἐπὶ τὴν περιτομὴν
Is this blessedness only for the circumcised,

ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκροβυστίαν;
or is it also for those who are foreskinned?

λέγομεν γάρ· Ἐλογίσθη τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
For we say, “Faith was credited to Abraam as righteousness.”

10 πῶς οὖν ἐλογίσθη; ἐν περιτομῇ ὄντι
So, how was it credited to him? When he was circumcised,

ἢ ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ; οὐκ ἐν περιτομῇ
or when he was still foreskinned? Not afterwards, when he was circumcised,

ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ·
but earlier, when he was foreskinned.

11 καὶ σημεῖον ἔλαβεν περιτομῆς, σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης
He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness

τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν
of faith while he was still foreskinned. This happened in order that Abraam

πατέρα πάντων τῶν πιστευόντων δι’ ἀκροβυστίας,
would be the father of everyone foreskinned who believes in God,

εἰς τὸ λογισθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὴν δικαιοσύνην,
in order that righteousness would be credited to them.

⁶ Similarly, David said an identical thing about how happy a person is whom God credits righteousness without deeds. ⁷ He said in a psalm: “Happy are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sinful acts are covered up away from view,” and ⁸ “Happy is the person for whom the Lord does not keep a record of their wrongdoing.”

⁹ Is this blessed state limited to those men who have circumcised the foreskin of their human flesh? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰ But under what terms was it credited to him? Was it before or after he was circumcised? If you read the story in the Jewish Law, you’ll notice that Abraham had righteousness credited to him not when he was circumcised but before that, when he was still an uncircumcised pagan! ¹¹ Abraham received circumcision in due time, but only as a seal and symbol of the righteousness that comprises faith, a righteousness he already had while he was still uncircumcised.

7–8. OT This verse includes a quotation from Ps 32:1–2. Paul links Gen 15:6 and Ps 32:2 by the word *logizomai* (“credit/reckon/impute”); however, this word is found only in the LXX, not the Hebrew Bible.

9. OT This verse includes a quotation from Gen 15:6.

11. GK Gk. *dikaïosynēs tēs pisteōs* (lit. “righteousness of faith”) is a genitive of source, the righteousness that comes by faith.

- 12 καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον
 Abraam could then be the father of the circumcised, those who aren't only
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς στοιχοῦσιν τοῖς ἴχνεσιν τῆς ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ πίστεως
 circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the foreskinned faith
 τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ.
 of our father Abraam.
- 13 Οὐ γὰρ διὰ νόμου ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἢ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ,
 The promise to be heirs of the world was given to Abraam and to his seed,
 τὸ κληρονόμον αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου, ἀλλὰ διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως
 not through the Torah but through the righteousness of faith.
- 14 εἰ γὰρ οἱ ἐκ νόμου κληρονόμοι, κεκένωται ἡ πίστις
 For if they become heirs because of the Torah, then faith has been nullified
 καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία·
 and the promise has been voided
- 15 ὁ γὰρ νόμος ὀργὴν κατεργάζεται, οὐ δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος,
 because the Torah produces wrath. But when there isn't any Torah,
 οὐδὲ παράβασις.
 there isn't any transgression of the Torah.
- 16 Διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν,
 This is why the promise comes through faith, so that it will be based on God's
 εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι,
 unmerited favor. In this way, the promise is assured for all of Abraam's seed,
 οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ
 not just for those who belong to the Torah but also for those who belong
 (ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν,
 to the faith of Abraam, who is the father of all of us.
- 17 καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Πατέρα πολλῶν ἐθνῶν τέθεικά σε),
 Just as it is written: "I have appointed you to be the father of many nations,"
 κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσεν θεοῦ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ
 before God in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls
 καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα·
 nonbeing things into being.

¹² Abraham is and remains the father of the circumcised, who don't just have the sign of the covenant on their bodies but who also walk in the trail of faith that Abraham our forefather paved ahead of us while he was yet uncircumcised.

¹³ If that is the case, then it was not through the Jewish law that Abraham or his descendants received the promise that he would be the heir of the world, but it came through the righteousness that he gained by faith. ¹⁴ For if it is only those who have the law are heirs, then faith is futile and the promise is petrified. ¹⁵ That is because the law brings God's anger against us, and where there is no law, there is no violation of the law. ¹⁶ Therefore, the divine promises are received by faith, so that it might be according to unmerited kindness and might be set in stone for every one of Abraham's descendants, not only for those who live under the law but for those who have faith like Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all, law or no law, circumcised or not. ¹⁷ Check out what is written in a holy book: "I have made you the father of many nations." Abraham is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls the things that *ain't* to be the things that *are*.

15. NT While Romans has a more positive and nuanced view of the law/Torah than, say, Galatians—which was written in the heat of the moment at full rhetorical throttle—Paul still makes negative remarks or points to the inadequacies of the law/Torah in Romans.

17. OT This verse includes a quotation from

Gen 17:5.

17. INT Or else "calls into existence the things that do not exist." That idea here is that the justification of the ungodly by faith is so powerful that the only analogous type of event is creation from nothing.

- 18 ὃς παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ἐπίστευσεν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν πατέρα
 Hoping upon hope, he believed that he would become the "father of many nations"
 πολλῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον· Οὕτως ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα σου
 according to what was spoken to him: "This is how numerous your seed will be."
- 19 καὶ μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει κατενόησεν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σῶμα
 Without faltering in faith, Abraam, who was close to one hundred years old,
 νεκρωμένον, ἑκατονταετῆς που ὑπάρχων,
 knew his own body was good as dead,
 καὶ τὴν νέκρωσιν τῆς μήτρας Σάρρας,
 and knew, too, the deadness of Sarra's womb.
- 20 εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ
 Yet he did not vacillate into disbelief in the promise of God
 ἀλλὰ ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει, δοὺς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ
 but was resolved in faith and gave glory to God.
- 21 καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπήγγελται δυνατός ἐστιν καὶ ποιῆσαι.
 He was fully assured that God was able to do what he had promised.
- 22 διὸ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.
 Therefore his faith "was credited to him as righteousness."
- 23 Οὐκ ἐγράφη δὲ δι' αὐτὸν μόνον ὅτι ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ,
 But the sacred scroll, when it says, "it was credited to him," wasn't written for his sake alone.
- 24 ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἡμᾶς οἷς μέλλει λογίζεσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν
 To the contrary, it was written as much for our sake too, the ones to whom it will be
 ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγείραντα Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐκ νεκρῶν,
 credited, to those of us who believe in the one who raised Iēsous our Lord from the dead.
- 25 ὃς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν
 He was handed over because of our transgressions,
 καὶ ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν.
 and he was raised to life with a view to our righteousing.

18. OT This verse includes a quotation from Gen 17:5 and 15:5.

¹⁸ At one point, when Abraham was in a somber state, when the chips were down, in hope piled upon hope, he still believed in God, trusting him entirely, that he would be the father of many nations, just as God had said to him, “Your descendants will be more numerous than the stars.”¹⁹ Without floundering in his faith, even though he knew that his own geriatric body already had one foot in the grave, after he hit the big one-zero-zero, while Sarah’s womb was barren like a desert,²⁰ despite that, he did not falter into unbelief with respect to God’s impossible-looking promise. Instead, he was resolute and steadfast in his faith, and he did what humanity was always supposed to do, he gave glory to God,²¹ having complete and utter confidence that God was more than able to do what he had promised.²² That is why his faith “in God’s promise was credited to him as righteousness.”

²³ The phrase “it was credited to him as righteousness” was not written only for Abraham’s benefit²⁴ but for us too. For we are the ones for whom God will also credit faith as righteousness, those of us who believe in the God who brought our Lord Jesus back from the dead.²⁵ As we say: Jesus was handed over to death to save us from our sins, and he was brought back to live so that we could be declared righteous.

25. INT Probably best to take both clauses as prospective: he was handed over in order to deal with our transgressions,

and he was raised from the dead in order to secure our justification.

LEXHAM
INTERPRETER'S
TRANSLATION

ROMANS

Greek-English Interlinear | Paraphrase | Study Notes

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον | Κατὰ Μᾶρκον | Κατὰ Λουκᾶν | Κατὰ Ἰωάννην
Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων | Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους | Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' | Πρὸς
Κορινθίους β' | Πρὸς Γαλάτας | Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους | Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους
Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς | Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς α' | Πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς β'
Πρὸς Τιμόθεον α' | Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' | Πρὸς Τίτον | Πρὸς Φιλήμονα
Πρὸς Ἑβραίους | Ἰακώβου | Πέτρου α' | Πέτρου β' | Ἰωάννου α'
Ἰωάννου β' | Ἰωάννου γ' | Ἰούδα | Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου

Michael F. Bird

ROMANS

Romans publishes January 29, 2025.

Preorder from your favorite Christian bookseller or from
LexhamPress.com/LIT. Request a textbook examination
copy at LexhamPress.com/Review-Request.

Watch for future volumes releasing soon.