

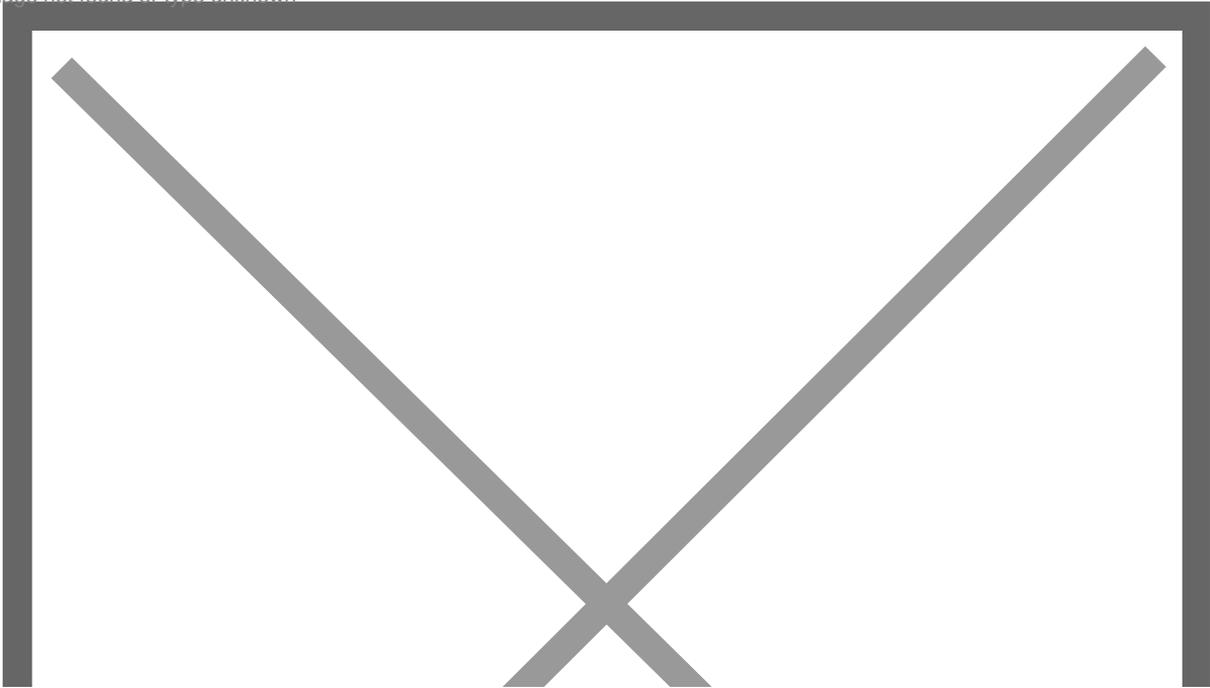
Week 1: God's plan for Israel and the Gentiles

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- **Brief introduction about St. Paul**

- Roman Citizen: Born a Roman citizen, enabling safe travel and legal protection.
- Greek education: Born in Tarsus, major center of Greek learning, exposure to Greek philosophy.
- Jewish heritage: Adhering to Jewish law and traditions and studied under Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem
- **1st Journey (44 AD, 2 years):**
 - Asia Minor (Turkey), with Barnabus and St. Mark.
 - After this journey, a council is held among the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem to determine that the gentile converts need not submit to the Law of Moses regarding circumcision.
- **2nd Journey (51 AD, 3 years):**
 - Mainly in Macedonia (Greece), with Silas and Luke.
 - 2 Epistles: 1 & 2 Thessalonians.
- **3rd Journey (54 AD, 4 years):**
 - Asia minor and Macedonia
 - 4 Epistles: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians.
- **4th Journey (Rome):**
 - 8 Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews.

- The Lord said to him: "I will send you far from here to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21)
- Unmarried: "For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that." 1 Corinth 7:7
- **His early preparation for ministry**
- **Missionary trips**
- **St. Paul** wrote 14 epistles out of the 27 books in the New Testament.
- **Known as the Apostle of the Gentiles**
- **Received 4 crowns:** martyrdom, purity, apostleship, and righteousness.



- **Introduction:**

- Author: St. Paul
- Written to: believers in Rome
- Time of writing:
 - 58 AD in Corinth, before Paul's visit to Rome in 62 AD
- Purpose of the book
 - The need for all people, Jews or Gentiles, to be justified by Christ.
 - How a person can obtain justification and its blessings in life.
 - The rejection of faith by many Jews is temporary, but some will return to faith in Christ after the Gentiles accept the faith.
 - Basic teachings for practical Christian living.
 - Care for those weak in faith and encourage them

- **Outline**

- The apostolic blessing and encouragement of the believers (Chapter 1).

- The need for all humanity to be justified by Christ, how they can receive it, and its blessings (Chapters 2–8).
- God chose the Gentiles just as He did to the Jews, who rejected Him but they will repent at the end of days (Chapters 9–11).
- Practical commandments for Christian behavior (Chapters 12–15).
- Paul's fatherly care and his greetings to his beloved friends (Chapter 16).

- **Reading:**

- Chapter 9-11

- **Resources:**

- [Bible Explanation of the Epistle to Romans - Fr. Daoud Lamei English](#)
- [The Epistle to Romans by Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty- English](#)

- **Key verse:**

- "Oh, the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33

- **Comments: Chapter 9**

- **Paul's sorrow over the unbelief of the Jews (Romans 9:1-5)**

- St. Paul declares in this chapter his sorrow over the Jews who didn't believe.
- **Verse 3:** *"For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ .."* Paul's words should not be taken literally; he certainly does not wish to be separated from Christ. He said before in the previous chapter *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"*. He demonstrates his deep love for the Jews, as he was deeply moved by the sacrificial love of Christ the Redeemer on the cross.
 - **Contemplation:** If God has granted you circumstances that support your spiritual life, take advantage of them and rejoice in your sonship to God, lest neglecting them stand as a witness against you on the last day. Use every opportunity and respond to the voice of God today to draw closer to Him.

- **God's Promise Is for the Chosen Only (Romans 9: 6:13)**

- God's promise is only for the **true spiritual Israelite**, the one who will be united with Christ.
- The promise is not for all the physical descendants of Abraham. The proof of this is that:
 - **Ishmael** was also a son of Abraham by the flesh, yet he did not receive the promise like **Isaac**, who remained steadfast in faith like his father.
 - **Jacob and Esau**, twin brothers from the same parents, Isaac and Rebekah. God chose Jacob because he loved and sought to please Him.
- The children of God doesn't refer to physical descent from Abraham, but faith and adherence to God's promises.
- The choice to be children of God is based on God's grace, not our renthouse deeds, since no one deserve that honor by work alone.

- **God's choice and human free will (Romans 9:14-29):**
 - God choice of one person over another does not mean that God is unjust, but It is based on His foreknowledge.
 - Therefore, Israel has no right to be angry about God's choice to include the Gentiles, as His mercy and compassion are His alone, as God.
 - **Verse 18** "*Whom He wills He harden*" means that God used Pharaoh, who was already hard-hearted, and Pharaoh's actions as an example to demonstrate His anger toward the wicked and His power in avenging them.
 - Just as God chose to have mercy on Jews, He also extended His mercy to Gentiles, making them His people—forming the New Covenant Church alongside Christians of Jewish descent.
 - **Contemplation:** God endured Pharaoh many times and was patient with the people of Israel for about 2,000 years. In the same way, He is patient with us, giving us every opportunity for repentance. We should be ashamed of His love and quickly turn to Him in repentance.
- **The Cause of justification of the Gentiles and stumbling of the Jews. (Romans 9:30-33)**
 - The Gentiles, who lived in darkness have reached justification through faith, but the Jews who spent their lives to fulfill the law failed to because they relied on their work only not their faith.
 - The Israelites stumbled over a "**stone**," which was the Lord Jesus Christ, who exposed their hypocrisy and rejected their self-righteousness and pride. In the end, they crucified Him, killed Him, and denied His resurrection.
- **The Jews lack spiritual understanding (Romans 10:1-5)**
 - The Jews have strong attachment to God and zeal for His name, however this strong zeal lacks spiritual understanding.
 - St. Paul recalls his own past when he was zealous for God and persecuted Christians.
 - The Jews were unaware that the purpose of the Law, sacrifices, and the Old Covenant was to prepare humanity to receive Christ.
- **The Righteousness of Christ is available to everyone (Romans 10: 6-13)**
 - Salvation has become accessible through Christ Jesus. We should take advantage of this opportunity by repentance and receiving the Holy Sacraments, which lead to a deeper relationship with God through prayer and daily reading of His Word in the Bible.
 - Our confession of Christ should not be just verbal, But by our good behavior and outward actions, showing that we are children of God.
- **The rejection of the Gospel by the Jews (Romans 10:14-21)**
 - It was expected that the Jews would be the first to believe the good news and even participate in proclaiming Christ, just as the apostles did. However, instead of accepting the gospel message, they rejected it and resisted it.
- **The future of the Jews in terms of salvation (Romans 10:1-10)**
 - God, who chose Israel as His people, wouldn't reject them even after they crucified and rejected Him. He will always keep His arms open to anyone believes in Him.
 - In verse 4: 7,000 men who have not bowed to Baal. The number seven symbolizes perfection, and 1,000 represents heavenly life—meaning that these 7,000 live in the fullness of heavenly life.
 - Salvation requires both grace and works. Salvation is a gift from God, granted by His **grace**, but that this grace requires cooperation from the individual through **faith**, **repentance**, and **good works**.
- **God's call to the Jews to believe in Christ (Romans 11:32)**

- St. Paul compares **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** to the firstfruits, symbolizing how their holiness sanctifies the Jewish people.
- He also compares **them** to the root of a good tree, with the **Jewish** people being the **branches**. Those Jews who rejected the faith are like the broken-off branches.
- The **Gentiles** are compared to a **wild olive tree**, which does not bear fruit. However, in His mercy, God grafted them into the cultivated olive tree, making them part of it.
- Verse 24: Paul declares that the faith and return of the rejecting Jews is not impossible. He explains that if God, in His mercy, was able to graft a wild olive tree (the Gentiles) into the cultivated olive tree, how much easier would it be for God to graft the branches that share the same nature as the original olive tree, meaning the Jews, when they repent.

2. Review/recap questions

** Servant may add more questions

8. Homework

** Servant may add more questions

Revision #6

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