

Survey of Romans

A 22-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®
 Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

The Survey of Romans is a foundational study produced by Keith Blades for the full edification of members of the church, the body of Christ. Romans is the first epistle in the divine design for our edification—not in the order Paul wrote it, but in the doctrinal order God intends for us to learn. This 22-lesson survey walks through the entire book of Romans, setting forth in careful detail the four great cornerstone doctrines that establish the believer in who they are in Christ and how they are to walk in this dispensation of Gentile grace. The four cornerstones are: (1) Justification by grace through faith (Romans 1–5), (2) Sanctification and living under grace (Romans 6–8), (3) The doctrine of Israel and this dispensation of Gentile grace (Romans 9–11), and (4) Walking worthy as justified and sanctified members of God’s new creation (Romans 12–16). These foundational truths are designed by God to establish and settle the believer’s soul so that the superstructure of further doctrine in Paul’s remaining epistles can be properly built upon them.



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Lesson Summaries

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Foundation — Romans 1:1–14

L1

Romans as the Foundational Epistle *Introduction to the Survey*

- This survey is built on the right division principles of 2 Timothy 2:15 and is designed for the full edification of members of the church, the body of Christ.
- Edification is the process of building a house of doctrine within the soul— God’s knowledge, norms, standards, and will—so that believers can live out of it to His honor and glory.
- Romans is the starting point for full edification because it contains the foundational, first-things-first doctrines for members of the church, the body of Christ.

The Two Illustrations of Edification

- Paul uses two key analogies: the building/house analogy (foundation +

superstructure) and a growth/body analogy—both showing that Romans is the foundation upon which all of Paul’s further epistles build.

- The four cornerstone doctrines of Romans (Justification, Sanctification, Israel/Dispensation, and Walking Worthy) form the indispensable foundation for the believer’s soul.
- 2 Timothy 2:15 is the governing principle: rightly dividing the word of truth is essential to understanding which parts of Scripture are written directly to us in this dispensation of grace.

L2

The Divine Design for Edification *Ephesians 1–2 as the Context for Romans*

- Keith begins this survey not in Romans 1:1 but with Ephesians 1–2 to establish the doctrinal context and demonstrate that Romans contains foundational, first-level truths.
- Ephesians 2:20–22 presents the building/temple analogy: the saints are built upon the foundation with Christ as the chief cornerstone, a picture of the edification process for the body of Christ.
- The Ephesian saints are commended as being ‘faithful’ (Eph. 1:1)—a doctrinal status indicating advanced edification—which is the goal God wants for every member of the body of Christ.

Paul’s Prayer in Ephesians 1:15–17

- Paul’s prayer for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17) points directly to the content of Romans as providing that essential next level of doctrinal knowledge.
- Romans through Galatians are the foundational epistles; First Corinthians through Philemon build the superstructure—all in keeping with the divine design for the edification of our souls.
- God has arranged His word—Romans through Philemon in its canonical position—according to the outworking of His eternal plan and purpose in this dispensation of Gentile grace.

L3

Overview of Romans’ Four Cornerstones *The Structure of Edification Established*

- Romans is the first epistle in the doctrinal order for edification (not the order in which Paul wrote it), because it contains the first-things-first foundational doctrines God wants believers to learn.
- The four cornerstones that compose Romans’ foundation are: (1) Justification by grace through faith (Romans 1:15–5:21), (2) Sanctification and living under grace (Romans 6–8), (3) The doctrine of Israel and this dispensation (Romans 9–11), and (4) Walking worthy as sons of God (Romans 12–16).
- Paul’s gospel reveals three aspects of our position in Christ that correspond to the first two cornerstones: justification unto eternal life, sanctification (dead to sin, alive unto God), and glorification (the hope of glory).

The Goal of Each Cornerstone

- Cornerstone 1 goal: Complete knowledge of our perfect judicial standing

before God and total assurance in the eternal nature of that standing.

- Cornerstone 2 goal: Full understanding of our sanctified position in Christ and the practical means by which God equips us to live under grace and not under law.
- Cornerstones 3 and 4 complete the foundation—understanding our place in the dispensational plan of God and the norms and standards by which we walk worthy as God’s sons.

L4

Paul’s Special Apostleship to the Gentiles *The Introduction to Romans, Part One (Romans 1:1–7)*

- The introduction to Romans (Romans 1:1–15) is composed of three sections: (A) Paul’s unique Gentile apostleship (vv. 1–7), (B) the doctrinal design of the epistle (vv. 8–12), and (C) Paul’s purpose in writing to the Romans (vv. 13–15).
- Romans 1:1: “Separated unto the gospel of God”—Paul is uniquely and distinctly separated as the apostle sent with the good news of God concerning His Son for this dispensation.
- The introduction frames the four cornerstones and is matched by the conclusion (Romans 16:21–27), where Paul reiterates the purpose to establish the saints through the epistle.

Paul’s Apostleship: Its Fundamental Distinctiveness

- Paul is called ‘the apostle of the Gentiles’ (Romans 11:13)—his apostleship is fundamentally and uniquely different from that of the twelve apostles of Israel.
- The four cornerstones are introduced by an introduction and closed by a conclusion, both of which declare the epistle’s purpose: the establishment of the saints’ souls in these foundational doctrines.
- Understanding Paul’s unique apostleship is not background knowledge but directly bears on why Romans contains the doctrine it does and why it is addressed to us today.

L5

The Mystery of Christ and Paul’s Two-Fold Distinctiveness *The Introduction to Romans, Continued (Romans 1:1–5)*

- Paul’s separation unto the gospel of God has two dimensions of uniqueness: (1) the gospel itself was ‘promised afore’ in the Old Testament scriptures (Romans 1:2), yet (2) the aspect of proclaiming it to Gentiles in spite of Israel was never prophesied—it was part of the mystery of Christ.
- Matthew 16:21–23 and Luke 18 show the twelve apostles being introduced to the Lord’s coming death and resurrection for the first time—confirming the prophesied nature of Paul’s gospel concerning Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.

The Unprophesied Aspect of Paul’s Apostleship

- The twelve were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:5–6) and eventually to the Gentiles through Israel (Acts 1:8)—but Paul was sent to Gentiles in spite of Israel, which had no vestige of a promise in the Old Testament.
- This two-fold distinctiveness is the fundamental thing Paul sets forth in

Romans 1:1–5 to establish the unique character of his apostleship and his message for this dispensation of Gentile grace.

- The ‘mystery of Christ’ (Ephesians 3:4–6)—God’s secret purpose in His Son—is the foundation of Paul’s unique gospel and apostleship, hidden from ages and generations but now revealed.

L6

Paul’s Gospel Versus Israel’s Future Message *Completing the Introduction (Romans 1:1–15)*

- The introduction is completed in this lesson, covering the doctrinal design of the epistle (vv. 8–12) and Paul’s purpose in writing (vv. 13–15).
- Without Paul’s special apostleship and grace gospel, the message Gentiles would have heard is the message of Joel 3 and the prophets—‘Prepare war’ (Joel 3:9)—judgment and wrath, not grace.

The Two Messages Contrasted

- Israel’s program message to Gentiles was one of national confrontation and judgment at the Day of the Lord. Paul’s grace message is justification by faith and peace with God—an entirely new offer from God entirely apart from Israel’s program.
- God had a secret—a plan and purpose He never spoke about in ages and generations past—and Paul’s gospel is the declaration of that secret purpose now revealed in this dispensation of Gentile grace.
- Paul’s desire in Romans 1:15 is to preach the gospel to the believers at Rome: not for initial salvation but to instruct them in the full riches of what God accomplished for them when they trusted Christ.

FIRST CORNERSTONE

Justification by Grace Through Faith — Romans 1:15–5:21

L7

The Gospel and Wrath Consciousness *First Cornerstone Begins (Romans 1:15–32)*

- Beginning in Romans 1:15, the first cornerstone opens: establishment in the doctrine of our justification by grace through faith, with the goal of complete knowledge of our perfect judicial standing before God.
- The gospel has a three-part structure: (1) Wrath consciousness—every man is worthy of the wrath of God (Romans 1:18–32); (2) The self-defense refutation (Romans 2); (3) The glorious good news of justification by grace (Romans 3:21–26).
- Romans 1:18–32 declares God’s wrath upon the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men—a foundational truth that shows the individual why they need salvation in the first place.

Part One of the Gospel: Wrath Consciousness

- Wrath consciousness is essential to the gospel because until a man sees that

he deserves God's wrath, he cannot appreciate the greatness of the grace that provides righteousness as a free gift.

- This section also equips believers as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)—understanding wrath consciousness in advance prepares them to handle the self-defense reactions of the fleshly mind when witnessing.
- The increasing description of ungodliness in Romans 1:24–32 is not gratuitous; it demonstrates the depth of wrath-worthiness and prepares the heart to receive the good news of God's grace.

L8

Refuting Relative Righteousness *Part Two of the Gospel (Romans 2)*

- Part Two of the gospel (Romans 2) addresses the self-defense tactics the fleshly mind uses to argue against deserving God's wrath—preparing the hearer to receive the good news of Part Three.

The Three Self-Defense Tactics

- Tactic 1—Relative/Comparative Righteousness: 'I'm not as bad as some people.' Paul refutes this by showing that God judges impartially according to truth, not by comparison (Romans 2:1–2:16).
- Tactic 2—Religious Privilege: The Jew who has the law and circumcision argues superiority—but Paul shows that having the law and not keeping it actually increases condemnation (Romans 2:17–29).
- Tactic 3—God's Faithfulness as Escape: Some reason that since God is faithful and committed to His people, He would not condemn them—but Paul shows that God's righteousness demands judgment on sin regardless (Romans 3:1–20).
- Romans 3:9–20 concludes with the universal verdict: 'There is none righteous, no, not one'—every mouth is stopped and the whole world stands guilty before God, fully prepared to receive the good news of grace.
- Understanding these self-defense tactics equips the believer to handle objections when presenting the gospel and to appreciate the thoroughness of God's preparation of the heart for grace.

L9

Justification by Grace Through Faith *Part Three of the Gospel (Romans 3:21–4:25)*

- Romans 3:21–26 is the heart of Part Three: the glorious good news of how God can justly justify the ungodly—by grace through faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Three Key Doctrines of Justification

- Redemption (v. 24): Christ paid the full price for our sins—He willingly bore the execution of God's wrath against our sin as our substitute Redeemer.
- Propitiation (v. 25): Christ's substitutionary death satisfied God's justice completely, so that God's justice can now work for us rather than against us.
- Justification (v. 26): God can be both just AND the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus—He imputes His own righteousness to the believer as a free gift.
- Romans 3:27–4:25 provides the declaration and proofs that justification is by

grace through faith without works of any kind at any time—demonstrated through Abraham (Romans 4) and David (Romans 4:6–8).

- The righteousness of God (Romans 1:17; 3:21–22) is the gift God freely provides—not a righteousness we produce, but God’s own righteousness imputed to the believer through faith in Christ.

L10

The Results of Justification and Eternal Security *Completing the First Cornerstone (Romans 5)*

- Romans 5:1–2 sets forth the three primary possessions of the justified believer: (1) Peace with God, (2) Access into this grace in which we stand, and (3) Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.
- The hope of the glory of God replaces the former prospect of wrath and indignation (Romans 2:8)—instead of cringing before the coming Day of the Lord, the justified believer rejoices in what that day holds.

The Capstone Doctrines of Eternal Security (Romans 5:6–21)

- Romans 5:6–8 establishes that God loved us while we were yet sinners—the basis of our security is not our performance but God’s love demonstrated at the cross.
- Romans 5:9–11: Having been justified by Christ’s blood, we shall much more be saved from wrath through Him—the capstone of assurance that our eternal security rests on Christ’s accomplished work.
- The Adam/Christ parallel (Romans 5:12–21) shows that just as condemnation came to all through one man’s offence, so the free gift of righteousness and eternal life comes to all who receive it through one Man, Jesus Christ.
- The first cornerstone goal is achieved: the believer has complete knowledge of their perfect judicial standing before God and total assurance in the eternal nature of that standing.

SECOND CORNERSTONE

Sanctification — Living Under Grace — Romans 6–8

L11

The Gospel of Sanctification *Second Cornerstone Begins (Romans 6:1–13)*

- The second cornerstone (Romans 6–8) establishes the doctrine of sanctification—the other great transaction that occurred at salvation alongside justification. It is as glorious and certain as justification.
- Romans 6:1–2: ‘Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.’ Paul answers this by revealing that God did more than justify us—He also sanctified us, making us dead to sin and alive unto God.

Our Sanctified Position in Christ

- Holy Spirit baptism (Romans 6:3–4) placed us into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection—we are co-crucified with Him, co-buried with Him, and co-raised to walk in newness of life.
- Romans 6:11–13: ‘Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ The response to sanctification is to recognize and walk in this identity.
- Our sanctified position means we are made ‘dead to sin’—sin has no more dominion or claim over us as a master—and ‘alive unto God’ in righteousness through Christ.
- The second cornerstone is specifically designed to impact our lifestyle right now, motivating us to live unto God on the basis of who He has made us to be in Christ by His grace.

L12

Not Under Law But Under Grace *The Law-Grace Operating System (Romans 6:14–7:25)*

- Romans 6:14: ‘For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ This is the principle by which our sanctified position can be practically maintained.

Why Grace—Not Law—Defeats Sin’s Dominion

- Natural thinking says law is needed to restrain sin—but Paul shows that the law actually energizes and amplifies sin’s power in the flesh (Romans 7:8–9). The law is holy but it has no power to produce what it demands.
- Romans 7 demonstrates through personal experience the impossibility of living unto God through the law operating system: ‘The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do’ (v. 19).
- Being under grace provides a completely different operating system: our sanctified position in Christ, plus the Holy Spirit’s enabling power, allows us to live unto God in a way the law never could produce.
- Romans 6:16–22 describes the transfer of masters: we were once servants of sin, but now are servants of righteousness—freed from sin and made servants to God, bearing fruit unto holiness.
- The goal of this section: believers must understand that living under grace is the only operating system consistent with their sanctified position and that it—

not law—is what God has provided for their practical victory over sin.

L13

Walking After the Spirit *Putting Sanctification Into Practice (Romans 8:1–17)*

- Romans 8:1: ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ This is the great conclusion to the law-grace discussion.
- The contrast between walking after the flesh and walking after the Spirit is the practical expression of our sanctified position—one produces spiritual death (functional failure), the other produces functional life unto God.

The Two Walks Defined

- Walking after the flesh means attempting to live unto God through self-effort, law-keeping, or fleshly performance—which the flesh has no capacity to accomplish (Romans 8:7–8).
- Walking after the Spirit means being led by the Spirit of God—recognizing our identity in Christ, mortifying the deeds of the body, and yielding to the Spirit’s direction (Romans 8:13–14).
- Romans 8:15–16: ‘Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.’ Sonship status is received at salvation—it is not earned through maturity or faithfulness but is the given position of every believer in this dispensation.
- The indwelling Spirit not only enables the walk but bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God—an ongoing inner confirmation of our position and identity in Christ.

L14

Sufferings, Glory, and Eternal Security *Completing the Second Cornerstone (Romans 8:18–39)*

- Romans 8:18: ‘The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’ This is the perspective from which we are equipped to cope with all circumstances.

The Sufferings of This Present Time

- These sufferings arise from the bondage of corruption—the fallen condition of the created world (Romans 8:20–21)—and are common to all creation, not personal judgments from God.
- The whole creation groans and travails in pain together (v. 22), and we ourselves groan within ourselves as we await the redemption of our body—the fullness of the hope set before us.
- The Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (v. 26)—God’s provision for praying in accordance with His will even when we do not know what to pray for.

The Unbreakable Chain of Romans 8:28–30

- Foreknown → Predestinated → Called → Justified → Glorified: this golden chain of Romans 8:29–30 guarantees the completion of God’s purpose for every believer.
- Romans 8:35–39: Nothing—tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, death,

life, angels, principalities, powers, nor any creature—can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the capstone of the second cornerstone.

THIRD CORNERSTONE

Israel & This Dispensation of Gentile Grace — Romans 9–11

L15

The Doctrine of Israel Begins *Third Cornerstone Begins (Romans 9:1–13)*

- The third cornerstone (Romans 9–11) addresses the doctrine of Israel and this dispensation of Gentile grace—providing the believer with an accurate understanding of their place in God’s plan and purpose.
- Without this cornerstone, believers will misidentify themselves as spiritual Israel, misapply Old Testament and prophetic scriptures, or misunderstand what God is doing in this present age.

The Central Question: What Has Happened to Israel?

- Romans 9:1–5: Paul declares the reality of Israel’s present cut-off status—they are not seeing the fulfillment of the things that pertain to them, and Paul has great heaviness of heart over this.
- Romans 9:6–13 refutes the first misconception: ‘Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.’ God’s promises to Israel have not failed—they are being fulfilled in the elect remnant (spiritual Israel within physical Israel).
- The doctrine of election is introduced here—God operates according to His sovereign purpose and not according to human lineage or works, as demonstrated in the calling of Jacob over Esau (Romans 9:10–13).
- This third cornerstone is as foundational as the first two: a believer cannot properly understand the superstructure of advance doctrine without first understanding their identity and place in this dispensation of grace.

L16

God’s Righteousness in Setting Aside Israel *Romans 9:14–33*

- Romans 9:14: ‘Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.’ Paul addresses the second misconception: that God has been unrighteous in setting aside Israel and turning to Gentiles.

God Reserved the Right Outside the Law Contract

- Even under the law covenant, God reserved the right to operate in mercy outside the law contract, as demonstrated when Israel made the golden calf (Exodus 32) and Moses interceded. God had the legal right to destroy Israel but showed mercy.
- Romans 9:15 (citing Exodus 33:19): ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.’ God’s sovereign right to show mercy outside the law framework is established in Israel’s own history.
- The hardening of Pharaoh (Romans 9:17–18) demonstrates God’s sovereign

operation in human affairs—He raises up and hardens for His own righteous purposes in the outworking of His plan.

- Romans 9:30–33: Israel stumbled over the stumbling stone (Christ) because they pursued righteousness by the works of the law rather than by faith—the very issue Paul’s gospel addresses.
- God’s turning to Gentiles in this dispensation is not unrighteous—it is consistent with the sovereign mercy He demonstrated throughout Israel’s history, now extended in a new and unprecedented way.

L17

Israel’s Stumbling and Paul’s Heart for Them *Romans 10*

- Romans 10:1: ‘Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.’ Paul’s personal passion for Israel’s salvation frames the doctrinal content of this chapter.

Israel’s Failure: Zeal Without Knowledge

- Romans 10:2–3: Israel has a zeal for God but not according to knowledge—they sought to establish their own righteousness and did not submit to the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Christ.
- Romans 10:4: ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.’ The law’s purpose was to drive men to Christ; Israel missed this by treating the law as the means of righteousness itself.
- Romans 10:9–10 sets forth the means of personal salvation for the individual Israelite (and for anyone): confess the Lord Jesus and believe in the heart that God raised Him from the dead.

Two Kinds of Salvation in Romans 10

- Individual salvation (v. 9–13) is the personal salvation of the individual Israelite who believes. National salvation (cf. Romans 11:26) is the future deliverance of the nation Israel at the Lord’s return—these must not be confused.
- Romans 10:13–17: Salvation comes by hearing the word of Christ—and the gospel must be proclaimed. Paul’s apostleship and the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles is shown to be in accordance with Isaiah 65:1.

L18

Israel’s Future: Blindness, the Remnant, and National Salvation *Completing the Third Cornerstone (Romans 11)*

- Romans 11:1: ‘Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.’ Israel is not permanently cast away—their present blindness is judicial and temporary, not final and irreversible.

The Remnant by Grace

- Romans 11:4–5: As in Elijah’s day, God has reserved a remnant—not by works of the law but by grace. The remnant by grace demonstrates that God is not finished with Israel.
- Romans 11:7–10: The rest of Israel is blinded judicially—given a spirit of slumber—so that during this dispensation of Gentile grace they do not see the fulfillment of their program.
- Romans 11:17–24: Gentile believers are as wild olive branches grafted into

the olive tree—a picture of receiving the spiritual blessings that flow from God’s program with Israel. This position is one of grace, not boasting.

Israel’s National Salvation Guaranteed

- Romans 11:25–27: The blindness in part is until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in—then all Israel will be saved. The Deliverer shall come out of Zion and take away their sins, fulfilling the covenant promises.
- Romans 11:33–36: The doxology that closes the third cornerstone extols the unsearchable riches of God’s wisdom, knowledge, and judgment in the outworking of His two-fold plan—for Israel and for us.

FOURTH CORNERSTONE

Walking Worthy as Sons of God — Romans 12–16

L19

The Reasonable Service *Fourth Cornerstone Begins (Romans 12:1–21)*

- The fourth cornerstone (Romans 12–16) establishes the doctrine of walking worthy as justified, sanctified members of God’s new creation in this dispensation of grace.
- Romans 12:1–2: ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’

Transformation Through Mind Renewal

- The key to the fourth cornerstone: ‘Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.’ The mind must be renewed with God’s norms and standards so the believer can prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.
- Romans 12:3 onward provides the doctrinal content for that mind renewal—beginning with thinking soberly about oneself and one’s gifts in the body of Christ.
- Romans 12:4–8: The body of Christ is one body with many members, each given grace gifts according to God’s sovereign distribution. Walking worthy includes recognizing and functioning in one’s proper role.
- Romans 12:9–21 describes the practical outworking of renewed-mind living: genuine love (agape), honoring others, fervent in spirit, patient in tribulation, blessing those who persecute, not rendering evil for evil, and overcoming evil with good.

L20

Human Government and the Armor of Light *Romans 13*

- Romans 13:1–7 addresses the believer’s relationship to human government—a fundamental norm and standard that God wants to renew our minds with as we walk worthy in this present evil world.

Human Government as God’s Ordinance

- Human government is ‘the ordinance of God’ (v. 2)—God Himself established it as part of His ordering of human society, and resistance to it is resistance to His arrangement.
- Rulers are ‘ministers of God’ (v. 4)—they bear the sword as God’s revengers to execute wrath upon evildoers. This is a God-ordained restraining function built into the structure of human society.
- The believer’s response: render to all their dues—tribute, custom, fear, and honor as appropriate. The walking-worthy son of God is characterized by respectful, law-abiding conduct toward governing authorities.

The Armor of Light (Romans 13:8–14)

- Romans 13:8–10: Love (agape) is the fulfillment of the law—the renewed mind expressed in the details of relationships with others, doing no ill to a neighbor.
- Romans 13:11–14: Knowing the time—the nearness of our salvation (the hope of glory)—motivates the believer to put on the armor of light and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision for the flesh.

L21

Strong and Weak in Faith *Receiving the Weaker Brother (Romans 14–15:7)*

- Romans 14 addresses the practical dynamics between believers who are strong in the faith (doctrinally mature) and those who are weak in the faith (newer or less grounded in doctrine).
- Romans 14:1: ‘Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.’ The strong believer is to receive the weaker brother into full fellowship without engaging in debates the weaker cannot yet handle.

The Responsibility of the Strong

- The strong believer has a frame of reference from doctrine that gives discernment the weak one does not yet possess. Using that advantage to force the weak to conform—rather than to serve and edify—violates the principle of walking in love.
- Romans 14:7–9: ‘None of us liveth to himself.’ The believer lives and dies unto the Lord, not to himself—the foundation for why we must not judge or despise one another.
- Romans 14:13–15: The strong are not to put a stumbling block or occasion of falling before the weak brother—the agape walk means not exercising liberty in a way that damages the weaker saint.
- Romans 15:1–7: ‘We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.’ Christ is the pattern—He did not please Himself but received all for the glory of God, and we are to do the same.

L22

Completing the Survey *The Dispensational Change and Paul’s Apostleship (Romans 15:8–16:27)*

- Romans 15:8–13 underscores the great dispensational change: Christ was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers of Israel—AND that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy.

- Paul's unique apostleship as 'minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles' (Romans 15:16) is reiterated at the close of the epistle—the same truth declared in the introduction (Romans 1:1–7) now forms the conclusion's bookend.

The Conclusion Mirrors the Introduction

- Romans 16:25–27 restates the purpose of the entire epistle: 'Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery.' To stablish you was the purpose from beginning to end.
- The mystery kept secret since the world began is now made manifest—and this epistle is the foundational declaration of that mystery's doctrinal implications for believers in this dispensation of grace.
- Romans 15:14–21: Paul explains his God-given ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not yet named, laying foundations in new territory—consistent with his unique role as apostle to the Gentiles.
- Romans 16:1–20 contains Paul's personal greetings, demonstrating the fruit of his apostolic ministry, and closes with a warning to mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine learned—a final note of doctrinal vigilance.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Israel's Program vs. the Body of Christ

Romans carefully distinguishes between God's prophetic program with the nation Israel (Genesis through John; Acts 1–8; Hebrews through Revelation) and the mystery program for the church, the body of Christ, revealed through the apostle Paul (Romans through Philemon). Believers today are members of the body of Christ, not spiritual Israel. Romans 9–11 is specifically designed to establish this distinction in the believer's mind so they do not misapply Israel's scriptures, promises, or program to themselves.

Justification vs. Sanctification

Justification (Romans 1–5) is the judicial transaction in which God declares the believing sinner righteous by imputing to them the righteousness of Christ—it is positional, instantaneous, and entirely the work of God based on Christ's finished work. Sanctification (Romans 6–8) is the simultaneous transaction in which God makes the believer dead to sin and alive unto God in Christ through Holy Spirit baptism—equally instantaneous and positional. These are two distinct yet inseparable aspects of what God accomplished at salvation, each requiring its own doctrinal treatment.

Sonship Status vs. Living as a Son

Romans 8:15 declares that believers have 'received the spirit of adoption'—sonship status is given at salvation, not earned through maturity or faithfulness. It cannot be lost. However, learning to live as a son—understanding the Father's norms and standards, walking by the Spirit, and proving the good,

acceptable, and perfect will of God—is the progressive process that Romans 12 onward addresses. The fourth cornerstone is the doctrine of living as the sons God has already made us to be.

Living Under Grace vs. Living Under Law

Romans 6:14 establishes the foundational principle: ‘Ye are not under the law, but under grace.’ The law operating system cannot produce victory over sin because the flesh has no power to fulfill the law—in fact the law energizes sin in the flesh (Romans 7). Grace, by contrast, provides both the sanctified position in Christ (dead to sin, alive unto God) and the Holy Spirit’s enabling power, creating an entirely different operating system that actually produces the righteousness the law demanded but could never produce.

Paul’s Gospel vs. the Mystery

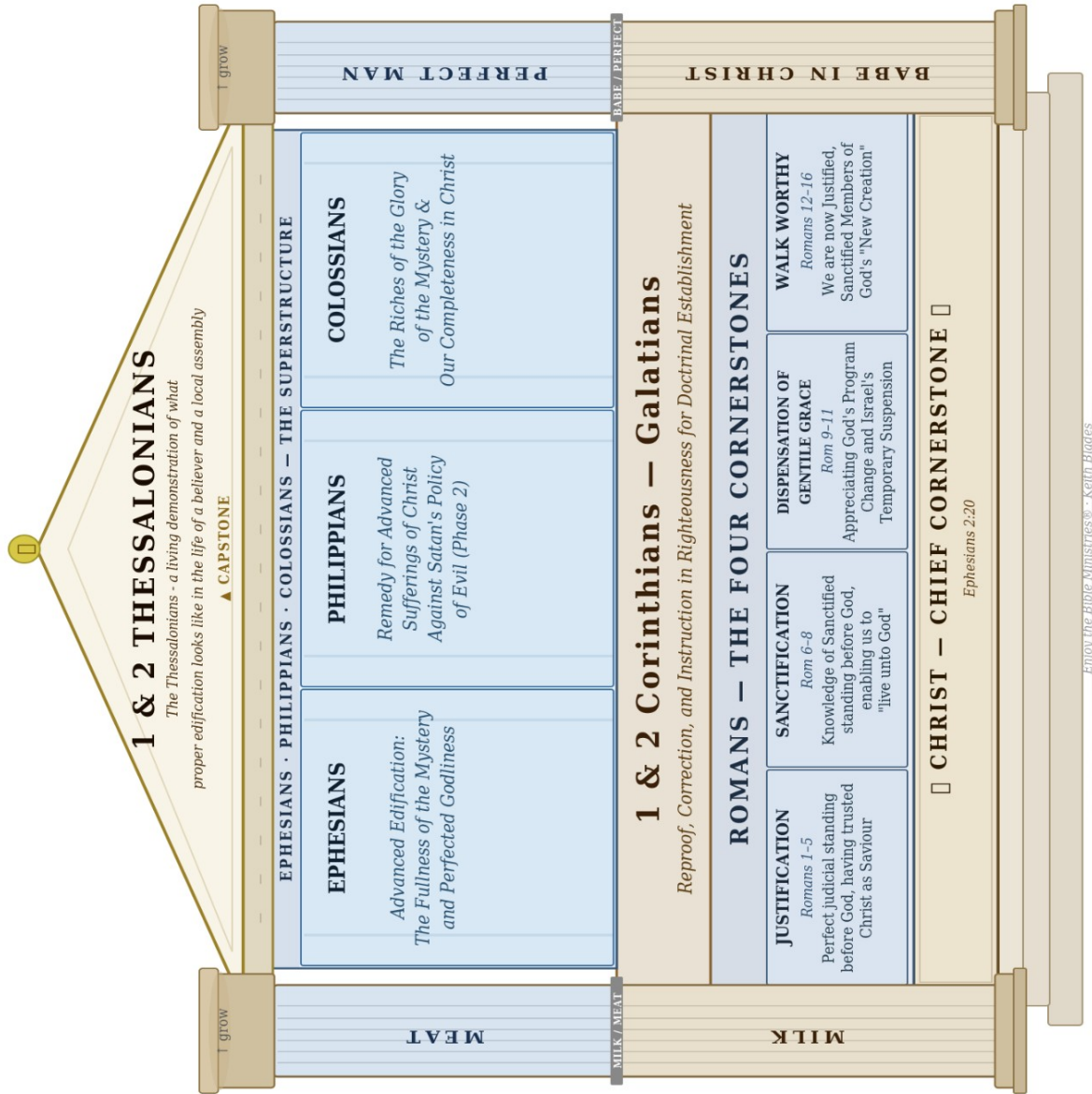
Paul’s gospel (‘my gospel,’ Romans 16:25a; Romans 1–5) is the salvation message—justification by grace through faith—directed to every creature. It was promised in the Old Testament (Romans 1:2) and fulfills prophetic purposes. The mystery (Romans 16:25b; Ephesians 3) is the dispensational revelation of God’s hidden plan—the body of Christ, Gentiles as fellow heirs, the unprecedented dispensation of Gentile grace—never before revealed, now made manifest through Paul. These two are not the same message and must not be conflated.

Key Scripture References

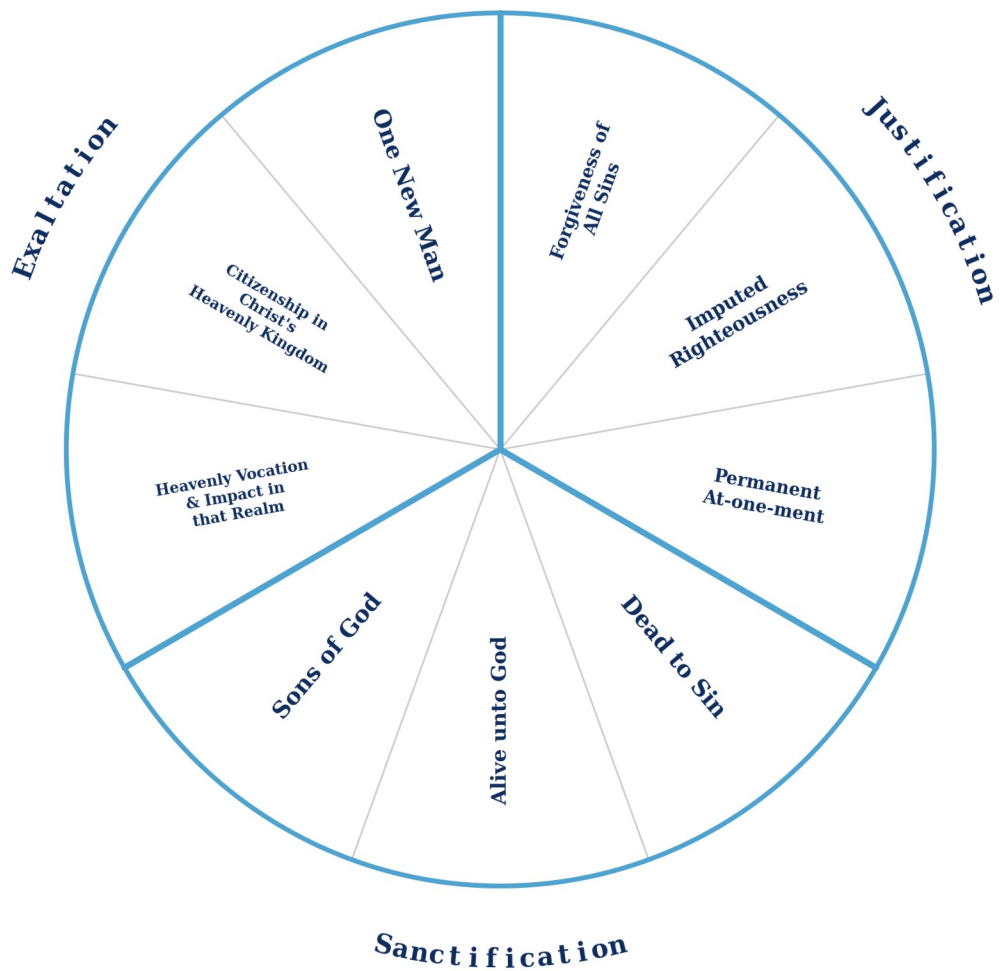
2 Timothy 2:15	The right division principle—the governing hermeneutic for the entire series
Romans 1:1–5	Paul’s special apostleship to the Gentiles; separated unto the gospel of God
Romans 1:16–17	The gospel of Christ: the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith
Romans 1:18–32	Wrath consciousness: the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men deserving God’s wrath
Romans 3:21–26	The glorious good news: redemption, propitiation, justification by grace through faith
Romans 5:1–2	The three results of justification: peace, access, and hope of the glory of God
Romans 5:8-9	God’s love demonstrated at the cross; much more saved from wrath through Christ
Romans 6:3–4	Holy Spirit baptism into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection—our sanctified position
Romans 6:11–13	Reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God; yielding members to righteousness
Romans 6:14	Not under law but under grace: the operating principle of sanctified living
Romans 8:1	No condemnation; walking after the Spirit, not the flesh

Romans 8:15–16	Spirit of adoption received at salvation; sonship status confirmed by the Spirit
Romans 8:28–30	The unbreakable chain: foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified
Romans 8:35–39	Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord
Romans 9:6	The word of God has not failed; spiritual Israel within physical Israel
Romans 11:25–27	The fullness of the Gentiles; all Israel shall be saved; the Deliverer out of Zion
Romans 12:1–2	The reasonable service; transformation through the renewing of the mind
Romans 13:1–2	Human government as the ordinance of God
Romans 16:25–27	Stablished according to Paul's gospel and the revelation of the mystery
Ephesians 3:4–6	The mystery of Christ: Gentiles as fellow heirs, fellow body members, fellow partakers

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"in Christ"



"in Adam"

