

Aug 14-20, 2023

## Romans 7–16

“OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD”

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**Summary:** *Romans 7. The law of Moses is fulfilled in Christ—Paul delights in the law of God after the inward man.*

*Romans 8. The law of Christ brings life and peace—Those adopted as children of God become joint heirs with Christ—God’s elect are foreordained to eternal life—Christ makes intercession for man.*

*Romans 9. Paul explains how the law of election (foreordination) operates—The people of Israel are chosen (foreordained) to receive the adoption, covenants, promises, and blessings of the gospel; yet they are not all Israel who are of Israel—They must seek their blessings by faith—The Gentiles also attain to righteousness and salvation by faith.*

*Romans 10. Salvation comes through righteousness to those who believe in Christ—Faith comes by hearing the gospel taught by legal administrators sent of God.*

*Romans 11. Israel was chosen (foreordained) according to the election of grace—But some harden their hearts against it—The Gentiles are adopted into the house of Israel—The gospel goes preferentially to the Gentiles until the fulness of the Gentiles.*

*Romans 12. Paul counsels the Saints to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, to use their own grace-given gifts, and to live as Saints should live.*

*Romans 13. Paul counsels, Be subject unto God’s ministers; keep the commandments; love one another; righteousness leads to salvation.*

*Romans 14. Avoid quarreling about opinions and making unrighteous judgment of each other—Every knee will bow to Christ—The kingdom of God embraces righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

*Romans 15. True Saints fellowship one another—Paul recounts his diligence in preaching the gospel—The gifts of the Spirit are poured out upon the Gentiles.*

*Romans 16. Paul sends greetings to various Saints—He counsels the Saints to avoid those who cause divisions—The Saints should be wise concerning good and innocent concerning evil.*

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### **Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights**

**How can I be “me” among so many unlike me?**  
One of Paul’s great concerns was the assimilation of early saints into the world culture that existed around them. Today’s Latter-day Saints are told to be in the world yet not part of it. “One of the most

difficult challenges in our lives is to be in the world but not of the world (see **John 15:19**). Gospel doctrine makes it clear that we must live in this world to achieve our eternal destination. We must be tried and tested and found.” (**Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Ensign, Feb. 2006, 53–55**) One of the Jews’ greatest concerns is “conforming to the

world,” or as they call it, assimilation. Note the similar trends of the challenge of Jewish assimilation and identity with that of the Latter-day Saints. “Assimilation is the process in which one cultural or national group loses its identity and becomes part of another group. Referred to by Jews, assimilation means losing Jewish identity and becoming absorbed in gentile society.” “Throughout Jewish history assimilation of Jews has taken place and has been motivated by many factors. In some cases, Jews viewed gentile culture as superior and wished to join it.” “For some Jews, assimilation served as a shortcut to attaining individual advancement . . . Later, their admiration for the modern national state, a growing appreciation of the lifestyle and social structure of the dominant nations, and the idea of progress combined to create the conception that the Jewish national existence was outdated. Such Jews also felt that they were guilty of intellectual and emotional dishonesty in cherishing Jewish messianic hopes. Furthermore, instead of looking to *Erez* (land of) Israel as the Jewish national homeland, Jews became imbued with nationalistic feelings for the country in which they lived.” “Assimilation in the Jewish community of the United States has been directed by several different pressures. During colonial times, there were so few Jews that they were regarded as exotic.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **What do I miss being part of isolationism?**

“The Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel caused many Jews to reaffirm their Jewish identity. The rapid economic rise of the bulk of the American Jewish community into the middle and upper-middle classes during the postwar period remade the lifestyle of American Jews, so that in many aspects Jews became part of the American establishment. This was particularly true

in the realms of academic and artistic endeavor, where Jews became a dominant force during this era. It was thus no longer necessary to play down the fact of one's Jewishness. Increased efforts were made by almost every American Jewish body toward intensifying Jewish education and strengthening the connection between American Jews and Israel. The last generation of American Jews has rebuilt the institutions of Jewish communal life at an estimated cost of two billion dollars, and enormous personal energy.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) Assimilation for Latter-day Saints represents a compromise in lifestyle and obedience to the Lord's commandments. Yet being “in the world” and yet “not of the world” allows us the interchange with others and that can benefit, add-to our God-given standards. Those higher standards even apply to the treatment of our enemies.

### **How can I show my election of grace?**

Regarding being subject to God's ministers and keeping the commandments we can reflect on the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. We find that the motivation of those who many call the Essenes was to move away from wickedness and establish a singular community of righteousness. They desired a system of ministers and arranged a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader was called the “Teacher of Righteousness” and he had two assistants. There was also a council of “Twelve Overseers.” They had an order following the ‘righteous king’ which is said in Hebrew, “Melech Zedek.” The Dead Sea sect shunned others and probably evoked one of the Savior's comments in the Sermon on the Mount. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which

despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:43-46)

### **How is strengthening those around us fulfilling a commandment as well as be a blessing?**

Getting along with each other as believers also includes getting along with those who do not believe as we do. Sometimes those people are in the majority and sometimes become our political leaders. An Old Testament example is shown as the Prophet Elisha, a servant of God, healed Naaman, Syria's highest-ranking officer in the Land of Israel at that time and refused payment from him. The anomaly is that the ancient children of Israel strongly objected to the Syrian "occupying" forces." Yet they had a prophet who was probably teaching the same principle that Jesus taught and that has been revealed again in our day.

"Then saith he unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

(Matthew 22:21) "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law." (Articles of Faith 11)

So, there was a faithful young woman, probably serving in Naaman's household, who was a believer. She prompted the "occupying" Syrian officer to come to the prophet to be blessed. He sent a message to do something simple – bathe in the Jordan River. When Naaman finally "swallowed his pride," he was blessed! Imagine--the enemy was blessed! "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

(Matthew 5:44) We don't know for sure if

that resulted in Naaman's conversion and it doesn't matter. The blessing was unconditional. The lesson for the unbelieving Israelites was repeated by the Savior as He said: "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of (Elisha) the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4:27) "The earliest ethical teachings are commandments in the Bible: to do justice, to avoid bribery, gossip, robbery, oppression, to protect the weak --- the widow, the orphan, the slave, the stranger; to be kind to animals. Man is obliged to overcome his normal feelings and to obey these commands --- even with respect to his enemy." (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **How important are "Gentiles" to the Jews?**

Anciently, the covenant kingdom of Israel split in two, one was led by Ephraimite descendants and continued calling themselves the Kingdom of Israel. That northern kingdom included most of the tribes of Israel. Eventually, they were scattered and lost their identity – mixing with and becoming Gentiles. The southern part of them became the Kingdom of Judah. It was inhabited mostly by the tribe of Judah, some Levites, Simeon, and a smattering of those who stayed in the southern part of the land of Israel. Those inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah were subsequently identified as Judeans, or Jews. They kept their identity by holding on to biblical traditions, laws, rituals, and regulations. That was quite different than their northern brothers and sisters who were soon conquered, assimilated, and scattered. Their "DNA" is now scattered all through the Gentile nations. Other than Jews who have meticulously held on to their biblical traditions, laws, rituals, and regulations, a large part of the Jews has mostly forgotten that after their scattering, they eventually they would be gathered. Facilitating that would be the Ephraim –

part of the Gentiles! “And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.” (Isaiah 11:10-14) “

#### **What Gentiles will begin the gathering?**

“ . . . Salvation is come unto the Gentiles . . . ” (Romans 11:11) “ . . . blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” (Romans 11:25) “God

should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also, to return to that power which she had lost.” (Doctrine and Covenants 113:8) “From this [D&C 133:11-16] and other revelations in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants, we are informed that the Jews are to gather at Jerusalem. On this, the American Continent, the converted Israelites and Gentiles are to gather with the Latter-Day Saints and the revelation states that those who come from among the Gentiles are to “flee” unto Zion. However, they are not to go out “in haste,” that is to say, the Latter-day Saints are preparing they way. They are building the temples and the highways and performing the labors which are necessary for the tribes of Israel when their prophets shall speak to them and they shall receive their call to come to Zion . . . ” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions 5:72-74)