

Romans I

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Colorado Theological Seminary

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I. FOREWORD

A personal study in the Book of Romans is credited with bringing to pass the dynamic decision of the great Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther. Luther's sixteenth (16th) century stand against the Church of Rome has, without question, affected the present theological world in which we live.

Concerning Romans, Luther wrote,

It is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel. It well deserves that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. For it can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

This study is designed to assist in the daily personal pursuit of the truth of the text. It is obviously not an exhaustive study or an extensive scholarly assessment of the Book. It is a systematic approach and simplistic assessment of Paul's scholarly advancement of the Spirit's inspired Word. It should only be used with the Word in hand and referred to only after the Biblical text has been read. It is sent forth with the prayer that it can be used by Pastor and parishioner as a seed form which can be grown into both powerful sermons for the pulpit, as well as personal study for the pew, bringing to pass life changing results in our day.

II. PREFACE

As we begin our study of the Book of Romans, we need to have a goal in view. Succinctly stated, our goal can be expressed by four (4) key words, appreciation, application, amplification, and assimilation.

A. Appreciation

It is our belief that through this study we will come to a deeper appreciation of God's plan of Salvation. It is easy to become so familiar with the central truths of the Gospel that they no longer grip our hearts. It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the worth and the wonder of Christ's work through this study in the Book of Romans.

B. Application

By applying the truths contained in Romans, we will arrive at a greater determination to live fully for the Lord Jesus Christ. We want this study to find a practical application in our lives.

C. Amplification

We want the message of the Book to be amplified, so that all will clearly understand its meaning. Also, we believe that because of this study the message of the Gospel will be amplified to others by our lips and life. The Apostle Paul felt himself obligated to the entire world (1:14-17). Every Believer should share with Paul the sense of duty to the lost multitudes of the earth.

D. Assimilation

We pray each one will assimilate both the meaning and message of the text, as well as the method of study we are using. A clear understanding of this method will prove an indispensable aid in subsequent Bible Study.

The Book divides itself into two (2) main divisions.

1. Section one (1) is chapters one (1) through eight (8), which are a doctrinal foundation.

Here, Paul explains to his readers why the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants have not been fulfilled.

2. Section two (2) is chapters twelve (12) through sixteen (16), which are to be the desired function.

In this concluding section, Paul exhorts Believers to a life in conformity with the doctrine given in chapters one (1) through eight (8). In this commentary, we will be studying only section one (1).

Since most people are in the habit of following the given chapter divisions, we have made the alternated outline by chapters. It is our prayer that a systematic study in this form will help aid clarity of thought, as well as increase our conviction of the truth.

III. DOCTRINAL TERMS

There are doctrinal terms that are used in the Book of Romans that require a good understanding in order to understand what Paul was writing. The Book of Romans has been called "The Gospel According to Paul." As we study, the understanding of these terms will help us to see the truth of Paul's Gospel.

A. Atonement

The word atonement in the New Testament is closely related with the words reconciliation and propitiation. It shows the way in which God, through the vicarious death of Christ, has made His own payment for sin. It points out to the Believer that there is nothing that he can do to merit or earn his Salvation.

For the best meaning of the word atonement, we should go to the Old Testament and look at the Hebrew understanding of the word. The atonement was a vital part of their religious understanding. To the Jew the word atonement meant this: to cover, to placate, to cancel, to appease, to cleanse, to disannul, to forgive, to be merciful, to pacify, to pardon, to purge away, to put off, to make reconciliation."

When we look at the Feast of Atonement, which the Jews celebrated, we can see why it was one of the most important feasts to them. In Christ we have the perfect sacrifice that completely fulfilled every one of the meanings of the Jewish concept of atonement. The word atonement means "to be one with God." This may be weak in descriptive attributes but it does, in a simple way, show to the Believer all that Christ has done for him in His atoning death on the Cross. When we accept that death for our sins as God's means of propitiation and reconciliation for us, we truly enter into a relationship with the Father because we are in union with the Son, who is in union with the Father. We are "at-one-ment" with Him.

B. Election

According to Thiessen, election is "that sovereign act of God in grace, whereby, He chose in Christ Jesus Salvation for all those whom He foreknew would accept Him."

In election we are confronted with our own inability to procure for ourselves Salvation. God was under no obligation to elect anyone. Since we were all born sinners because of Adam=s act of high treason, man had lost our standing before God. Even though Christ died for us, God was not under any obligation to us, but He was to His Son. God was not constrained to elect to save man. He elected to save us because He loved man and He elected to demonstrate His love to us by providing, in Christ, a channel for His grace to flow to us. We were elected, chosen, in Christ.

We must remember that the source of our election is God's grace and not human will (Ep.1:4-6). Although Christ's death is sufficient for all men, and is effective in the case of the elect, men in the eyes of God are treated as responsible, being capable of the will to choose. God has elected us in Christ, but we must elect to be elected. It is by grace, through faith, that we are saved and that not of ourselves. A...It is the gift of God, lest any man should boast.@ Election is the sovereign act of God. We must ever be mindful that what He has given us is because He loves us and has chosen us before the foundation of the world (Ep.1:4). Election is in the hands of God. It is based on His grace and His foreknowledge. We can do nothing to merit it or earn it, but we can elect to receive it.

C. Faith

Hebrews 11:1 says to us, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." In looking at faith we must become conscious of the

fact that we are incapable of producing anything that could lead us to God and procure for us Salvation.

Some say that faith is blind, or that it is just a procurement of the will. There may be these kinds of faith, which term we use loosely, which are false and not of God. Faith is not blind. It is based on something concrete, that is, the immutable and unchangeable Word of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Ro.10:17). We need to have our spiritual ears in tune to the voice of the Father. Faith brings assurance because of the fact that it is the Word of a living God that we are responding to. The Word of God tells us that each one of us has been given the measure of faith. That word "measure" means "the capacity to hold." God will give to each and every one of us the capacity to hold faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (He.11:6). Without faith we will constantly be trying to redeem ourselves or justify ourselves at the expense of God. We will set ourselves up as a god and build up a false faith, which is human pride and self-centeredness, which will lead us to spiritual death. We need to live a life that is pleasing to Jesus Christ. The A...just shall live by faith...@ in His faithfulness.

Faith is the hand of man's spirit which reaches out to God and never returns empty. God is speaking to us today to reach out to Him in faith. In that reaching out He will increase our capacity for faith and cause us to walk in obedience to Him, thus walking in faith.

D. Imputation (Reckoning)

Vines Dictionary says imputation is "to reckon, to take into account," or, metaphorically, "to put down to a person's account."

The word is translated more often as reckon than impute. The word, Aimpute@ or Ato reckon@ has basically the same meaning as the word Areconciliation.@ In the Book of Romans it is used more often to describe the relationship between the Believer and God. It is the sinner's faith in the work of Christ on the Cross that is reckoned, imputed, or put onto his account as righteousness. In Romans 4:4 the subject is treated by way of contrast between grace and debt, which latter involves the reckoning of a reward for works. What is owed as a reward can never be reckoned as a favor. But, the faith of the Believer sets him outside of the category of those who seek to be justified by self effort, works, and vice versa.

In Christ we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, the Law, and our old nature. The reason for this reckoning is that He has imputed to our account all that is necessary for us to live in a state of righteousness.

E. Justification

Justification has its roots in the meaning of righteousness. It is the act of declaring one as righteous, justified or being acquitted of a crime committed.

In coming to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son, we first had to see that we were sinners, condemned by the Law of God to death. In seeing this we had to realize that there was no way possible for us to work our way out of that sentence of death. But, in coming to the Father through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, we were justified. God acquitted us of all the guilt of sin on the conditions of His grace in Christ, through Christ's atoning death and the acceptance of Christ through faith (Ro.5:16).

The Believer needs to see that there is nothing that he can do to merit his Salvation, righteousness, or justification. We must see that the just, those who have been declared justified, must live by faith in His faithfulness. We must also realize that in being justified freely by faith in Christ is not an excuse to continue in sin. Justification can not be earned by good works, but on the other hand it will be demonstrated in the life of the Believer by obedience to Christ. This will produce a life of good works that have their foundation in Him who is both the just and the justifier.

Justification is an act of God's free grace wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and received by faith alone.

F. Predestination

Some Bible scholars have a tendency to interpret away into oblivion the simple truth of God's Word. Predestination is one of those subjects. It does not matter if we were predestinated to be called or elected by God. We are just thankful that God so loved the world and that meant us. We were lost and going to hell and had no way of redeeming ourselves, but through faith in Jesus we are now justified, sanctified and righteous in the eyes of God.

Romans 8:29-30 says that God foreknew us and that He also foreordained us to be conformed to the image of His Son. Then it goes on to say that those He foreordained, He called, and those He called, He also justified and glorified. So it is into the image of Jesus Christ that we have been predestinated to be made by the foreknowledge of God.

This is a weighty matter, for the adopted son cannot be disinherited. However, the natural born son can be disinherited at the whim of the father. We can see how powerful this is, for we are adopted into the family of God, never to be disinherited.

G. Propitiation

In the feeling behind this word we sense that there is a Divine reasoning that is beyond our finite understanding. For it is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character; whereby, He has so dealt with sin, through the

provision that He has made in the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ. He can show man as a Believer in the removal of his guilt and the remission of his sins.

It is also seen in the Old Testament type of the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle. God has offered His Lamb, Jesus Christ, on the Altar of Calvary and then took His blood into the Heavenly Tabernacle and sprinkled it on the Heavenly Mercy Seat, thus making provision for man's sins. Therefore, Christ has become the propitiation for our sins. By believing in Christ, the Believer has open to him the means to receive forgiveness for his sins and to be shown mercy. In First John 4:10, we see that God sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins, in an outward demonstration of His love toward man. This is the reason we should love one another.

Propitiation then could be seen in this way. Man had forfeited his life on account of sin and God has provided the one (1) and only way by which eternal life could be bestowed. The provision is the laying down of His own life by His Son, under Divine retribution. Man can, by faith in that act, receive eternal life and the forgiveness of sin. To propitiate is then to cause to be "favorably disposed toward, to appease" or "to conciliate."

H. Reconciliation

Reconciliation, like atonement and propitiation, has basically the same meaning. Reconciliation, although similar, has in its context the idea of transfer. It is like a money system in accounting. It is as the transfer of funds into an account that is deficient or bankrupt. It is not anything that we have earned; it is a reconciliation of our account at the expense of another person's account.

With regard to the relationship between God and man, the use of the term reconciliation points to the primary reconciliation that God accomplishes. He exercises His grace towards sinful man on the grounds of the death of Christ in propitiatory sacrifice under the judgment due to sin. By reason of this, man in his sinful condition is estranged from God and yet invited by faith to be reconciled to Him. That is to admit that they are spiritually bankrupt, to accept the provision that God has made, and thus their sins can be forgiven and they themselves can be justified in His sight in Christ.

Reconciliation also can mean "the war is over" (Ro.5:10). We were at one (1) time not only bankrupt but also enemies of God. God has won the victory through Jesus Christ. This brings man into a relationship with God where he has passed from death into life and from wrath into peace.

What we need to see is what God has done in the matter of reconciliation and what He has done in Christ. This is based upon the fact that God made Him to be sin on our behalf that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. On this fact, the command to man is to "be reconciled."

I. Regeneration

Thiessen says regeneration is "the communication of the Divine life to the soul. It is the impartation of a new nature."

Then we view the terminology of the word "regeneration", we can see a dualistic idea begin to formulate. Justification is the way in which the Believer should view his life after his encounter with Jesus Christ. This means that man's heart has had a change. From the Divine side, this change in heart is called regeneration, the New Birth; from the human side it is called conversion. In regeneration, the soul is passive, while in conversion it is active. Regeneration involves the soul of man. Man needs Divine life (Jn.3:5; 10:10; 1Jn.5:11-12). The soul needs an impartation of a new nature (2Pe.1:4), and a new heart (Je.24:7; Ezk.11:19; 36:36). This brings man to the point where he is a new creation in Christ (2Co.5:17; Ep.2:10; 4:24). By a new heart, we mean that the soul of man, his real self, what he thinks, acts, wills and feels, comes under the changing power of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Regeneration is the work of God and not of man. We are born again of the will of God (Jn.1:13). We must remember that the new birth is conditioned on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Jn.3:14-16; 1Pe.1:3). It is the Believer who, by faith in this, has been regenerated. Above all, it is the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn.3:5-6; Ti.3:5).

J. Righteousness

Vines Dictionary says it "is the quality or character of being right or just. Righteousness in former times was spelled 'rightwiseness' which gives a clear expression of the meaning. Righteousness also denotes the character of God. Righteousness is that quality of the holiness of God which must find expression in His condemnation of sin."

When the Word of God speaks of the Believer being righteous, it is speaking of a two-fold relationship. First we must see that our being declared righteous is not dependent on our good works but on the accomplished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. He is our righteousness. The Christian's righteousness is never doing things because they are right, which is pride, independence or exaltation of self, but because they are God's will for us. We must obey in order to be living examples of righteousness. Righteousness then is being in right standing with God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and living in obedience to Him Who has declared us righteous by faith in Him.

The second aspect of righteousness is if we are in right standing with God through Jesus Christ, then we need to demonstrate this righteousness by being in right relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Righteousness is an inner quality that has an outward manifestation to all who meet us. It is an outward manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world.

K. Sanctification

Vines Dictionary says that "sanctification is that relationship with God into which men enter by faith in Christ, and to which their sole title is the death of Christ."

In looking at sanctification we focus ourselves back to Jesus Christ. Sanctification is not something that we can do in ourselves. This again would lower it to the grounds of human achievement and make the work of Christ on the Cross of a lesser merit. If we could sanctify ourselves, there would be no need for Calvary. In First Corinthians 1:30, we see that Jesus Christ has been made unto us righteousness and sanctification. He is our sanctification. Sanctification carries with it the idea of holiness and separation. Christ was separated unto God. In Him we become, by faith, separated unto God. Sanctification is a separation from the evil things and ways that we walked in at one (1) time. It is by faith in Christ, an instant reality, and at the same time a progressive walk. It must be learned (1Th.4:4), and it is God's Will (1Th.4:3). We must see that sanctification is a Divine process in a Believer's life. Little by little he grows into the full stature of Christ. This growth is based on the Believers obedience to the Word of God and of following the example of Christ. Sanctification is a revelation of the will of the Father to our life. It is something we cannot earn or merit, but it is something we can attain unto. Christ is the way. He is our sanctification.

IV. INTRODUCTION

For full and complete information regarding the background of Romans the student is urged to read any conservative introduction or commentary on the Book. Our purpose here is to set forth certain basic facts, indispensable to proper understanding and appreciation of Romans.

A. The Direction of Romans

1. The writer of Romans is Paul.

Because of the tremendous importance of Romans to the entire system of Christian truth, modern liberal scholarship has attempted both to discredit the Apostle Paul and to assign to writings attributed to him as being written at a later date. That Romans and other New Testament writings bearing his name came from Paul's pen has been successfully defended by Christian scholars of every generation.

2. The timing of the writing of Romans predated his visit to Rome.

Paul had wanted for a long time to visit the Church in Rome, but had been hindered from doing so (Ro.1:13). It looked now like the way was clear for his

long awaited visit (Ro.15:14-24). In light of this fact, Paul writes his Epistle and sends it off to Rome from Corinth.

3. Paul had several reasons for writing Romans.

A careful reading of the book will indicate at least a four-fold purpose for the Epistle:

a. Paul's reasons for writing were personal.

Paul wanted to express his personal interest in the Christians at Rome. As the Apostle to the Gentiles he would naturally be concerned for the spiritual welfare of the largest of all Gentile Christian churches (Ro.1:8-13).

b. Paul's reasons for writing were Prophetic.

Paul indicated his desire to visit Rome. Many times Paul had planned to journey west to Rome. But, each time, in the providence of God, something would hinder the realization of this purpose.

c. Paul wanted the Roman Church to make preparation.

Paul wanted to prepare the Roman Church for his visit. The Spirit of God evidently bore witness with the Apostle's heart that shortly he would be able to visit Rome. He wrote this Epistle to indicate this fact and to prepare them for his visit.

d. Paul had a presentation to make.

Paul wanted to present a systematic treatise on the method and result of Salvation. How glad we are that the Spirit of God moved upon the heart of Paul to write this priceless Epistle.

B. The Date of Romans

The Apostle Paul wrote Romans from Corinth at the close of his third (3rd) missionary journey, about A.D. 57 or 58. For seventeen (17) years he labored for Christ in pioneering missionary work before he wrote any of his Epistles. The first New Testament letter to come from his pen was First Thessalonians, written about A. D. 52, to the church in the Macedonian city of Thessalonica. During the next thirteen (13) years Paul wrote twelve (12) additional Epistles, thirteen (13) if he wrote Hebrews. Paul labored for Christ for thirty (30) years, dying a martyr's death in Rome, probably in A. D. 66. Romans is the fifth (5th) Epistle written by Paul, preceded by First and Second Thessalonians, Galatians, and First Corinthians (ref, Calvin, Romans, pp, x-xi).

C. The Destination of Romans

The Epistle is addressed "...to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be Saints" (Ro.1:7). We should, therefore, know something about the church to which Paul wrote.

1. The commencement of the Church at Rome was through several Believers.

The Church in Rome was probably founded by various Christians who had migrated to Rome and taken up permanent settlement there. Paul sends greetings to a fairly long list of personal acquaintances in Rome, as in chapter sixteen (16). These people apparently had known Paul previously, since he had not been in Rome.

2. The character of the Church at Rome was good.

For some years following the inauguration of the Christian Church, Believers assembled in various homes. The larger the city and the more numerous the Believers, the more meeting places there would be in operation. Paul refers to at least five (5) distinct groups of Believers in Rome (16:5,10, 11, 14, 15). Undoubtedly the Roman Church, located in the capital city of the empire, was the largest, wealthiest, and most active of all churches in the empire. The subsequent influence of the Roman Church adds weight to this surmise.

3. The constituency of the Church at Rome was mixed.

There were both Jewish and Gentile Christians in the Church at Rome (Ro.1:16). Probably, in this Gentile center, there were more Gentile Believers than Jewish. The words of Romans 1:5-6, seems to indicate a Gentile preponderance, inasmuch as the Apostle links the Roman Believers with those who from "among all the Gentiles" had turned to Christ. In Romans 1:13-15, the Believers in Rome are numbered among the Greeks and Barbarians; in Romans 11:13, Paul addresses himself to the Gentiles; and in chapter sixteen (16), many of the names are Latin or Greek. All of these evidences point to a majority of Gentile Believers in the Church at Rome.

D. The Design of Romans

A study of the Book of Romans impresses the student with at least five (5) great facts about the Epistle:

1. There is provision in Romans.

The Book of Romans provides us with information that would only be available from God. This Book deals with the high and lofty subject of God's righteousness and man's sin, and how a sinful man may become righteous in the sight of God. There is no subject under heaven of more importance than this.

2. There is preciseness in Romans.

It is a precise Epistle and yet most comprehensive. It opens the door to all the treasures of the Scriptures. It is an inspired exposition of the plan of redemption, and is well placed at the head, i.e., first in order of the New Testament Epistles, because it exhibits God's mighty scheme of Salvation as no other single epistle does. For the first time in the Bible, the Gospel is plainly and systematically set forth. The Book of Romans gives the foundation of all Paul's Gospel, and all true preaching for this dispensation.

3. There is plausibility in Romans.

The Book of Romans demonstrates an amazing acuteness of reasoning, and of logic that is irresistible. The Epistle to the Romans is undoubtedly the most scientific statement of the Divine Plan for the redemption of mankind that God has been pleased to give us. Apart from the question of inspiration, we may think of it as a treatise of transcendent, intellectual power, putting to shame the most brilliant philosophies ever conceived by the minds of men. The Book of Romans is literally logic set on fire.

4. There is production in Romans.

This Epistle produces a marvelous literary vigor and style. One commentator on Romans has this to say about the Book as literature: "The Epistle to the Romans is... the greatest literary product of Paul's life, in the most strenuous period and his highest powers."

5. There is power in Romans.

The Book of Romans provides great motivating power. Every great spiritual revival has been found to be connected as effect and cause with the deeper understanding of the Epistle to the Romans. No student of Romans can pursue his study with an open heart and mind and not flame into a holy fire of love and devotion to Jesus Christ.

V. CHAPTER 1, ROMANS 1:1-32

A. The Apostle and the Gospel Proclaimed, Verses 1-7

This first important paragraph of the Book accomplishes three (3) valuable objectives. First of all, it provides us with the identity of the messenger. Secondly, it gives us an indication as to the message involved. Thirdly, it provides the identification of the metropolis to which Paul wrote.

1. The identity of the messenger is in verse one (1).

In this section we learn four (4) important facts about the writer.

- a. Paul is the writer of this book.

This Book bears the name of Paul and thereby identifies him as the writer. Every Hebrew baby born in a cosmopolitan city, as was the Apostle Paul, was given two (2) names. One (1) was his Hebrew name and the other his name to be used among Gentiles. The Apostle's Hebrew name was Saul and his Gentile name, Paul. When he became the chief Apostle to the Gentiles he was addressed exclusively as Paul. The name Paul is first used in Acts (Ac.13:9).

- b. Paul's surrender to Christ is shown in Romans.

Paul was completely surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ because he was said to be "a bond servant of Christ Jesus.@" The word "bondservant" literally means "bond-slave," and indicates Paul's complete surrender to Jesus Christ as his only Lord and Master. The title "bond-slave" was his favorite appellation when he wrote about himself (Php.1:1; Ti.1:1).

- c. Paul's service to God is shown in Romans.

Paul was called into service "as an Apostle." Paul was a "called" Apostle (Ro.1:1; 1Co.1:1). This means that God had chosen him to a special vocation. He was called to serve as an ambassador of heaven (2Co.5:20). Paul was just as much a called or chosen Apostle as were the original Twelve (12) (Jn.15:16; Ac.9:1-30; Ga.chp.1).

- d. There is separation shown in Romans.

Paul was "set apart for the Gospel of God." This separation was in the mind of God prior to Paul's birth (Ga.1:1 5-16). It was carried out in time on the Damascus road (Ac.9:1-30). The words "set apart" denote the sovereign act of God in setting aside this man for a special task, namely, the teaching and preaching of the "Gospel of God." In a very real sense, every true Believer has been separated unto God to bear witness to Jesus Christ by life and by lip (2Co.-6:14-7:1; 1Pe.2:9; Ti.2:11-14).

2. The indication of the message is in Romans 1:1b-5.

In these verses, Paul indicates four (4) things about the Gospel. These four (4) things can be summarized by four (4) key words: character, confidence, continuity, and content.

a. The powerful character of the message is in verse 1b.

Here Paul indicated that the character of his message is "the Gospel of God". The message Paul had been called to proclaim was "the Gospel." i.e., the Good News of full Salvation through the finished work of Christ, as Paul explains in his letter.

b. Paul's confidence in the message shows also in verse 1b.

The message Paul preached had not originated with him; he had received it from God Himself (Ga.1:1-24). This explains the confidence, the faithfulness and the urgency that characterized Paul's teaching and preaching.

c. The predicted continuity of the message is in verse 2.

Here, Paul indicates that this Gospel was the Gospel that God "promised beforehand through His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures." Paul is emphasizing the fact that he was not an innovator nor was his Gospel something new, unconnected with the long centuries of Hebrew history. These words in verse two (2) indicate that Christ is the key to the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament (Lk.24:25-27, 44-49); that the Gospel is the fulfillment of a long awaited event, and thus, the Jews should be ready to receive the Gospel. The Gospel and its roots were lodged in the promises of God, recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures.

d. The principle content of the message is in verses three (3) through five (5).

The content of Paul's message was "... concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh..." Christ is the heart of the Word of God. God is concerned that all men should see His Son and hear Him (Mt.3:16-17; Mk.1:9-11; Lk.3:21-22; He.1:1-3). These three (3) verses emphasize the humanity of Christ, the Deity of Christ, and the authority of Christ.

Verse three (3) emphasizes the humanity of Christ by stating that He "was born of the seed of David..." Two (2) things must be found in Christ, in order that we may obtain Salvation in Him, which are Divinity and humanity. That Jesus was a promised humanity is evident by the statement "of seed of David." According to Scripture, Christ must come from the line of David (2Sa.chp.7). It is also clear from this chapter that Christ's humanity was genuine because He is said to have been born "according to the flesh." Although Christ was virgin born, He was nonetheless a real man. Later, Gnosticism and other false religious systems denied the real humanity of Christ, but His humanity is an integral part of redemption (2Co.5:21; 1Pe.2:24; 1Jn.4:1-3).

Verse four (4) emphasizes the Deity of Christ, since He is "...declared with power to be the Son of God." All Believers are sons of God (Ro.8:14-17; Jn.1:12), but Christ is the Son of God in a unique sense never applied to men (Jn.1:18; Jn.3:16; Php.2:5-11; He.1:1-3). Christ's Deity is clear since He is "declared." This means "marked out, clearly defined," or "perfectly evident." Christ's Deity is completely confirmed and His resurrection provides positive proof that He was/is the Son of God. This resurrection was a miracle. It gave evidence of tremendous power, a stupendous event with world shaking consequences. This resurrection was further attested to by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, who cannot lie, bears witness through the disciples and in the Word to the fact of this resurrection.

Verse five (5) emphasizes the authority of Christ "...through whom we have received grace and Apostleship..." Christ is the ordained channel of authority. The authority of Christ can be seen in His gifts to the Church (Ac.2:32-36; Ep.4:11). The specific gifts given by Christ in this verse are "grace and Apostleship." The term grace refers to all the inner work of the Spirit of God. The Apostleship here mentioned is a high and holy calling. Paul was proud of its dignity and faithful to its mission even through it involved terrible suffering (2Co.11:23-31). The purpose of these two (2) gifts was "...to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name sake..." Christian service should be with a view of winning obedient converts. Obedience to the Word of God is the mark of saving faith (Ro.6-8; Mt.7:21-23; Ja.2:14-20). Men are to yield themselves to the belief of God's saving message, which is the highest of all obedience. Christian service is designed for the entire world. This was Paul's goal and should be ours (Mt.28:19-20; Ro.15:17-21; Re.5:9-11; Re.7:9-10). Christian service also seeks to glorify Christ. This must be the chief aim and goal of Christian ministry.

3. Paul identifies the metropolis of Rome as the addressed people in verses six (6) and seven (7).

These two (2) verses provide us with much information about the Christians to whom Paul addressed this very important letter.

- a. They were called into redemption in verse six (6).

They were Gentiles for the most part, "...among whom you are also the called of Jesus Christ." Having been called from among the Gentiles is mentioned in verse five (5). This is the call of possession; they were called to belong to Christ, as is every Christian. The calling of Christ is an effectual calling (Jn.6:37, 60; Mt.11:25).

- b. This letter was written to citizens of Rome, verse seven (7).

It is clear that these Believers lived in Rome. Certainly this indicates the power of the Gospel, that there should be trophies of grace in the very capitol of pagan religion. Also, they were greatly loved of God. Just as an earthly father loves his family, so the Heavenly Father loves His. Who can fathom the love of God for His very own children? Finally, they were the Saints of God. Every Believer is a Saint in God's sight, that is, he is reckoned as a Saint because of his identity with Jesus Christ. But every Believer ought also to live like a Saint. Holiness is the distinguishing mark of the Christian (Jn.15:16; Ep.1:4-5; 1Th.4:7; 2Th.2:13-15; Ti.2:12-14).

This first section closes with an apostolic benediction. God is always ready to pronounce blessing upon His people. Note the blessing that God confers in verse seven (7), "Grace to you and peace." The grace of God here spoken of indicates God's attitude towards His elect, which is always one of grace. He is favorably disposed toward His people as is evidenced by the gift of His Son. This term also indicates God's intent toward His people. The peace of God is a gift that is priceless. It includes peace with God through Christ, and the peace of God in the Believer's heart. Note the source of these blessings; "...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." They come from God and from Christ. God cannot and will not deal with men apart from His Son. Nothing speaks more decisively for the Divinity of Christ than this placing side by side of Christ with the eternal God. These run through the whole language of Scripture, and the derivation of purely Divine influences come from Him also. The name of no man can be placed by the side of the Almighty. He only, in whom the Word of the Father who is Himself God became flesh, may be named beside Him. Men are commanded to honor Him even as they honor the Father (Jn.5:23). The blessings of God are "Father" blessings;

they come only to those who have become His children through faith in Jesus Christ.

B. The Gospel Preachers Affection

The main purpose of Paul in writing these words is apparently that of explaining to the Christians in Rome why he had not visited them long before now. The Church in Rome was probably the largest and most influential church in the Roman Empire. The Believers in Rome knew that Paul was the special messenger of the Gospel to the Gentiles, yet he had not visited the most important Gentile church in the area. Paul indicates his love and concern for the Christians in Rome and tells them how he longs to visit them and to fellowship with them in the things of the Lord. This paragraph displays the loving and tender heart of the Apostle. Paul reveals the depth of his spiritual nature and sets a tremendous example for all who would become true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Paul's attitude toward the Saints is shown in verse eight (8).

This verse reveals Paul's positive approach, his perceptive attitude and his personal association with Almighty God.

- a. Paul makes a positive approach.

The first note the writer strikes is a positive one (1). This is characteristic of Paul: He looked for the bright and happy side of things. Many a Christian worker would be far more wise and effective for the Lord if he also looked for the good qualities in people and commended them on these, rather than scolding them for defects which may or may not be apparent.

- b. Paul had a perceptive attitude.

Gratitude will always help to chase the blues away. Every minister of the Gospel can thank God for the evidence of His grace. It was this that brought a note of gratitude to the lips of the Apostle Paul. He could not thank God for riches or even for good health, but he could certainly thank God for His grace manifested in the faithful witness of the Christians in Rome. The missionary zeal of the Church at Rome had spread the Gospel "...throughout the whole world."

- c. Paul had a personal association with the Lord.

God was more than just a name to Paul. He was a living, loving person, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul recognized the key truth of the Gospel message, namely, that the only avenue of access to God the Father is through God the Son.

2. Paul's association with the Savior is shown in verses nine (9) through twelve (12).

This association is seen through the wholeheartedness and sincerity of his ministry. The fact that he was a surrendered messenger is shown by the spiritual nature of his ministry.

- a. Paul was a sincere minister, verse nine (9).

Paul saw to it that he kept his conscience void of offense toward God and men (Ac.23:1; Ac.24:16). He put his whole heart and soul into his work for Christ, He held nothing back. No sacrifice was counted too great to enlarge the name and fame for his Savior. We speak today of liberals, but when do men have a right to be liberal with something that belongs to God? Paul knew that the Gospel was Christ's and he handled it accordingly. No man should dare to misrepresent or temper the Gospel of Christ. We also learn from this verse that Paul lived in the atmosphere of prayer (1Th.5:17). This was the power of his life, for where prayer is focused, power falls.

- b. Paul was a surrendered messenger, verse ten (10).

Even though Paul wanted very much to visit the brethren in Rome; he still had no plan but God's plan. He had long been anxious to visit the capital, yet he had met with a number of providential hindrances (Ro.1:13; 15:22; Ac.19:21; 23:11; 28:15). Nearly a quarter century had lapsed, after his conversion, until his desire was accomplished, and then only as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul's whole future was in the hands of God, yet it was his continual prayer that the obstacles to a happy and prosperous meeting might be removed.

- c. Paul had a spiritual ministry, verses eleven (11) and twelve (12).

He wanted to visit this large church in Rome, not that he might receive a large offering, but that he might bring a large blessing to them (Mk.10:45; 1Co.4:1-2; 1Co.4:9-16). Some preachers get high and mighty and become independent of the people to whom they minister. This robs the people of the mutual benefit of Christian fellowship. Paul's goal was always to bless the people by fellowshiping with them around the Word of God. Paul was widely different from the apostolic style of the court of Papal Rome.

3. Paul's approach to the service of God is shown in verses thirteen (13) through fifteen (15).

- a. Paul desired some fruit at Rome, verse thirteen (13).

This preacher would never be satisfied with a fruitless ministry. He expected the Word of God to bring forth fruit in the lives of the Believers to whom he ministered.

- b. There was a debtor-ship of his function, verses fourteen (14) and fifteen (15).

Because he knew the truth contained in Christ, he felt an overwhelming sense of obligation to the whole world that the multitudes might hear and be saved. This sense of obligation made him extremely restless. As been said, "Paul had the woe in his heart and the go in his boots."

C. The Affirmation of the Gospel's Power

The two verses, numbers sixteen and seventeen, set forth the major theme of the Book of Romans, namely, Salvation by grace through faith. The entire book is basically an exposition of these verses. We should note the two main lines of thought in Paul's statement regarding the Gospel. He first deals with the essence of the Gospel, and then with the effectiveness of the Gospel. This language implies that it required some courage to bring to the "masses of the world" what was "...to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." But its inherent glory, as God's life-giving message to a dying world, so filled his soul, that like his Master, he "despised the shame."

1. The essence of the Gospel is in verse sixteen (16).

- a. The preaching of the Gospel is focused on (v.16).

The word "Gospel" means "glad tidings." There is no more joyous message on earth than that the love of God has found a way to justify the sinner, so that he is freely delivered from the guilt of sin, and offered full pardon through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the good news, the best news ever heralded on earth. It was no wonder Paul was not ashamed of such a message.

- b. The power of the Gospel is God's Word, verse sixteen b (16b).

The Greek word "*dunamis*," used for power, is the same word from which is translated our English word 'dynamite.'" The Gospel is the "dynamite" of God which blasts away the stony heart, and allows God to implant a new heart and a fresh life. The great theme for Paul's writing is the ensuing argument; Salvation, the one overwhelming

necessity of perishing men. It is God's own power to save every soul that embraces it, Greek and barbarian, wise and unwise alike.

c. The performance of the Gospel meets man's need.

The Gospel brings Salvation and thereby meets man's greatest and most urgent need, We delight in the performance of the Gospel to promote Salvation and all the more as we study the real truth of man's total depravity (Ro.1:18-3:20). The truth that only God can take a hopeless and helpless sinner and transform him into a Saint is indeed marvelous in our eyes.

d. The provision of the Gospel is adapted to all men.

The Gospel is adapted to all men because all men are sinners (3:23). There are no racial or geographical or cultural barriers as far as the Gospel of God is concerned. The Gospel speaks the universal language of the heart and gives man the only answer as to how he may be just and justified before God. Some religions make extreme demands on men that only a comparative few have the ability to perform, but the Gospel is "...to everyone who believes."

2. The effectiveness of the Gospel shows in its results, verse seventeen (17).

In this verse we are provided with information as to the reason for the result of the Gospel. Here, Paul tells of a wonderful revelation in the Gospel, namely, that it reveals the imputed righteousness of God to every Believer.

a. The reason for the Gospel is shown in verse seventeen (17).

The character of God, of which the Law is the verbal expression, demands moral perfection. This just demand no man can meet, for all men have sinned and come far short of the moral perfection of God (Ro.3:23). The sinner, with his life gauged by the Law of God, finds himself condemned under the righteous judgment of this Holy God (Ro.3:19). The sinner's greatest need, therefore, is a righteousness somehow accounted to him that will meet the inexorable standard of God. The righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel in two (2) ways. First of all, it is manifested in the fact that God insisted on the full punishment of sin, even though that punishment fell on His own Son. Secondly, it is revealed in the fact that the guilt of sin is adequately dealt with in the atoning work of Christ. Now that justice has been thus satisfied, God can deal in mercy with those to whom the righteousness of Christ is reckoned.

The statement "...from faith to faith" has nothing to do with the progressive stages of faith, but solely with faith itself as the appointed way of receiving God's righteousness. We prefer, therefore, to understand it thus: "The righteousness of God is in the Gospel message, revealed (to be) from (or by) faith to (or for) faith, that is, in order to be by faith received."

b. The result of the Gospel is shown in verse seventeen (17).

In the statement "...but the righteous man shall live by faith," is seen as the very heart of the Gospel. By virtue of the fact that every man is a sinner already and condemned under the Law, he cannot justify himself by any amount of works or merit. No system of jurisprudence can justify a guilty man, but this is precisely where the Gospel comes in. What man cannot do, God can do by Himself, taking the guilty sinners place and thus condemning sin. With the sin problem out of the way, God can freely justify the believing sinner and still maintain His moral integrity as the just and holy God (Ro.3:21-31; 8:1-4). The term "righteousness" used here in verse seventeen (17) is a legal term denoting something done for the Believer. Justification is objective, sanctification is subjective, that is, something that is done in the Believer. There is no room for man's works here, only room for the work of Christ, which He performed for the Believer. Paul deals with objective righteousness, justification, in chapter three (3), verse twenty one (21) to chapter five (5), verse twenty one (21); he deals with subjective righteousness, that is, sanctification, in chapter six (6), verse one (1) to chapter eight (8), verse thirty nine (39).

The peculiar features of the Gospel that are brought prominently forward should be the devout study of all who preach it. These features should guide the views and tastes of all who are privileged to hear it.

- 1) It is "the Gospel of God," as a message from heaven, yet it is not absolutely new.
- 2) On the contrary, it is only the fulfillment of Old Testament promise.
- 3) Not only is Christ the great theme of it, but Christ in the very nature of God as His own Son, and in the nature of men as partaker of their flesh.

- 4) The Son of God now in resurrection power and invested with authority to dispense all grace to men, with all gifts for the establishment and edification of the Church.
- 5) Christ is the righteousness provided of God for the justification of all that believe in His name.
- 6) That in this glorious Gospel, when preached as such, there resides the very power of God to save Jew and Gentile alike who embrace it.

D. The Aftermath of the Gospel's Perversion

The importance of these four (4) paragraphs, verses eighteen (18) through thirty two (32), cannot be over-estimated. In them, God states His indictment of the Gentile world and explains their tragic moral and spiritual history. We are often told by those who accept the naturalistic theory of history, that world paganism and illiteracy are simply stages in the evolution of humanity. God tells us that, in fact, the exact opposite is true. The origin of human depravity dates to that fateful period when man turned his back on God. Paganism, with all its attendant evils, is one of man's own choosing. In retributive justice, the Almighty God left man alone to plunge himself into deeper and deeper infidelity. This is the record given in this section of Romans. Let us observe the facts which indicate so clearly the Gentile world's great need of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

1. The revelation of the wrath of God is shown in verses here.

The Gentiles need Salvation because they are under the wrath of God. God is the Holy One, verses eighteen (18) through twenty three (23). He cannot and will not tolerate defiance of His just and necessary moral law.

- a. The wrath of God is revealed.

We should note first of all that "...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven," verses eighteen (18) and nineteen (19). This is the future day of God's vengeance to be climaxed at the time of the Great Tribulation so graphically described in the Book of Revelation. But in a sense, the wrath of God is even now in effect. Moral and spiritual disintegration, as well as calamities in the natural world, are the indirect consequences of His wrath, directed towards those who rebel against His holy Law. God's wrath is revealed against "...all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Sin is sin to God. Men have a tendency to classify and categorize sin, but God sees sin as a basic moral evil, with actual sins as the tragic symptom of the dread spiritual disease. The calamities men face today come because of their own actions, not because of an outpouring of God's wrath.

Paul, though he began this verse with a comprehensive proposition regarding men in general, takes up in the end of it only one (1) of the two (2) great divisions of mankind, to whom he meant to apply it; thus gently sliding into his argument. But before enumerating their actual iniquities, he goes back to the origin of them all, their stifling the light which still remained to them. As darkness overspreads the mind, so impotence takes possession of the heart, when the "still small voice" of conscience is first disregarded, next thwarted, and then systematically deadened. Thus, the truth which God left with and in men, instead of having free scope and developing itself, as it otherwise would, was obstructed.

The wrath of God is a horrible thing (He.10:26-31). Evildoers may escape the wrath of human justice, but there is no escape from the judgment of God, to whom all things are naked and laid open (He.4:13). God does not arbitrarily bring His vengeance on hopeless and helpless people. God is Love (1Jn.4:8; Jn.3:16). When God's judgment is brought upon people, it is always because they deserve it. God allows His judgment, at this time, to come in the form of men reaping what they have sown. It is in this that Satan is His puppet, bringing calamities upon the earth.

In this verse, Paul speaks of "ungodliness," which is the absence of reverence for God. He also speaks of "unrighteousness," which has reference to the unjust acts of men toward men. When men hate God and ignore Him, they inevitably hate one another and perpetrate horrible crimes against themselves. Not only do men, estranged from God, ignore and oppose Him and their fellowmen, they, by doing so, "suppress" or hinder the truth of God. In verse nineteen (19), we learn of the inexcusableness of man's sin. It was not because man did not know God that he fell into the moral quagmire described in this chapter. Man fell despite God's revelation of Himself. This revelation of God was an inner or subjective revelation. There is an innate, inborn knowledge of God in man, engraved into the constitution of his very nature. This fact is evidenced in the religious tendencies that all people have, no matter how darkened their understanding is.

b. The work of God is shown in verse twenty (20).

Not only is there an inner or subjective revelation as verse nineteen (19) indicates, there is also an outer or objective revelation as is indicated here in verse twenty (20).

1) There is a world of evidence against man.

The "invisible attributes," such as His Power in creation and His wisdom in providence, are seen in the material world and in the manner in which He governs His creation.

2) Those who view nature are without an excuse.

Although the evidence of nature is limited in its revelation of God as far as the plan of redemption is concerned, yet there is adequate knowledge of the power of God and His "...eternal power and Divine nature...", so that all men are "...without excuse..." if they do not acknowledge Him and worship Him as God.

3) The outward creation is not the "parent" but the "interpreter" of our faith in God.

Faith has its primary sources within our own breast (v.19), but it becomes an intelligible and articulate conviction only through what we observe around us by the things that are made (v.20). Thus the inner and outer revelation of God complement each other, making up between them one (1) universal and immovable witness of the existence and nature of God.

c. The way of Godlessness is shown in verses twenty one (21) through twenty three (23).

In these verses we see the progressiveness of man's sin, revealing the steps downward which plunged mankind into spiritual and moral ruin.

1) The progression of sin is shown (v.21).

Man had right understanding of God from the beginning, but did not act in the light of this knowledge. In fact, they refused God the honor and reverence due Him. In addition to this, they were ungrateful. Knowing that they were fully dependent upon God for everything and at the same time understanding something of His power, wisdom, goodness, truth, righteousness and mercy, mankind, nevertheless, did not express their gratitude to the Almighty. In fact, the progression of sin is led to the further profession of sin.

2) The profession of sin shows in attitudes (vs.22-23).

"Professing to be wise, they became fools." Man substituted reason for revelation. This action led, as it always does, to both

mental and spiritual darkness. The unregenerate prides himself on his learning, and not knowing that in the sight of God, he is a fool.

Verse twenty three (23) gives to us the inevitable conclusion of the preceding steps. Having abandoned the knowledge of the true God, men set about to manufacture their own gods and thus gave birth to world heathenism.

2. The response to the work of Godlessness is revealed here also (vs.24-32).

These verses provide us with information as to the consequences of man's sin. The law of spiritual harvest is given in Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." Because men refused to acknowledge God, He was obligated to give them up to their own folly. As punishment for their willful rebellion, He removed His restraining hand. The Holy Spirit sketches in complete frankness the awful result.

- a. The abandonment by God of men is shown here (vs.24-25).

When the light of God burns out in a man's mind and heart, he inevitably reverts to a bestial state. His chief concern is the gratification of his lustful passion. The perversion and prostitution of the God-given power of procreation is one of the marks of total human depravity.

- b. The activity of Godlessness is shown in verses twenty six (26) through thirty two (32).

This section provides us with information as to both the action of God-forsaken mankind as well as the attitudes of God-forsaken minds.

- 1) The action of God-forsaken mankind is despicable (vs.26-27).

These verses provide us with a stirring indictment of homosexuality. Illicit sexual relations between men and woman is dreadful enough, but the depraved heart is not satisfied even with this, going to the limit in practicing that which is contrary to God's plan. Be certain to observe that in light of the context of this passage, homosexuality is here being presented as a revelation of the present time reaping of what man has sown.

- 2) The attitudes of God-forsaken minds are revealed (vs.28-32).

A mind that has abandoned God is a mind unfit to decide between right and wrong, truth and error, a mind of warped moral judgment. When a person is born again by the Holy Spirit, the faculty of his mind is renewed (1Co.2:12-14; Ro.12:1-2; Ep.4;17-24). The Holy Spirit here lists the evil tendencies that are contained by the reprobate mind of the unregenerate person.

- a) "Unrighteousness" is the violation of justice among men.
- b) "Wickedness" is the active practice of evil, the spirit of maliciousness, or the disposition to inflict evil.
- c) "Greed" is avarice or covetousness. It is the insatiable lust to have something at any cost.
- d) "Fornication" is the activity of illicit sex.
- e) "Malice" is depravity of mind that leads to the doing of harm to one's neighbor, willfully and deliberately.
- f) "Envy" is the sister to jealousy and foul friend of hell, the robber of every spiritual blessing and the parasite of usefulness.
- g) "Murder" is a potential of the previously named permanent trait of the unregenerate nature. If let loose without restraint; it would result in cold-blooded, premeditated murder.
- h) "Strife" is a spirit of dissatisfaction, contention, quarreling, fighting, sedition, and the resistance to lawful authority.
- i) "Deceit" is treacherous deception, being unreal, shifty, not transparent, and hypocritical.
- j) "Gossips" are those who stir up trouble, a character defamer, a despicable whisperer.

- k) "Slanderers" are those who slander another's character undercover, secretly.
- l) "Haters of God" are those who despise and scorn the living God. They may not do it vocally, but by their life. They may even pretend to believe in God, but deep in their heart they want nothing to do with God at all (Ps.14:1).
- m) "Insolent" is a reference to being brutal and overbearing.
- n) "Arrogant" is a reference to being filled with the empty wind of pride.
- o) "Boastful" means that they are vain braggarts.
- p) "Inventor of evil," Indicates that the unregenerate are always coming up with some new crime against their fellows.
- q) "Disobedient to parents" is a tendency which crops up even in little children and indicates the inborn hatred of lawful authority. It speaks of the revolt against God that shows itself in anarchy against parents, against the Bible, against the Church and against the civil law.
- r) "Without understanding," means that they have no insight into spiritual and moral things.
- s) "Untrustworthy," indicates that they are faithless, liars, unreliable and undependable.
- t) "Unloving" indicates that they are void of natural affection. This means that they have a tendency to act contrary to nature.
- u) "Unmerciful" indicates they are heartless and pitiless. Verse thirty two (32) indicates that they are confirmed in ungodliness, and although they know the judgment of God, they recklessly cast caution to the wind and go all out, bent for hell. They pride themselves on their iniquity, boast about it, revel in it, glory in it and progress on to their mutual destruction.

VI. ROMANS CHAPTER TWO

A. The Folly of Attempting a Self-Righteous Salvation Solution

There is some difference of opinion as to the application of this opening paragraph of Romans chapter two (2). Some Bible scholars believe that in verses one (1) through sixteen (16), Paul is referring primarily to morally righteous Gentiles. Others believe that this paragraph sets forth the primary principles of Divine judgment without reference to any specific class of people. Still another opinion is that Romans 2:1 through Romans 3:8 is primarily a direct reference to the Jew. It is possible that all three (3) of these interpretations are correct.

While it is true that the beginning statement (Ro.2:1-16) sets forth the principles of Divine judgment, it is nevertheless our understanding that Paul has the Jew primarily in mind throughout. As Paul's pattern sometimes was, he leads slowly and indirectly to the establishment of his charge. We should note, however, that in the verse seventeen (17) he names the Jew.

In chapter two (2) of the Book of Romans, Paul puts forth two (2) main principles; why the Jew is lost and in need of Salvation by faith. The first (1st) of these two (2) reasons is given here in verses one (1) through sixteen (16), and has to do with the fact that the Jew, as well as every self-righteous man, has failed to achieve Salvation through self-righteousness. This being true is evidenced by the fact presented in these verses, namely, that the judgment of God is always based on justice.

1. Man has a problem of passing judgment on others.

As has been mentioned before, there is some discussion as to the identity of those addressed in this paragraph. It is likely that the Holy Spirit had the Jew in mind.

- a. The facts of self-righteousness is discussed in verse one (1).

That the Jew is primarily in mind seems evident in this verse, since self-righteousness was the characteristic sin of the nation of Israel in the day in which Paul wrote. Paul seems to be taking aim at this particular sin, as he also does in chapter ten (10), verses one (1) through three (3). The Jews looked with scornful disdain upon the Gentiles of their day. This attitude is apparent in verse one (1). In addition to this, the Jews were especially prone to presumption. They had the tendency to rest upon their distinctive heritage and their determined history (Ro.2:4, 17-20). As Paul begins his discussion, his method is most characteristic. Many times, in dealing with a difficult

subject, Paul would come at it progressively, finally reaching the point where he openly identifies the offender (Ro.2:17).

b. The function of judgment is God's.

Paul properly points out here in the first part of verse two (2) that judgment belongs to God.

2. God is precise in providing justice.

God's judgment is just because it is based on His omniscience. God sees the truth about man's actions. He observes the hidden reason, the motives behind every human action. For this reason, no man can escape the just judgment of God.

a. There are those who practice judgment against another, verses two (2) through four (4).

God is heading off from escape, first, the proud 'judges' of others, of every sort, the moralist, and moral philosophers, all the 'moral folks,' the 'whosoever' that 'judge'; and, secondly, those who escape the consciousness of guilt and judgment by running under a 'religious' roof, whether a Jewish shelter, as in Paul's day, or a 'Christian' one, as in our day. These verses also present the fact that God's judgment is just because He gives ample time for repentance. He blesses men, not because they deserve it, but because He wants to move their hearts toward Him in repentance. In self-righteous lives the result was just the opposite. Such people were filled with a sense of false security.

b. God always speaks the truth in prediction.

Because they prospered they supposed that God was favorably disposed toward them, or that He paid no attention to their actions.

1) Paul gives them the message of judgment, verses five (5) and six (6).

Because of this false attitude toward God and His process of judgment, blind self-righteous sinners, unconscious of their real danger, used God's goodness and patience as a time to pile up judgment against themselves. In verse six (6), Paul presents the fact that God's judgment is righteous because it is according to man's work. It is the general tenor of a man's life that indicates his basic attitude toward God. Works cannot save, as Paul himself emphatically maintained, but they do

serve as a fairly accurate index to a man's spiritual life, especially if they are continuous and evidently produced by the Holy Spirit.

2) Paul gives us the manifestation of judgment (vs.7-8).

The manifestation of the life God accepts is seen in its perseverance in doing good deeds. The acceptable life is steadfastness in Christian conduct and persistent in seeking the favor of God. Verse eight (8), however, presents the fact that the attitude of some is contentious and disobedient. Because they will not repent, they are under the indignant wrath of God and shall experience tribulation and anguish.

c. Tribulation or peace is available (vs.9-10).

In verse nine (9), we learn that the ultimate end of the contentious and disobedient, whether he is Jew or Greek, is "...tribulation and distress.@ Conversely, verse ten (10) presents the fact that the ultimate end of every person, whether Jew or Greek, who does good is A...glory and honor and peace."

3. God's punishment is not partial justice (vs.11-16).

God's judgment is impartial because there is no partiality with God. God's judgment is righteous because it is according to man's response to the light he has. This important passage corroborates what the Apostle Paul states in chapter three (3), verses nine (9) through twenty (20), namely that all are lost until saved by faith in Christ, regardless of their present condition in the world. Both pagan and Jew are without Salvation if without faith in Christ.

a. The inward light of the Law is revealed (vs.12a, 14-16).

The Gentile is here presented as having the light of his conscience. The Holy Spirit clearly indicates that the Gentiles are guilty before God because they have not lived up to the Law of God written in their conscience. Having sinned against this light they are guilty and shall perish.

1) The word of the Law is that A...all have sinned@ (v.12a, v.14).

"For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law." "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves."

- 2) The work of the Law is written in the heart (vs.15-16).

The work of the Law is shown "...written in their hearts, and their conscience bearing witness, and their heart alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my Gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

- b. The outward light of the Law is shown here also (vs.12b-13).

The Jew is here presented as having his light given him in the Law of God. The very possession of the Law by the Jews was their condemnation because they didn't keep it.

- 1) By listening to the Law, they were accountable (vs.12b-13a) to it.

"And all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law."

- 2) Thus, they were to learn from the Law to be doers of it (v.13b).

"But the doers of the Law will be justified." There is no doing when there is no belief.

B. The Failure to Achieve a Satisfactory Religious Salvation System

In these verses (17-29), the Jew is presented as being lost and in need of Salvation by faith because he had failed to measure up to his responsibilities as a privileged and advantaged person.

1. Paul points out the practice of religion (vs.17-20).

These verses present the fact that the Jew had many advantages both by provision and position.

- a. There is the provision of the Jew (vs.17-18).

His first advantage was the fact that he was a Jew. Thus he was identified with the Covenant people of God. In addition to this, he possessed the Law. The trouble is he tended to "rely upon the Law," as though the mere possession of the Law brought acceptance with God (Ro.2:13). Also, the Jew was known to "boast in God," or vainly

consider himself a peculiar possession of God even though he ignored God's Word and will for his life. Verse eighteen (18) points to the fact that the Jew was well taught. He knew the will of God, and he paid lip service to the teaching of the Word, but all this was without obedience from the heart.

b. There was the position of the Jew's responsibility (vs.19-20).

In addition to the many provisions for the Jew, the Jew was fully aware of his position in the world. He knew precisely what he was supposed to do if he was to fulfill his obligation to mankind, namely, to teach the truth of the Word of God to the Gentiles and to all who were without the truth. Be sure to note in these verses the descriptive words used of those untaught in the Word, "blind," "in darkness," "foolish," and "immature." How appropriately these set forth the tragedy of spiritual ignorance. The Jew was well equipped to fulfill his sacred task, for he had in his possession the perfect embodiment of spiritual wisdom and truth, namely, the Law of God.

2. The preaching they were to do was with responsibility (vs.21-23).

In spite of the privileges, advantages and knowledge of the Jew, they failed to preach with responsibility.

a. The Jew had a responsibility to preach (vs.21-23).

In these verses Paul points out the fact that the nature of their failure was that they taught one (1) thing and acted another, in other words, they were hypocrites (Mt.chp.23). Several examples of hypocrisy are given by Paul. First of all, they were thieves. In their business transactions they were dishonest. Our Lord makes reference to this sin in Matthew 23:14, and likewise in James 3:17. Also, they were adulterers. In their loose views of divorce and re-marriage they were guilty of adultery (Mt.19:8-9; Ja.4:4). The last half of verse twenty two (22) presents the fact that they were guilty of sacrilege. This means that the Jews were charged with the offense of robbing heathen temples and making themselves rich thereby (Ac.19:36-37). The passage in Acts indicates that the Jews were known to have engaged in such practices.

b. There was a consequence to their failure to be obedient (v.23).

There is always a tragic consequence to failure in spiritual matters. It was bad enough that the Jews had corrupted themselves, but they exceeded even this in that they made the name of their God an offense to the Gentiles through their actions.

3. The perversion of religion was the Jews hypocrisy (v.24).

The heathen always judge God by the lives of those who profess to be His people. Every nation knew whom the Jews claimed as God, so they were on display for all to see.

4. The prescription for beneficial results, spiritual religion, is given to us.

The cause of their failure was the effect given here in verses twenty five (25) through twenty nine (29). A proper understanding of this error will provide for us the prescription for beneficial results. The basic cause of Jewish failure was their failure to comprehend the real essence of religion, namely, that it is a spiritual matter. Someone has well said "The heart of religion is religion in the heart." The Jews mistook true religion for outward ceremony and ritual. Is it not true that this same difficulty is often evident in our Christian churches today?

a. The outward sign of obedience is required.

The true test of reality is obedience (vs.25-27). The New Testament makes this crystal clear (Mt.7:21;23; Ro.6:14-23; Ja.1:22-25). Faith and obedience, however, are above the sign itself. Here is Paul's answer to the value of any ordinance. An ordinance is merely a sign, but if there is no accompanying personal and saving faith, the ordinance means nothing.

b. The inward spirit is where true Salvation takes place.

These concluding verses of chapter 2 (vs.28-29), obviously present true Salvation as a matter of the heart. This means, of course, that the inner man must be transformed by regenerative power of the Holy Spirit (Jn.3:1-7; 2Co.5:17). The name "Jew" and the rite of "circumcision" were designed but as outward symbols of a separation from the irreligious and ungodly world, unto holy devotedness in heart and life to the God of Salvation. Where this is realized, the signs are full of significance; but where it is not, they are worse than useless. It is a sad mark of depravity when all that is designed and fitted to melt only hardens the heart. Amidst all the inequalities of religious opportunity measured out to men, and the mysterious bearing of this upon their character and destiny for eternity, the same great principles of judgment will be applied to all. They will be in a form suited to their respective discipline, applied to all, and perfect equity will be seen to reign throughout every stage of the Divine administration. The Law written on the heart, or the "Ethics of Natural Theology," may be said to be the one (1) deep foundation on which all revealed religion

reposes. In Romans 1:19-20, we have what we may call its other foundation, the "Physics and Metaphysics of Natural Theology."

The testimony of these two (2) passages is to the theologian invaluable, while in the breast of every teachable Christian it wakens such deep echoes as are inexpressibly solemn and precious. No external privileges or badge of discipleship will shield the unholy from the wrath of God. In the sight of the great searcher of hearts, the judge of the quick and the dead, the renovation of the character in heart and life is all in all. In view of this, have not all baptized, sanctified disciples of the Lord Jesus who "profess that they know God, but in works deny Him," have a need to tremble? Under the guise of being friends, they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

Homework 1, Chapters I-III

Name _____

1. The book of Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament according to Luther.

True or False

2. The word atonement is closely related with:

- A. Reconciliation and election
- B. Imputation and election
- C. Justification and predestination
- D. Reconciliation and propitiation

3. "To be at one with God" is a strong way of describing the term "atonement."

True or False

4. God was under obligation to elect us.

True or False

5. Election is in our hands.

True or False

6. The word "imputation" is at times translated as "reckon."

True or False

7. What is owed as a reward is reckoned as a favor.

True or False

8. Coming to the Father through the atoning work of Christ is how we were justified.

True or False

9. Predestination is a simple truth that some Bible scholars try to interpret away.

True or False

10. Propitiation is not seen in the Mercy Seat.

True or False

11. Reconciliation has in it the idea of transfer.

True or False

12. Regeneration means the war is over.

True or False

13. Justification is how we should view our born again life.

True or False

14. Regeneration involves the spirit of man.

True or False

15. Regeneration is the work of man.

True or False

16. "Rightwiseness" is the old English way of saying righteousness.

True or False

17. If we could bring about our own sanctification, we would be bringing it to the grounds of human achievement.

True or False

18. Sanctification is a Divine process in the Believer's life.

True or False

Homework 2, Chapters IV-V

Name _____

1. It has never been questioned as to the author of Romans.

True or False

2. The book of Romans was written from Corinth.

True or False

3. Paul died a martyr's death in approximately AD 90.

True or False

4. Paul spoke to five distinct groups of Believers in Rome.

True or False

5. There is no subject under heaven of more importance than the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man.

True or False

6. The book of Romans demonstrates acuteness of reasoning and logic that is resistible.

True False

7. The book of Romans is logic set on fire.

True or False

8. Hebrew babies born in a cosmopolitan city were given two names.

True or False

9. Paul's place of service was as a teacher.

True or False

10. Few Believers are set apart as witnesses.

True or False

11. The character of Paul's message is "the Gospel of God."

True or False

12. Christ is a side-bar of the Word of God.

True or False

13. Christ is the Son of God in a unique sense.

True or False

14. To deny the fact of the resurrection is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

True or False

15. The authority of Christ has nothing to do with the gifts to the Church.

True or False

16. Paul's goal was not to serve Christ.

True or False

17. Only some Believers are saints in God's sight.

True or False

18. God is favorable disposed toward His people by the gift of His Son.

True or False

19. The Church in Rome was probably the most important and influential church in Paul's time.

True or False

20. Man has a right to be liberal with things not his.

True or False

21. Paul was looking for a large offering from Rome.

True or False

22. Paul felt no obligation to the whole world.

True or False

23. Paul was not ashamed of the message of the Gospel of Christ.

True or False

24. The Gospel speaks the universal language of the heart.

True or False

25. God does not have an inexorable standard.

True or False

26. The heart of the Gospel is the righteous man living by faith.

True or False

27. The term "righteousness," as used in chapter one, verse seventeen, is a legal term, denoting something man has done for himself.

True or False

28. The Gospel's perversion is not talked about by Paul.

True or False

29. The origin of man's depravity started in the Garden.

True or False

30. God's wrath is revealed against "all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

True or False

31. Ungodliness is reverence for God.

True or False

32. Man fell because he did not know God.

True or False

33. "Invisible attributes" tell us that God cannot be seen.

True or False

34. In verse twenty two, men became fools who professed to be wise.

True or False

35. Man does not change just because the light of God goes out in his heart.

True or False

36. Man without God in his mind can still decide between right and wrong.

True or False

37. Greed is the insatiable lust to have something at any cost.

True or False

38. Malice is those who stir up trouble.

True or False

39. "Without understanding" is to have insight into spiritual and moral things.

True or False