

The Book of Romans - Part 1

Today, I'd like you to join me as we look into the book of Romans. Paul wrote this letter about 55-58 A.D. when he was in the city of Corinth. Paul had not yet visited the church in Rome, but he wanted to go there and he prayed that God would make this visit possible.

In Romans 1:10-12, it says, ¹⁰*Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. ¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; ¹²That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*

Of course, in Romans 15:23-24, the Bible says, ²³*But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.*

This makes the letter to the Romans unique. Most of Paul's other letters were written to churches where he had personally ministered, but here was a church, the church at Rome, where Paul had not been and where Paul had not taught.

We might ask this question: When Paul gets to Rome, what is he going to teach? Here in the book of Romans, Paul gives a doctrinal preview of the content of his teaching ministry. What Paul unfolds in these sixteen chapters is nothing less than a doctrinal masterpiece.

First of all, what is Christianity all about? Secondly, what is its central message? Third, what is the true Gospel of God? Fourth, what really is the good news of salvation? And, five,

what kind of message did the church's greatest apostle preach wherever he went? Now, in order to find out the answers to all these questions, we must turn to what many call the greatest doctrinal book in the New Testament, the epistle of Paul to the Romans.

Before we get started in this study, let me invite you to look at our Website, www.LRWM.org. On the Website, you'll be able to download this study series on the book of Romans and other studies that we've done. And you'll not only be able to download the audio version, but you'll also be able to download the written transcripts of these studies that we do. And if you'd like to write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, I'll be glad to send to you absolutely free of charge a written transcript of this program. Be sure to mention the outline of the book of Romans.

Well, the influence of the book of Romans is impossible to measure. Rather than giving you a general outline, let's get started with verse 1. The Bible says there, *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.* The first period is found at the end of the first sentence, not the first verse, but the first sentence which is 126 words long in the King James version.

Now this is the characteristic style of Paul. The personalities and styles of the human writers of the Bible are clearly seen in the Word of God, and, yet, what they wrote is free from error and exactly what God intended.

Second Peter 1:20-21 says, ²⁰*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of*

man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

And, of course, that familiar Scripture, II Timothy 3:16, says, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

Each Bible writer had his own unique style and characteristics, and, yet, God used them as his pen men to record exactly what God wanted to be included in His Word, the Bible.

In Romans 1:1, Paul tells us three things about himself. First of all, Paul says he is a servant. This means slave, bond servant, a love slave of Jesus Christ. And Paul was a servant. He was tied to the Lord. He loved the Lord, and the Lord had first loved him, as John wrote in I John 4:19. It says, *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Then we see that Paul says he was called to be an apostle. This is one who is sent on a mission. An apostle was used for foundational purposes of the early church. Ephesians 2:19-20 tells us that the apostles are said to be foundational men. A foundation is laid only once at the beginning of a building project. The apostles were needed in the beginning of the church age to fulfill their special foundational ministry. This may shock you, and whether you agree with it or not, I suggest you go to the Word of God and read about it. There are no apostles today. Some would disagree with me on that, but I believe that, according to the Word of God, there are no apostles today, because they were foundational men.

Ephesians 2:19-20 says, *¹⁹Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

Today, we do not have apostles, but we have the doctrine or the teaching of the apostles. We do not have the apostle Paul today, but we do have the doctrine of the apostle Paul, namely, the book of Romans, and his other writings that are now a part of Scripture. Once again, II Timothy 3:16 talks about the Word of God, all Scripture, being given by the inspiration of God.

Acts 2:42 says, *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* This is the early church, the foundation.

And then we see that Paul says he is separated unto the Gospel of God, not separation from but separation unto the Gospel of God. Romans 1:16 says, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

First Corinthians 2:1-2 says, *¹And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* You can also read Acts 6:9-10 in conjunction with this.

Paul's dedication and devotion to the Gospel of God is seen in Romans 1:16. He said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The key phrase in the book of Romans is "the Gospel of God," and this is what the book of Romans is all about, the Gospel, good news, glad tidings. Nowhere in the Bible is the good news of salvation more clearly unfolded than in the book of Romans. Paul skillfully and systematically presents the Gospel of God in this epistle.

Today, there is much confusion as to what the Gospel really is and how it should be presented.

Let's carefully study how Paul defined and explained and presented the Gospel. And may we never forget where Paul got his Gospel from. Also, let's be on the alert for false gospels.

Galatians 1:10-12 says, *¹⁰For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. ¹¹But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Galatians 1:8-9: *⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

And, of course, Paul goes on to explain there is no other Gospel. The only Gospel that saves is that good news that Jesus Christ came into this world to die, to shed His blood that people of this world could be saved, that the people of this world could be made like Jesus Christ.

Let's now look at verse 2 of chapter 1 of Romans. It says, *Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.* Let's read verse 1 in conjunction with that. *¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ²Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.*

The Gospel is not something new or newly revealed. The Gospel was revealed even in the Old Testament Scriptures. Galatians 3:8 says this: *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

Genesis 12:3 says, *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* And, of course, that's God speaking to Abraham.

The glorious facts about the death and resurrection of Christ are not now being revealed for the first time. In the book of Romans in which Paul sets forth the Gospel of God, Paul constantly quotes from the Old Testament some sixty-one times. And we see as we go through this book, he uses Isaiah 53:6 in Romans 1:3, and we also see that all men are condemned before a holy God.

The Holy Scriptures, writings, holy, set apart... the Bible is set apart and different from all other books. The Bible is the only God-breathed, inspired book. It says in II Timothy 3:16, once again, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.* It is God-breathed. May we also handle the Bible with care, knowing that it is God's Holy Word.

Next time, we'll pick up with Romans 1:3-4, and as we study this book, God help us not to just rush through it and overlook something that God has given us. I would encourage you to read chapter 1 and be ready the next time when you hear me say, "It's a Good Life." Be ready to look at the Scriptures. We'll begin with chapter 1, starting with verse 3.

It's always a pleasure to be able to come to you and share with you God's Word. I start this program by saying it's a time of prayer and fellowship, and right now, I want to pray for you.

Father, I do pray for those listening, for that one individual, Lord, right now, who needs You. I pray for that person, that individual that would ask You to come in, would receive Jesus as Savior this very day. I pray for that person, Lord, who is saved but not living for

You. I pray for that individual, that You would grip that heart and help that individual understand that, as long as there's a breath of life in them that they are to serve You. And, Father, I pray now that you would bless this Word as it goes forth. Bless anyone listening to this program today. And we give you all the glory and honor for Christ's sake. Amen.

Join me the next time when you'll hear me say, "It is a good life." May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.