



Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together

Sixth Series: "The Top Edge" New Testament: Gospels
Lesson 23: Romans

I. Introduction

- A. This is indeed a profound book of scripture!

"Luther wrote: 'The epistle to the Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purest gospel, which is well worth and deserving 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. 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.'" (Romans, Vol. Donald Barnhouse, p. 2)

- B. In some ways, Romans is an introduction to the entire Old Testament. It completes the old covenant. Tyndale in 1534 said, "'Wherefore it appeareth evidently, that Paul's mind was to comprehend briefly in this epistle all the whole learning of Christ's gospel, and to prepare an introduction unto all the Old Testament. For without doubt whosoever hath this epistle perfectly in his heart, the same hath the light and the effect of the Old Testament with him. Wherefore let every man without exception exercise himself therein diligently, and record it night and day continually, until he be full acquainted therewith.'" (Romans, F.F. Bruce, p. 9)

II. The Author

It is well accepted that Paul wrote this letter/treatise.

III. Audience: Church at Rome

- A. No one knows with certainty how that church was established. Paul had nothing to do with its beginning.
- B. Perhaps some of the believers who received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:10 returned to Rome and established that church.
- C. The letter was carried by Phoebe, a deaconess from Cenchrea (a port city of Corinth), see Romans 16:1-2.

IV. The Occasion

- A. Paul has a great desire to visit Rome (and beyond Spain). See Acts 15:23-24.
- B. The church included Gentiles and Jews. It is believed that this letter predates the expulsion of Jews from Rome.

- C. Paul is on his third missionary journey. This letter is written from Corinth (Acts 20:3). He was headed to Jerusalem with a collection for the relief of some famine-stricken believers in Palestine (Acts 24:17).
- D. "Paul felt that he should state far more in this his first direct contact with them, namely, to put them in mind of what they, indeed, already knew but certainly would be glad to hear again, as being most necessary for their faith and their life, since it was now coming from him, God's apostle sent especially to the Gentiles among who he also had worked with such signal blessing." (Interpretation of Romans, p. 6)

V. The Date

- A. It was written about 25 years after Christ's death (between 57-58 AD). This is based on a careful delineation of his missionary activities:

"Paul was in Corinth twice: the first time on his second missionary journey for a period of eighteen months when he planted the gospel in Corinth and in Greece (Acts 18:11); again on his third missionary journey for a period of three months (Acts 20:3), at the end of which time he accompanied the bearers of the great collection to Jerusalem. Rom. 15:25, 26 state that Paul is now on his way to help deliver this collection in Jerusalem. This makes time and place certain." (Interpretation of Romans, p. 5)

VI. The Theme

- A. Salvation is the basic theme of Romans. See Roman 1:16
- B. "It contains, indeed an abridgment of all that is taught in the Christian religion. It treats of the revelation of God in the works of nature, and in the heart of man, and exhibits the necessity and the strictness of the last judgment. It teaches the doctrine of the fall, and corruption of the whole human race, of which it discovers the source and its greatness. It points out the true and right use of the law, and why God gave it to the Israelites; and also shows the variety of the temporal advantages over other men which that law conferred on them, and which they so criminally abused. It treats of the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, of justification, of sanctification, of free will and of grace, of salvation and of condemnation, of election and of reprobation, of the perseverance and assurance of the salvation of believers in the midst of their severest temptations, of the necessity of afflictions, and of the admirable consolations which God gives His people under them, - of the calling of the Gentiles, of the rejection of the Jews, and of their final restoration to the communion of God. Paul afterwards lays down the principal rules of Christian morality, containing all that we owe to God, to ourselves, to our neighbours, and to our brethren in Christ, and declares the manner in which we should act in our particular employments; uniformly accompanying his precepts with just and reasonable motives to enforce their practice." (An Exposition of Romans, by Haldane, p. 5-6)
- C. The great Doctrine of Justification by Faith (Rom. 1:17, see also Heb. 11:6, Rom. 5:1, Gal. 3:6, Phil. 3:9)

See also Habakkuk 2:4 "...but the righteous will live by his faith."

This verse is quoted three times in the New Testament.

Rom. 1:17 where the first two words are emphasized: “The just shall live by faith”

Gal. 3:6 where the two middle words are emphasized: “The just shall live by faith”

Heb. 11:6 where the last two words are emphasized: “The just shall live by faith”

VII. An outline

The book of Romans can be divided into two general parts:

1. The Doctrinal Section (Ch. 1-12) – what to believe
2. The Practical Section (Ch. 13-16) – how to behave

**The conduct of believers towards civil life and church relationships.

VIII. So what?

Consider using the Roman’s Road (adapted by Sherry L. Worel) when sharing the gospel. This particular collection of bible verses is a systematic approach to personal evangelism.

1. Acknowledge that God is in control. Rom. 1:20-21. He is creator and must be glorified.
2. Acknowledge that you are a sinner. Rom. 3:23. A moral “gap” exists between man and God.
3. Recognize that our sin exacts a price to be paid. Rom. 6:23.
4. Praise the Lord that Jesus paid our debt on the cross and provided a way of salvation. Rom. 5:8
5. Salvation comes by faith. Rom. 1:17, Rom. 10:9-10
6. That salvation can be yours! Rom. 10:13
7. Christ deserves to be the Lord of your life. Rom. 11:36

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think many believers consider Romans “hard to understand”?
2. Think about Romans 1:16 and talk about why it seems difficult for some believers to share their faith.
3. Consider Romans 13:1-7. How do those verses impact what you believe about the role of government in our lives?