

1The Message of Romans

The Gospel Promised

Rom. 1:1-17

Introduction:

1. With this lesson we are beginning a series of lessons I have entitled “The Message of Romans.”
2. Our objective is to summarize the message of Romans in nine lessons. Primary focus will be given to chapters 1-11 where Paul develops his theology of salvation by faith. The Epistle of Romans is divided into two sections.
 - a. Chapters 1-11 defines what we are to believe.
 - b. Chapters 12-16 defines what we are to practice.
3. I would like you to read and meditate on the Book of Romans using the following outline. I hope that this will help you to see the message as it unfolds. You will notice nine items in the outline. Each of these will constitute a lesson in the series. If you read the nine items one after the other, you should be able to see the thread running through the book. This should be clearer and more explicit as we study.
 - a. The Gospel Promised (1:1-17).
 - b. Why the Need for the Gospel (1:18-3:20).
 - c. The Righteousness of God Manifest (3:21-30).
 - d. Abraham Believed God and It Was Reckoned to Him as Righteousness (Rom. 3:31-4:25).
 - e. We Have Peace with God (5:1-21).
 - f. Baptized Believers Are Dead to Sin and Alive In Christ Jesus (6:1-23).
 - g. We Are Now Married to Christ (7:1-25).
 - h. There Is No Condemnation for Those In (Married to) Christ (8:1-39).
 - i. Unbelief Results in Being Broken Off; Belief Results in Being Grafted In (9-11).
4. Romans is written by Paul from Corinth, after the 2nd journey. He is collecting aid for Jerusalem (Acts 18:1ff; Rom. 15:25-26; cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9).

Discussion:

- I. Paul says he was set apart for the gospel which God had promised through His prophets in the Scriptures (1-6).
 - A. This statement reveals several things about Paul.
 1. He believes that God has revealed things in the Scriptures. This necessarily implies that he believes that God stands above time and communicates things unknowable by mere human ability.
 2. He believes that what God has communicated involves “good news.”
 3. He believes that he personally has been set apart to play a role in communicating this “good news,” particularly to the Gentiles. He describes this as having received grace and apostleship (as one sent).

4. Although he does not mention how he was set apart here, he does reflect on it in Acts 22:3ff; 26:4ff). Luke gives a description of it in Acts 9:1ff. In a radical turn of events he went from being a persecutor breathing out threats and slaughter against Christians to preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah in Jewish thought and therefore the one promised by the prophets. This dovetails perfectly with what he says here in the first verses of Romans.
- B. He connects the prophetic message with the Davidic lineage (3). This harks back to that pivotal passage in 2 Sam. 7:12-13 where God told David, "I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."
 1. Matthew and Luke trace the lineage of Jesus through David (Matt. 1:6; Lk. 3:31).
 2. Peter references 2 Sam. 7 in Acts 2:30 as he identifies Jesus with the prophetic message of God. He said, Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God (33) and concluded that "God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (36).
 - C. Paul says, "He was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).
 1. There is no more magnificent, nor radical way that God could establish Jesus as the Son of God than by resurrection.
 2. So the prophetic message through the Prophets is validated and established by the resurrection of Jesus. The promise made to David was validated by the resurrection.
 3. It is the matter of "first importance" (1 Cor. 15:3).
 - D. If the "good news" was promised beforehand through the prophets in the Scriptures this means that what the prophets said has come to fruition in Jesus Christ. Meaning that they would be in harmony with one another. We would not expect the prophets to proclaim salvation by works of law and then the gospel to promise salvation by some other means. We would expect congruence. We would expect integration. We would expect harmony.

II. Paul says his work as an apostle was "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles" (1:5).

- A. Paul references this "obedience of faith" again in Rom. 16:15.
 1. It is a faith that is "according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made know to the nations."
 2. So again, the gospel now revealed is manifested by the prophets.
- B. The message of the prophets that the Gentiles be brought to faith is evident in many texts. This was God's plan all along. That all mankind, not just Jews, should find hope through the grace of God.
 1. God intended the Jews to be His servant to bring light to the nations (Isa. 42:5-7).
 - a. We generally interpret this to apply to Jesus as God's servant and that is indeed what Matthew does (Matt. 12:17-21).

- b. But the Jews were supposed to be God's servant to bring light to the nations too. Jesus was the perfect personification of what they were supposed to do.
 - c. Paul was a chosen instrument to "bear My name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). Ironically, the bright light he saw on the road to Damascus was the light that blinded him, but would bring light to the nations (Acts 22:12ff, 21; **26:17-18, 22-23**).
 - d. Yes, we look at the case of Paul's conversion from these texts, but the emphasis is on his being commissioned to take light to the Gentiles and the Jews.
2. Paul uses texts from Isa. 42 **and** 49:6 in Acts 13:47 in Pisidian Antioch to turn to the Gentiles when his message was rejected by the Jews in the synagogue.
- a. Isa. 49:1ff identifies Israel as God servant to be a light to the nations (3, 6).
 - b. Simeon had quoted this text when Jesus was presented in the temple to be circumcised (Lk. 2:32; cf. Isa. 2:2-3; 9:1ff; 42:6; 49:6; 51:5; 60:1-3).
 - c. Zacharias saw the light too (Lk. 2:28-29). Ironically, blinded when he questioned the word of the angel who spoke to him!
3. What the Jews had failed to do as God's servant, Jesus as God's Servant DID!
- C. Paul's message is that Jesus as the Servant of God became a servant to both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 15:8-12). Note that he quotes from 2 Sam. 22:50; Psa. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Psa. 117:1 and Isa. 11:10).
- D. This obedience of faith involves Gentiles placing their faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

III. What had been promised by the prophets in the Scriptures is that "the righteous man shall live by faith" (cf. Hab. 2:4).

- A. This Hab. 2:4 passage is quoted here and in Gal. 3:11.
 - 1. In the Gal. 3 passage Paul contrasts being under works of law and being under faith.
 - 2. Under law involves being under the curse of death.
 - 3. Under faith involves salvation and life.
- B. Faith then is the focal point. Faith is the mechanism that is critical. This is what has been promised by the prophets. This is what is revealed in the Scriptures. This is what Paul was commissioned to preach. It includes both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ. It is good news!

Conclusion:

- 1. It is this message that calls us into relationship with Jesus Christ (1:6, 7). Cf. 2 Thess. 2:14.
- 2. We do not have to ascend into heaven, nor descend into the abyss. But we do have to believe the word, confess Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:6-13). Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

