

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

TEXT: ROMANS 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

1. The apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans in approximately 60 AD (*Scofield Study Bible*).
2. At that time, the Roman Empire dominated the world, and Rome was the greatest city in the world.
3. When Paul wrote this letter, Nero was the Roman emperor. Nero was a wicked and cruel tyrant. Nero had his own mother murdered in 59 AD, the year before Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans.
4. Nero was rumored to have had captured Christians, dipped them in oil, and then set them on fire in his garden at night as human lamps and torches.
5. But Paul does not mention the infamous Nero in his epistle.
6. At that time, Seneca was Rome's leading intellectual figure. Seneca was a philosopher, a statesman, and an orator. His tragedies were widely read, and they influenced great writers such as William Shakespeare.
7. Seneca's philosophy of Stoicism spread across Europe. He was studied by Augustine and Jerome, and his ideas were a big component of the Latin culture of the Middle Ages. Seneca was read by Dante and Chaucer, and his moral treatises were edited by Erasmus.
8. But when the apostle Paul wrote this letter, he did not mention Seneca or any of his writings.
9. Paul's message was far more important than politics or philosophy.
10. Robert Haldane was a Scottish preacher. He wrote a great commentary on Paul's epistle to the Romans, and he said, "It's the only part of Scripture which contains a detailed and systematic exposition of the doctrines of Christianity."
11. Paul's emphasis was "the gospel of God" (1:1).
12. In Romans 1:9, Paul calls it "the gospel of his Son."
13. In Romans 1:16, Paul calls it "the gospel of Christ."

I. THE SEPARATION OF THE GOSPEL

II. THE THEME OF THE GOSPEL

III. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

I. THE SEPARATION OF THE GOSPEL

1. Separation should be looked at both positively and negatively. We are to be separated from sin, and we are to be "separated unto the gospel of God" (1:4).
2. Second Corinthians 6:17 says, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." We are to separate from wickedness and from wicked people.
3. And we are to be "separated unto the gospel of God" (1:1).
4. This principle of separation goes all the way back to Genesis 1.
5. Genesis 1:4 says, "And God divided the light from the darkness."
6. Leviticus 20:24 says, "I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people."
7. Leviticus 20:26 says, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."
8. Separation from sin means living a holy life and avoiding things that are displeasing to God.
9. Being "separated unto the gospel of God" (1:1) means being devoted to the proclamation of the Gospel of God.
10. "Separated" means "marked out." In Galatians 1:15, Paul says, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace."
11. This means God had marked Paul out for service. God had designed that Paul should be an apostle from his infancy.
12. Albert Barnes said, "It was not (for Paul) to live in splendor, wealth, and ease, but to devote himself to this great business of proclaiming good news, that God was reconciled to people in his Son. This is the sole business of all ministers of 'religion.'"
13. We see the same thing in Jeremiah 1:5, where the LORD said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."
14. Jeremiah was set apart, separated, marked out, and designated to be a prophet.
15. John the Baptist was also separated from his mother's womb. In fact, the angel said to Elisabeth, John's mother, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15).

II. THE THEME OF THE GOSPEL

1. This glorious gospel message was "promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" (1:2).
2. It has been said that the Messianic promise was the warp and woof of the Old Testament. Paul quotes the Old Testament many times in this epistle (cf. Romans 4:3-8).
3. Someone put it this way:

The New Testament is in the Old concealed.

The Old Testament is by the New revealed.

Or

The New Testament is in the Old contained.

The Old Testament is by the New explained.

4. You will recall on the road to Emmaus, our Lord "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).
5. And in John 5:39, our Lord said to the Jewish leaders, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."
6. The Ethiopian eunuch was "searching the scriptures" that day as he sat in his chariot on his way back home from Jerusalem. He was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet, chapter 53.
7. Philip heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (Acts 8:30).
8. The eunuch was reading the Gospel of God "promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Romans 1:2), and Acts 8:34 says the eunuch said to Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"
9. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).
10. Christ is seen on every page of the Old Testament.
 - Christ is the Passover Lamb.
 - Christ is the Manna from heaven.
 - Christ is the smitten Rock.
 - Christ is the Captain of the Lord's Host.
 - Christ is the Branch of the LORD -- the righteous branch.
 - Christ is the promised Messiah, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
 - Christ is Emmanuel -- God with us.

- Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.
 - Christ is the Hope of Israel, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of Jesse, the Seed of the woman.
 - Christ is the Son of God and the Son of man.
 - Christ is the fourth man in the burning fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
11. Spurgeon said no matter what text he was preaching, and no matter where he was preaching in the Bible, he always made a beeline to the cross.
 12. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15).
 13. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that our Lord would come through the seed of David (Romans 1:3). Christ is the son of David "according to the flesh" (1:3).
 14. The New Testament begins with these words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1).
 15. Christ is the son of David "according to the flesh" (1:3), "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

III. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

1. Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power. Our Lord's resurrection from the dead (1:4) validated His claim to be the Son of God.
2. Our Lord said in John 10:17 and 18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
3. The word "power" is found three times in Romans chapter 1 (1:4, 16, 20).
4. The Greek language has several different words that are all translated into our English word "power," but the same Greek word is used here in Romans 1: 4, 16, and 20.

5. The Greek word is *dunamis*, and it is where we get our English words "dynamite," "dynamic," and "dynamo."
6. The Gospel is a powerful force, a divine energy. It is the good news of salvation energized by the Holy Spirit.
7. Preachers should emphasize the Gospel when they preach, because only the Gospel can save souls and change lives.
8. Politicians ramble on about better education, better health care, better wages, the environment, more social reform, etc. but what we need is more Gospel preaching!

CONCLUSION:

1. The apostle Paul's emphasis was preaching the Gospel. This should be our emphasis as well.
2. In I Corinthians 9:16, Paul said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"
3. John Phillips said, "The Gospel message grips the mind, stabs the conscience, warms the heart, saves the soul, and sanctifies the life. It can make drunken men sober, crooked men straight, and profligate women pure. It is a message sufficient to transform the life of any who believe" (*Exploring Romans*).