

# Romans – Part II

## Introduction

The Apostle Paul was a man on a mission. His assignment was to distribute the most precious commodity this world has ever received: the gospel, a cure formulated by God to be 100% effective against the terminal disease of sin. The gospel became the driving force of his life.

**Romans 1:1** *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.* Paul had never met most of his brothers and sister in the Roman church. They only knew Paul by reputation, which was second to none, especially amongst the Gentiles. Because the Roman believers did not know Paul personally, Paul had to present truth to demonstrate theological connection with the church right from the outset. He could have used a number of different titles to address the church, but he chose to use the title **bond-servant of Jesus Christ**.

Both Greeks and Romans despised servitude above all else. Compulsory service, meant loss of freedom, and loss of freedom for them was to lose one's dignity. The word Paul used was *doulos*, which was reserved in Jewish culture to mean illegal or unreasonable service, such as Israel's slavery in Egypt. No one wanted the title of *doulos* unless it was in the service of God. Bondservants of God

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included people like Abraham, Moses, David and other noteworthy heroes of faith.

Paul also called himself an Apostle. In Greek terms an Apostle was a representative, sent to accomplish a task on behalf of someone else. And Paul based his authority on the mandate of the person who sent him, Jesus Christ, God himself. Paul wrote that he was set apart to teach and preach the gospel.

**Romans 1:2** *the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures* Paul declared that the gospel had been promised beforehand, it was not something new, it had been the central focus of the Old Testament since Adam and Eve's tragic disobedience in the Garden of Eden. The gospel was promised through His prophets. The message Paul carried fulfilled the hope of salvation foreshadowed by every prophet since Moses. He quoted Old Testament scripture no less than sixty times throughout the book of Romans

**Romans 1:3-4** *regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David,<sup>4</sup> and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul declared several truths about Jesus: He was born a descendent of David, a genuine human being, but he also

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declared that Jesus was the son of God, undeniably proven by His resurrection from the dead. The phrase *spirit of holiness* refers to Jesus' Divine nature. Christ referred to here is the Greek term Kyrios used throughout the Old Testament to refer to the Lord God.

**Romans 1:5** *Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.* The purpose of the gospel is to produce obedient faith. We are saved in order to surrender our lives to Christ Jesus. Paul proved his obedient faith by surrendering everything to the will of God to the very end of his life.

**Romans 1:6** *And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.* Paul reminded them that Jesus Christ had also called the church at Rome to faith and obedience and to share the gospel with the inhabitants of Rome. Today all of us are called to seek those who have not heard the good news and become the means by which they come to faith.

**Romans 1:7** *To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul encouraged them to set them selves apart to be pure and

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undefiled by this world. OCC we are called to be the same.

In AD 58 the population in Rome exceeded one million people, over half of which were slaves. It was a difficult place to live. The Church needed encouraging and Paul did so this in four ways.

**Romans 1:8** *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.* Paul expressed his personal admiration and thanks for their reputation of faithfulness throughout the Roman Empire. He was saying well done. You're doing a great job! **Everyone needs encouraging!**

**Romans 1:9-10** *God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you<sup>10</sup> in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.* Even though Paul did not know most of the people personally he never failed to remember them in his prayers. He expressed his desire to be with them. Paul understood the value of being physically present with someone who needs encouragement.

**Romans 1:11-12** *I long to see you so that I may impart to*

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*you some spiritual gift to make you strong – <sup>12</sup> that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.* Paul promised to help them, to share his spiritual gift of knowledge that God had given him. Paul would in turn be strengthened by the spiritual gifts the believers in Rome had to offer. This is so important that as believers that we share our spiritual gifts to strengthen one another. Paul's hope was that there would be more converts through belief in Jesus Christ living in obedience as a result of their growing faith. This is **my hope too!**

**Romans 1:14** *I am a debtor both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.* The Apostle Paul talked about being under obligation to share the good news he had been given from Jesus. He now had the responsibility, a debt to pay, to give this news to someone else. It was **not** a condition of Paul's salvation. He wanted to see the people living in spiritual darkness to see the light of truth. Friends, we too have an obligation to let others know that God is extending salvation to them. Our responsibility is to give this wonderful news to those in spiritual darkness so that they can experience for themselves the light of truth.

Paul was passionate about preaching the gospel message. The grace and mercy Paul received for God motivated him

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to act. Question – does the grace and mercy we received motivate us to act? Are we passionate about it?

**Romans 1:16-17** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.* <sup>17</sup> *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.*

Paul was not afraid of what other people thought for two reasons *because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes* and *in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed*. The cure for the terminal disease of sin is the gospel message, and all who receive it will enjoy a restored relationship with God.

Paul is not concerned about what others think because the gospel is too precious and wonderful to disregard. We know the gospel appears foolish to those who do not understand, but it is not to us.

We have studied already that *the righteous live by faith*. We now enjoy having a right standing before God because of our personal belief in Jesus Christ. We have staked our eternal life on this gospel truth. We need to remain steadfast even if it does mean that we lay down our lives

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for Jesus.

Paul then transitions in this chapter from his introductions to the Roman Christians and to the serious moral failure of mankind, God's judicial abandonment and the eternal destiny of mankind. Paul wrote that there is eternal separation from God in a place of indescribable suffering because of mankind's rebellion and sin. This is a real place; God will send people to it.

The Jews believed that they were exempt from judgement because of the covenant they had inherited from Abraham. Paul clearly explained that all people stand condemned. This isn't a particularly enjoyable portion of scripture, some people like to skip this part or choose to ignore it but it is vitally important. People don't like to talk about the wrath of God and judgement but it needs to be discussed and understood.

People today don't want a god they fear but rather have one that is loving and does not gets angry.

A God of love **must** have the capacity for anger. A God of love must mean business when He declares certain actions off-limits. A God of love must take action to protect the innocent. A God of love hates anything that harms those He loves. God's wrath is terrifying, yet also controlled,

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deliberate, measured and it is completely just. His wrath is a reasonable expression of His righteous and unfailing love when confronted with evil.

The Bible teaches us that God is love (1 John 4:8). That is why He will **NOT** stand idly by while evil consumes His creation.

**Romans 1:18-19** *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,<sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.* His (anger) burns against all *godlessness and wickedness.*

Godlessness or ungodliness comes from the Greek word *asebia* a term meaning having attitudes or actions of irreverence. A lifestyle of irreverence inevitably leads to disrespect.

Wickedness or unrighteousness comes from the Greek word *adikea* and is taken directly from the OT meaning **violation of divine law**. The divine law refers to the standards of conduct given through Moses, which were to be lived out by the Hebrew nation of Israel.



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God did not randomly choose these things to *spoil our fun*. He isn't a spoilsport. These rules are expressions of His character. His nature defines what is good. Actions that are contrary to His nature **is sin**.

Ungodliness and unrighteousness then represent not only the violation of certain rules of conduct, but rejection of God himself: His deity, His authority and His very nature. When people choose to sin they show disrespect or contempt for God's character.

Verse 18 talks about *people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness*. A word picture of suppressed is a person who is struggling to put a lid on a container so that whatever is inside cannot escape. People are trying to suppress the truth by their wickedness. Sin keeps the world from working as God originally intended it to.

**Romans 1:20-21** *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

<sup>21</sup> *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Paul pointed to the evidence of creation itself. God has

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surrounded us in the evidence of His handiwork. John Calvin wrote **nature itself is the best argument for intelligent design, leaving men and women without excuse, yet they wantonly suppress the truth of God – professing to be wise they became fools.** Greek and Hebrew cultures view a fool very seriously. The Hebrew language uses four terms to quantify the level of foolishness. According to the Hebrews, the greatest fool of all is the disobedient person who possesses the greatest intelligence. Romans 1:22 *Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.* Paul used the term *moros* which means moron. Moron is an offensive term that deliberately insults somebody's intelligence A determined ignorance of God, which leads to a clever imitation of God, and ends with a replacement of God.

Mankind has traded the one true God for one of their own making that fits in with what they want him to be. Our fallen nature prefers a creator who does not hold us accountable for our wrongdoing and passively waits for us to return to Him when we've grown tired of sin. But the truth is that He does hold us accountable for sin and people will be without excuse when they face Him.

Friends our responsibly and obligation is to share this gospel message. As we study Paul's teaching together

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each of us will have more understanding and knowledge in how to do that. But don't wait until we finish the study. Pray that the Lord will send someone across your path today and share what you know.