

The Apostle Paul

Romans, Part I

Romans 1:1-7

Stuart W. Bryan

I. The Glory of Romans

"This epistle is the real chief part of the NT and the very purest gospel, which, indeed, deserves that a Christian not only know it word for word by heart but deal with it daily as with daily bread of the soul. For it can never be read or considered too much or too well, and the more it is handled, the more delightful it becomes, and the better it tastes." Martin Luther

II. The Occasion of Romans (cf. Rom 15:22-33)

III. An Outline of Romans

Between his Introduction and Conclusion come the two principal parts of the letter:

1.5-11 - *Credenda* – Things that must be _____!

12-15.5 - *Agenda* – Things that must be _____!

IV. The Author of Romans

¹Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ²which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. ⁵Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; ⁷To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. A Bondservant of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:15-18; 2 Tim 2:24-26)

So, first, Paul identifies himself as a *bondservant of Jesus Christ*. The Greek is *doulos* – servant, slave, one bound in servitude to another. Whereas once a slave of _____, a son of Adam subject to death and destruction, held captive by Satan to do his will, Paul was now set free from those former masters and a servant of _____, his new Master, the Second Adam. So what is it that brings someone from one state to the other? It is this that the parallel in v. 5 answers: the _____ of God:

²⁴And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

It is God, in His _____, who grants repentance. Christ commissioned Paul to take this good news of liberation from bondage to sin and Satan to all nations, *"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness... I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me"* (Acts 26:15, 18).

- I. Introduction
 - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
 - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live
 - A. God's Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (3:21-5)
 - C. The Triumph of God's Righteousness (6-8)
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith"
 - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
 - B. Patient not Proud (14-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
 - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
 - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

B. Called to be an Apostle (cf. Eph 2:20; 4:11)

Our word apostle is a transliteration of the Greek *Apostolos* – one sent, an emissary. Paul *was called* – passive voice – *as an apostle*. He did not intrude himself into this ministry; he was appointed by Christ Himself. As he writes to the Galatians, ‘*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)...*’ (1:1). Hence, Paul’s apostleship was not *for himself* but *for the Church* – hence the “_____” in v. 5 – *we have received apostleship*.

C. Separated unto the Gospel of God (cf. Acts 9:15)

Whereas Paul had been a Pharisee, “*separated*” unto the traditions of the elders, he was now “*separated*” unto the Gospel – the Good News of God’s salvation of all nations in and through Jesus. The promise that all nations would one day confess that Yahweh is Lord of all was to reach its fulfillment through Jesus. So note the parallel in v. 5 – through the preaching of the apostles, Jesus would lay the foundation for the conversion of all nations – they would come to the *obedience of faith*.

V. The Danger of Religion (Lk 18:9-14; Ro 10:1-4; Ac 9:1-19; Gal 1:13-14; Phil 3:2-11)

Paul’s conversion reveals that it is very easy for religious people to have a muted sense of their own sin and thus to miss the glory of Christ’s sacrifice and God’s gift of forgiveness. Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews, a member of God’s covenant people, zealous for the law. And yet, he missed the whole point of the law. As Paul writes later in Romans:

¹Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

As a Pharisee, Paul had not reckoned with the gravity of his sin and the need for the atoning work of Christ to cover the guilt of his sin. He had not reckoned with a central part of the law – the sacrificial system – which highlighted the depth of our sin and the need for a true sacrificial Lamb to cover our guilt. Paul was like the Pharisee in Jesus’ parable:

¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

Paul believed himself capable of meriting God’s favor. He believed that his own good deeds, ethnicity, religious zeal, etc. would protect him in the day of judgment. In believing so, he missed the whole point of the Law: that *there is none righteous, no not one*. The only way that we can be set right with God is through trust in God’s forgiving mercy through a sacrificial offering. Paul wrote the Philippians:

⁷But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith... (Phil 3:7-9)

VI. Conclusion