

STUDIES IN ROMANS

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II. PAUL'S SALUTATION, THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

Romans 1:1-17

The theme of this letter is found in Paul's own words: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith." This theme condensed is, The Gospel Plan of Salvation. But some one asks, "Why not 'Righteousness of God' the theme?" Because this righteousness is only the means to the great end -- "salvation."

I. THE SALUTATION (1:1-7)

We gather from the salutation the following things:

1. The writer: "**Paul.**"
2. Those addressed: "**To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints**"; that is, Christians.
3. The salutation itself: "**Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**"

The writer is particularly described, (1) in his status as a "**servant of Jesus Christ,**" (2) in his office, as "**called to be an apostle,**" (3) in his ordination, as "**separated unto the gospel of God,**" (4) in the direct object of his work, as "**for obedience to the faith among all nations,**" including the Romans themselves: "**Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ,**" (5) in the ultimate reason for his work, as "**for his name.**"

His "**gospel of God**" is described, (1) as "**promised afore by his prophets,**" (2) as recorded "**in the holy scriptures,**" (3) as "**concerning his Son.**"

That Son is described thus: (1) "**made of the seed of David according to the flesh,**" (2) "**And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,**" (3) as our MESSIAH and LORD, (4) as the author of "**grace and apostleship.**"

II. THE THANKSGIVING (1:8)

The ground of thanksgiving is thus expressed: "That your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

This universal proclamation of the faith of the Roman Christians may be easily accounted for. Rome was the world's capital and center of governmental unity. To it and from it, over the great military roads and ship lines, were constant tides of travel and traffic, so that a whisper there reached the boundaries of the empire. To Paul, at least, working along these roads or sailing over these sea-courses there came continual news of the progress of the Gospel there. There were his kindred, his converts, his acquaintances from many lands, with whom he had constant communication.

III. THE PRAYER AND ITS REASON (1:9-15)

This prayer is thus expressed: ". . . **if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.**" It is described:

1. As sincere: "**God is my witness,**"
2. As unceasing: "**without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,**" and so forth.
3. The reasons for this prayer are: (1) to impart some spiritual gift looking to their establishment, (2) for mutual comfort in each other's faith, (3) that he might have some fruit in them as in other Gentiles, (4) because he was a debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish, (5) because he was ready to preach at Rome as well as elsewhere, (6) he had been hindered in his purposes to visit them hitherto: "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming unto you" (15:22), (7) he was not ashamed of the Gospel in any crowd.
4. The following conclusions may be drawn from this prayer: (1) That he counted Rome in the sphere allotted to him. (2) That on account of its central and political position as the world's metropolis, its strategical importance as a radiating mission base surpassed all others. (3) That the arch enemy of the Gospel understood this importance as well as Paul and, so far, had barred him out of the field. Hence, the necessity for this prayer. Twice in this letter he refers to this hindering of his purpose to come to them (1:13 and 15:22) and in I Thessalonians 2:18 we find that Satan is the hinderer: "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." (4) We learn from Acts 23:11 that it was the LORD's will for him to visit Rome according to this prayer, which says, "By the will of God": "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Thus we see Satan and his emissaries opposing Paul's approach to Rome, while Paul was longing and praying to get there; GOD's will over-ruling Satan's will in answer to the prayer. And he prayed "if by any means," leaving that also to GOD, and we learn that he went in bonds: "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band" (Acts 27:1) and "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20). (5) This prayer with its reasons opens the way to a statement of the great theme of the

letter.

IV. THE THEME OF THE LETTER (1:16-17)

This theme involves the answer to these questions:

What is the Gospel, to whom addressed and on what terms, what its power, and what the salvation into which it leads; how is it a power to this end, what the righteousness revealed, what the meaning of "**from faith to faith**," and what the varied use of the quotation from Habakkuk. The Gospel is the whole story of CHRIST's mediatorial work as PROPHET, SACRIFICE, PRIEST, KING, LEADER, and JUDGE, addressed to the whole human race, whatever the nationality, sex or social condition, on the terms of simple faith in JESUS as He is offered in the Gospel, the power of which is GOD Himself; that is, GOD the HOLY SPIRIT. The salvation unto which it leads consists generally in what it does for us, what it does in us, what it leads us unto.

1. Salvation -- What It Does for Us

It provides for us justification, redemption and adoption.

(1) Justification is the declaration of a competent court that one tried before it is acquitted. In a word it is the acquittal of a man at the bar of GOD. In this part of the letter Paul uses salvation in the sense of justification. Man is saved when he is justified. Later we will find the word "saved" used in a larger and completer sense. When I am justified before GOD, that delivers me from the wrath to come. It delivers from the guilt of sin.

(2) Redemption is the buying back of what has been sold. Paul tells us in this letter about the redemption of the soul, the buying back of the soul; later he tells about the redemption of this earth on which man lives.

(3) Adoption, like the two words already used, is a legal term. We are not naturally children of GOD; we get into the family of GOD by adoption. He adopts us into his family. Adoption is that legal process by which one, not naturally a member of the family, becomes legally so. It confers all the rights and blessings of actual sonship.

2. Salvation -- What It Does in Us

Let us look at salvation as done in us.

(1) As to the soul -- What are the processes? They are regeneration and sanctification. What is regeneration? Regeneration is giving a holy disposition to the mind. The carnal mind is enmity against GOD, not subject to His law, neither can be made subject to His law. Man in his natural state hates GOD, hates truth, hates light. It is not sufficient that a man be redeemed from the curse of the law, or the wrath of the law, and be acquitted. It is necessary that he have a mind in harmony with GOD. That occurs in us; GOD begins a good work in us, and continues it to the day of JESUS CHRIST. And that good work in us is expressed by regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration gives us a holy disposition, but the remnants of the flesh are still

with us. Then sanctification commences and more and more conforms us to the image of JESUS CHRIST, as we go on from strength to strength, from glory to glory, from faith to faith. That is what it does in us; it regenerates and sanctifies us. The salvation in us, referring to the soul, is consummated just as soon as the soul gets through its discipline and is freed from the body. On the other side we see the spirits of the just made perfect. That is the end of the salvation as far as the soul is concerned.

(2) As to the body -- But salvation takes hold of the other part of the man -- his body that lies mouldering in the ground. GOD provided in the Garden of Eden for the immortality of the body. When sin expelled the man and he had no longer access to that tree, his body, of course, began to die. Salvation must save that body. That comes in the resurrection which he discusses in this letter. In the resurrection these things take place:

First, the body is made alive, quickened.

Second, it is raised.

Third, it is glorified. And glorification means what? What these words say, "**It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**" That is the entire man, is it not? I said it was the complete and everlasting deliverance of the entire man, soul and body.

Then fourth, we must bring those two saved parts together. So CHRIST brings the spirits with Him. He raises the dead, and the spirits go back into the old house, now renovated and glorified.

We have not yet come to the end. That is what is done for us, and what is done in us, but it is not the deliverance unto that inheritance that is reserved in Heaven. That is Paul's idea of salvation as it is presented in this letter, and it is never less than that.

3. Salvation -- What It Is Unto

It is unto something as well as from something. We have seen what GOD does for us: He justifies, He redeems, He adopts. We have seen what GOD does in us: He regenerates and sanctifies the soul and He raises the body in glory. Beyond this, He delivers us unto that inheritance that is reserved in Heaven that the heart of man never conceived of -- the precious things that GOD has in store for those that love Him. Salvation cannot mean less than that. We cannot say that it is all of salvation, for the soul to be justified when the body is not saved; we cannot say the body is saved until it is raised from the dead and glorified. We cannot say that we are saved unto our inheritance until we get to it and enter into it.

Our salvation, therefore, may be spoken of as already accomplished: we have been saved: "**Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)**" (Ephesians 2:5). It may be viewed as in process: we are being saved: "**For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is**

the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18). It may be thought of as future: we shall be saved: **"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"** (Romans 5:9).

So salvation is a big thing. Let us define it.

Salvation is the final, complete and everlasting deliverance of the sinner's entire soul and body from the guilt of sin, from the bondage of Satan, and the deliverance of man's habitat -- this old world -- from the curse upon it.

QUESTIONS FOR STIMULATION AND REVIEW

1. What is the theme of this letter in Paul's own words?
2. What is the condensed theme?
3. What do we gather from the salutation?
4. How is his "gospel of God" described?
5. How is the Son described?
6. What is the ground of thanksgiving?
7. How may we account for the universal proclamation of the faith of the Roman Christians?
8. What is Paul's prayer here?
9. Why this prayer?
10. What the conclusions from this prayer?
11. Analyze the theme of this letter?
12. What then is the Gospel?
13. To whom addressed?
14. On what terms?
15. What the power of the gospel?
16. Of what does the salvation unto which it leads consist?
17. Define this salvation, and explain fully each of the aspects of salvation, defining also the terms used.

LET US RETHINK THE CHAPTER

Theme, The Gospel Plan of Salvation

I. THE SALUTATION (1:1-7)

1. The writer, "Paul"
2. Those addressed -- all Christians in Rome
3. The salutation itself

II. THE THANKSGIVING (1:8)

III THE PRAYER AND ITS REASon (1:9-15)

1. Sincere
2. Unceasing
3. Reasons for it
4. Conclusions from it

IV. THE THEME OF THE LETTER (1:16-17)

1. Salvation -- What it does for us

- (1) Provides justification
- (2) Offers redemption
- (3) Secures adoption

2. Salvation -- What it does in us

- (1) As to the soul
 - a. Regenerates
 - b. Sanctifies
- (2) As to the body
 - a. Raises
 - b. Glorifies

3. What it is unto

An inheritance, which is undefiled and that fadeth not away

~ end of chapter 2 ~
