

**NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY**

**LESSON SERIES**

**UNIT IV - THE CHURCH EPISTLES  
INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH EPISTLES  
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS**

for

**CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE  
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## **UNIT IV - NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY THE CHURCH EPISTLES**

### **A. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH EPISTLES**

WE HAVE now left the Gospels and the Acts, and are at the Epistles. There are twenty-two of these, if we include the Book of the Revelation as an epistle (which it really is, according to the opening verses); and they break up into three groups.

- First there are the nine **Christian Church Epistles** (Romans to 2 Thessalonians)
- Next there are the four **Pastoral and Personal Epistles** (1 Timothy to Philemon).
- Finally, there are the nine **General (Hebrew Christian) Epistles** (Hebrews to Revelation).

There are noteworthy correspondences between the two ninefold groups.

- Each group begins with a great doctrinal treatise - in the one case Romans, in the other case Hebrews,
- Each ends with an "apocalypse" or unveiling of the future in relation to the return of our Lord Jesus - in the one case Thessalonians in the other case the book of the Revelation.
- All the nine Church epistles, as the name implies, are written to Christian churches.
- Not one of the nine (Hebrew Christian) General Epistles is written to a church. Those nine are Christian epistles, their aspect and atmosphere are peculiarly Hebrew.

### **THE SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH EPISTLES**

We wonder whether Christians today discern the concentrated importance of these nine Church epistles and of the four "Pastoral and Personal" epistles for this present age. All Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is written for us, and is profitable to us; But not all Scripture is written about us or directly to us as Christian believers of the present dispensation. The one part of the Bible which is specifically written to us and about us, as Christians, consist of the nine Church epistles and the four Pastoral epistles. Therefore, if there is any part of Scripture which Christian believers ought to know thoroughly, it is this part.

I would say to, you, and all Christians: Get to know the Church Epistles well; they are that part of the Scriptures with which, we ought to be specially concerned.

### **THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER**

As to the approximate dates and places of composition, the consensus of opinion seems to be as follows:

<u>EPISTLE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
I Thessalonians	Corinth	A.D. 52-53
2 Thessalonians	Corinth	53
1 Corinthians	Ephesus	57
2 Corinthians	Macedonia	57
Galatians	Corinth	57-58
Romans	Corinth	58
Colossians	Rome	63
Ephesians	Rome	63
Philippians	Rome	64

### **THEIR THREEFOLD GROUPING**

But while it is good thus to see the Church Epistles in their chronological order, their true Spiritual order is undoubtedly that which we now find them in our New Testament. It is a noteworthy fact that this order of these Church Epistles never varies in any of the manuscripts. It is the same everywhere without exception. It would seem as though the Holy Spirit was just as careful about the arrangement of these precious letters as about their original inclusion in the sacred canon. Observe their three-fold group-development.

- Romans to Galatians
- Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,
- I and 2 Thessalonians.
- In the first group the distinctive emphasis is on **CHRIST AND THE CROSS.**
- In the middle three the distinctive emphasis is on **CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.**
- In the final pair the distinctive emphasis is on **CHRIST AND THE COMING.**

Is it without significance that I and 2 Thessalonians which were written first, now stand last? And is it without significance that Romans, which was written last of the first group of epistles, now stands first? These "Church" Epistles in their three groups, form just the order in which the Holy Spirit would have us learn and then teach them.

- First, in the Romans group, we learn those great evangelical truths by which, we are saved.

- Then, in the Ephesians group, we pass to those deeper depths concerning the "Mystery" and of our indissoluble oneness with the Son of God as elect members of His Body, the Church.
- Finally, in I and 2 Thessalonians our gaze is turned onward to coming consummation of the rapture and glory at the reappearing of our Savior.

Thus these three groups of the "Church" Epistles are a Trinity in unity. With regard for their respective emphases we may say:

- in the first group **faith** looks back to the Cross and is strengthened.;
- in the second group **love** looks up to the Bridegroom and is deepened;
- in the third group **hope** looks on to the Coming and is brightened.

In the words of 1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### **THEIR DISTINCTIVE EMPHASES**

Finally, before we come the study of these epistles each in turn, we ought to see them altogether as constituting a progressive series. Nothing is more fascinating than to see them thus, each with its distinctive emphasis and distinguishing contribution. Take, for instance, their successive emphases on our Lord Jesus:

Romans	Christ the <b>power</b> of God to us.
1 Corinthians	Christ the <b>wisdom</b> of God to us.
2 Corinthians	Christ the <b>comfort</b> of God to us.
Galatians	Christ the <b>righteousness</b> of God.
Ephesians	Christ the <b>riches</b> of God to us.
Philippians	Christ the <b>sufficiency</b> of God to us.
Colossians	Christ the <b>fullness</b> of God to us.
1 Thessalonians	Christ the <b>promise</b> of God to us.
2 Thessalonians	Christ the <b>reward</b> of God to us.

## **B. EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Epistle to the Romans is without doubt the Apostle Paul's magnum opus, his greatest work. Here we see Paul at his greatest as a constructive thinker and theologian. This Epistle is the complete and mature expression of the Paul's main doctrines, which it unfolds in due order and proportion and combines into an organic whole. For the purpose of systematic theology it is the most important book in the Bible. More than any other, it has determined the course of Christian thought. It is both the alphabet and the charter of evangelical Christianity. To master its contents is to be "grounded and settled in the faith, and to acquire a life-long enrichment.

### **THE CHURCH AT ROME**

When Paul wrote this epistle he had not been to Rome (1:15), but had often wished to go (1:13; 15:23), and now purposed to do so (15:24,28). How, then, was the church there brought into being? That it had originated early we can deduce from the fact that when Paul wrote this epistle, the faith of those Roman believers was already "spoken of throughout the world" (1:8). Doubtless the planting of the Gospel in Rome would be facilitated by the large settlement of Jews there. Turning back to Acts 2, we find in Peter's audience on the day of Pentecost "devout men" who were "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes" (Acts 2:10). Before they return to Rome they would learn much more than simply what they heard in that first sermon by Peter. Some of them would return to Rome as true converts and disciples to spread this new faith. Moreover, the ever-busy intercourse between Rome and the provinces would almost certainly bring Christian converts to the capital, not only from Judea, but from other parts as well.

It is clear, also, that the congregation at Rome was a thorough mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Paul addresses its members as Jews (2:17-29, 4:1; 7:1 etc.), yet equally as Gentiles (1:13; 11:13-32, 15:15,16, etc.). An interesting light is on this by the salutations in the last chapter of the epistle. Twenty-six persons are greeted, and two-thirds of the names are Greek.

It is also reasonably clear that no other Apostle had been to Rome, otherwise, as eager as Paul was to go to Rome he would not have went, if someone else had been there before him. In Romans 15:20 he said, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." Therefore we may conclude that no other Apostle had been to Rome.

### **STRUCTURE AND MESSAGE**

With careful reading and studying you see very clearly - the Book of Romans is a progressively constructed treatise, arranged in three main parts. There is no major break in Chapters 1 - 8; but as soon as you reach chapter 9, 10, and 11 you realize that Paul has passed from his general application of the Gospel to a particular consideration of its relation to the nation Israel. Then when you come to chapter 12 you are just as clearly aware that Paul passes on again from this to a consideration of the Gospel in its bearing upon individual character and conduct.

This three fold structure of the epistle is seen even more clearly by the fact that Paul winds up each of the three parts with a form of a doxology. 8:38-39; 11:33-36; and 16:25-27.

There is no doubt as to the subject matter in Part I (chapters 1-8). After a brief introduction, Paul begins an in-depth discussion of the basic doctrines of the Gospel, which are given in capsule form in verses 16-17.

### **THE GOSPEL - POWER OF GOD - SALVATION - EVERYONE - BELIEVETH - RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

The first eight chapters are throughout doctrinal, expounding these basic doctrines of the Gospel.

The next three chapters (9-11) are national, in the sense that they answer questions as to the relationship of the Gospel to Israel.

The remaining chapters (12-16) are practical, inasmuch as they apply the doctrines of the Gospel to individual conduct.

These then are the three main movements of Romans. In the first we have exposition; in the second, explanation; in the third, application. The first part is racial; the second, Israelite; the third, individual. The first part deals with the sin-problem; the second. With the Jew-problem; the third, with the life-problem.

The opening chapter of The Epistle to the Romans is inclusive as it embraces the introduction, the missionary motives of the Apostle Paul, the definition of the gospel, and the condition of man in sin which necessitates the gospel. This chapter furnishes the tempo for the entire epistle.

Romans teaches the total depravity of man. Man is irrevocably and hopelessly lost. He must have the righteousness of God since he has none of his own.

It is interesting to note that this great document of Christian doctrine, which was addressed to the church at Rome to keep it from heresy, did not accomplish its purpose. The Roman church moved the farthest from the faith which is set forth in the Epistle to the Romans. It is an illustration of the truth of this epistle that man does not understand, neither does he seek after God.

On the other hand the Great Reformation was certainly the work of this great Epistle (and that of Galatians also) and that it is probable that every great spiritual renovation in the church will always be linked both in cause and in effect to a deeper knowledge of this book. It was Martin Luther who wrote that the Epistle to the Romans is "the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, which is well worthy and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as daily bread of men's souls. It can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.

Let me urge you, as you begin the study of the this Epistle to the Romans, to do something that will pay you amazing dividends: read the Book of Romans, and read it regularly. This epistle requires all the mental make-up you have, and in addition, it must be bathed in prayer and supplication so that the Holy Spirit can teach you. This book will ground you in the faith.

Verses 16 and 17 of chapter 1 have long been recognized as the key to the epistle. These two verses should be memorized and the meaning of each word digested.

**Romans 1:16-17, 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.**

As we stated earlier verses 16-17 is the seed-plot of the whole Epistle. Here, once again, are gathered up in advance the great ideas which are to be expanded in the forth coming chapters:

**THE GOSPEL; THE POWER OF GOD; SALVATION; EVERYONE; BELIEVETH; RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**OUTLINE** (in brief):

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Salutation           | 1:1-17<br>1:18-3:20    |
| 2. Sin                  | 3:21-5:10<br>5:11-6:23 |
| 3. Salvation            | 7                      |
| 4. Sanctification       | 8:1-27<br>8:28-39      |
| 5. Struggle             | 9-11<br>12-13          |
| 6. Spirit-filled Living | 14-15<br>16            |
| 7. Security             |                        |
| 8. Segregation          |                        |
| 9. Sacrifice & Service  |                        |
| 10. Separation          |                        |
| 11. Salutation          |                        |

**OUTLINE** (Expanded)

I. DOCTRINAL (FAITH), CHAPTERS 1-8, (**How The Gospel Saves The Sinner**)

- **JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER, Chapters 1:1 - 5:11**
  - **Introduction, Chapters 1:1-17**
    1. Paul's Personal Greeting, verses 1-7
    2. Paul's Personal Purpose, verses 8-13
    3. Paul's Three "I am's", verses 14-17  
*(Key verses, 16-17 - the revelation of the righteousness of God)*
  - **Revelation of The Sin of Man, Chapters 1:18 - 3:20**  
*(Man is a sinner. Ecumenical movement is away from God. Axiom: World is guilty before God - all need righteousness)*
    1. **Revelation of the Wrath of God against Sin of Man, Chapters 1:18-32**
      1. Natural Revelation (Original Version), Verses 18-20
      2. Sub-natural Response of Man (Revision), Verses 21-23
      3. Un-natural Retrogression of Man (Perversion), Verses 24-27
      4. Super-natural Requittal of God (Inversion), Verses 28-32
    2. **Revelation of the Sin of Good People, Chapter 2:1-16**  
*(Respectable people need righteousness)*
    3. **Revelation of the Sin of Israel Under Law, Chapters 2:17 - 3:8**
    4. **Revelation of the Universality of Sin, Chapter 3:9-20**
      1. Judge's Verdict of Guilt against mankind, Verses 9-12  
*(Man cannot remove guilt)*
      2. Great Physician's Diagnosis of Mankind, Verses 13-18  
*(Man cannot change his nature. He has incurable disease)*

3. Purpose of the Law, Verses 19-20  
*(Law reveals sin, not salvation)*
  
- **Revelation of The Righteousness of God, Chapters 3:21 - 5:11**  
*(Righteous Provided - Righteous of God Defined - not the character of God nor self-righteousness of man)*
  1. Justification by Faith Explained, Chapters 3:21-31  
*(Definition: Justification is the act of God that declares a sinner righteous by faith on the merit of Christ's sacrifice. It is the addition of the righteousness of Christ as well as the subtraction of sins).  
(Propitiation - "mercy seat" [Heb. 9:5]; Redemption - to pay a price for deliverance. Propitiation is toward God. Redemption is toward sin.)*
  2. Justification by Faith Illustrated, Chapters 4:1-25  
*(Demonstration - Abraham and David)*
  3. Justification by Faith - Results Derived, Chapters 5:1-11  
**Seven benefits:**
    1. Peace - verses 1
    2. Access - verse 2
    3. Hope - verse 2
    4. Patience-Fruit of Tribulation - verse 3
    5. Love - verse 5
    6. Deliverance from Great Tribulation - verse 9
    7. Joy - verse 11  
*(Reconciliation is toward man. Definition: Change from enmity to friendship. Justification by faith is an act of God which is permanent.)*
  
- **SANCTIFICATION OF THE SAINTS, CHAPTERS 5:12 - 8:39**
  - **Potential Sanctification, Chapters 5:12-21**  
*(Federal headship, of Adam and Christ)*
    1. Headship of Adam, Verses 12-14  
*(Death - Sin)*

2. Headship of Christ, Verses 15-17  
*(Life - Righteousness)*
  3. Offense of Adam vs. Righteousness of Christ, Verses 18-21  
*(Disobedience vs. obedience; Judgment vs. Free Gift; Sin vs. Grace; Condemnation vs. Justification)*
- **Positional Sanctification, Chapters 6:1-10**  
*(Union with Christ in His death and resurrection, the basis of deliverance from sin)*
  - **Practical Sanctification, Chapter, 6:11-23**  
**(Obedience to God leads to the experience of deliverance from sin)**
  - **Powerless Sanctification, Chapters 7:1-25**
    1. Shackles of a saved Soul, Verses 1-14  
*(Spiritual Emancipation)*
    2. Struggle of a saved soul, Verses 15-25  
*(Civil War-Sin habits of old nature vs. powerless new nature)*
  - **God's New Provision for Sanctification, Chapter 8:1-39**  
*(Powerful Sanctification)*
    1. New Law: Holy Spirit vs. Law, Verses 1-4
    2. New Struggle: Holy Spirit vs. Flesh, Verses 5-13
    3. New Man, Son of God: Holy Spirit and Spirit of man, Verses 14-17
    4. New Creation: Old vs. New; Bondage vs. Liberty, Verse 18-22
    5. New Body: Groaning vs. Redeemed Body, Verses 23-27  
*(The Holy Spirit helps us in our present bodies)*
    6. New Purpose of God, Verses 28-34  
*(God's purpose guarantees the salvation of the Redeemed)*

7. New Security of the Believer, Verses 35-39  
*(God's love guarantees the security of the believer)*

## **II. DISPENSATIONAL (HOPE), CHAPTER 9-11, (How the Gospel Relates to Israel)**

- **GOD'S PAST DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL, CHAPTER 9**
  1. Israel Defined, Verses 1-5
  2. Israel Identified, verses 6-13
  3. Choice of Israel in the Sovereign Purpose of God, verses 14-24
  4. Choice of Gentiles in the Scriptural Prophecies of God, verses 25-33
  
- **GOD'S PRESENT PURPOSE WITH ISRAEL, CHAPTER 10**
  1. Present State of Israel - Lost, verses 1-4  
*(Reason: Christ is the end of the law of righteousness)*
  2. Present Standing of Israel - Same as Gentiles, verses 5-12  
*("For there is no difference")*
  3. Present Salvation for Both Jews and Gentiles - Hear and Believe the Gospel, verses 13-21
  
- **GOD'S FUTURE PURPOSE WITH ISRAEL, REMNANT RE-GATHERED AS A NATION AND REDEEMED, CHAPTER 11**
  1. Remnant of Israel Finding Salvation, verses 1-6
  2. Remainder of Israel Blinded. Verses 7-12
  3. Reason for Setting Aside the Nation Israel - Salvation of Gentiles, verses 13-21
  4. Restoration of Nation Israel - Greater Blessing, verses 22-32
  5. Reason for Restoring the Nation Israel, verses 33-36  
*(Locked in the riches of the wisdom of God)*

## **III. DUTY (LOVE), CHAPTERS 12-16, (How the Gospel Bears on Conduct)**

- **SERVICE OF "THE SONS OF GOD" , CHAPTER 12-13**
  1. Relationship to God, Chapter 12:1-2

2. Relationship to Gifts of the Spirit, Chapter 12:3-8
  3. Relationship to other Believers, Chapter 12:9-16
  4. Relationship to Unbelievers, Chapter 12:17-21
  5. Relationship to the Higher Authorities, Chapter 13:1-7
  6. Relationship to Neighbors, Chapter 13:8-14
- **SEPARATION OF "THE SONS OF GOD," CHAPTERS 14-16**
1. Relationship to Weak Believers, Chapters 14:1 - 15-3  
*(Three Principles of Conduct for Christians)*
    1. Conviction, Chapter 14:5
    2. Conscience, Chapter 14:22
    3. Consideration, Chapter 15:1-2
  2. Relationship of Jews and Gentiles as Believers, Chapter 15:4-13  
*(Racial Relationships)*
  3. Relationship of Paul to Romans and Gentiles Generally, Chapter 15:14-33  
*(The Gospel and Gentiles, verse 16)*
  4. Relationship of Christians to one another Demonstrated, Chapter 16:1-27  
*(Thirty-five persons mentioned by name - mutual love and tender affection)*

### **END of Lesson**

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