

## LESSON TWO

# PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Scripture Reference: Romans 1:1-17.

### A. AUTHOR:

The Apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans. In the very first verse he identifies himself and introduces himself to the Romans. He also describes himself as being a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle and separated unto the gospel of God.

The term "servant" here means "bond-servant." The Apostle Paul looked upon himself as being a bond slave of Jesus Christ. In this lesson we have Paul actually stating the motto that directed his life: *"As much as in me is, I am ready to preach to gospel" (verse 15)*. In this statement we find the characteristic that directed Paul throughout his entire ministry and the one thing that made Paul the great Apostle that he was.

### B. DATE, PLACE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING:

#### 1. DATE:

The epistle to the Romans was written in the year AD 58. The Apostle Paul had been a Christian for about twenty years. This epistle was written some twenty-eight years after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### 2. PLACE:

Paul spent three months with the church at Corinth from the late autumn of '57 to the early spring of '58. It was during these three months that he wrote the letter to the Romans and sent it to Rome by Phoebe a deaconess of the church of Cenchraea, a suburb and port of Corinth. Phoebe was an active Christian helper, a woman of quality and means. Paul entrusted to her this epistle which was his most important letter.

#### 3. CIRCUMSTANCE OF WRITING:

The Apostle Paul had long desired to visit Rome and to preach the gospel there. This epistle was written to pave the way for his arrival and in the meantime supply much needed teaching material.

The epistle to the Romans is the only letter written by him to a church, which had not been founded by him. His other letters were written to individuals or to churches and were written to warn them or correct them of some mistake or danger and to encourage them in the Lord. These epistles were written to converts or to churches, which had been founded by him. The epistle to the Romans was written in preparation for his coming ministry.

### C. THE CHURCH AT ROME:

Paul greets the church at Rome as being beloved of God, called to be saints (verse 7). Undoubtedly, the church at Rome was made of mainly gentiles. However, in this church there were some Jewish believers. In the year 63 B.C. the Roman General Pompey established at Rome, a Jewish colony. In this epistle, Paul addressed both Gentiles and Jews.

The names recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Romans give an indication of the membership of this church. Among these names, there are Jewish, Roman and Greek names. It would seem that Paul was personally acquainted with many of these. When persecution came to Jerusalem, and the Christians were scattered, they traveled throughout the Roman Empire and undoubtedly, some of them found themselves at Rome. It is even possible that a few were converts of Paul. Others were converts of Barnabas, Peter and other evangelists.

#### **D. PAUL'S MASTERPIECE:**

This epistle is Paul's most important work. It has been called Paul's masterpiece. If one wants to understand Paul's theology, he must carefully study the epistle to the Romans.

This epistle is the philosophy of the gospel, showing how it meets every human need and is the only answer to the problem of guilt and power of sin. There is no book in the Bible that looks so fearlessly into the depth of the degradation resulting from human sin, and gives God's answer for it. The epistle to the Romans is a doctrinal treatise, a body of systematic theology. It is a fundamental, profound and systematic discussion of the whole plan of salvation. It is universal in its application. It considers man as man and not as Jew or Gentile. Salvation is provided in Jesus for all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who will believe on him and obey his gospel.

#### **E. THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE:**

The theme and text of the epistle is found in the introduction. The theme of Romans is justification by faith, the great doctrine stated in Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:4). This doctrine is developed in this epistle and may be summed up in six words: condemnation, justification, sanctification, adoption, restoration and consecration.

The theme of Romans is stated in the text of Romans, which is 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."*

#### **F. OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE:**

The outline of the epistle, which we shall follow in this study, is as follows:

1. Introduction - 1:1-17.
2. Righteousness Needed by Sinful Men - 1:18-3:20.
3. Righteousness Provided by God - 3:21-3:26.
4. Righteousness Received by Faith - 3:27-4:25.
5. Righteousness Experienced in the Soul - 5:1-8:17.
6. Righteousness Guaranteed a Permanent Blessing - 8:18-8:39.
7. Righteousness Rejected by Jews - Chapters 9 thru 11.
8. Righteousness Manifested in Daily Life - Chapter 12 thru 16.

#### **G. INTRODUCTION:**

1. SALUTATION (1:1-7):

The Apostle Paul greets the Romans stating his official position and his reason for the writing of the epistle.

2. PERSONAL FEELING (1:8-15):

He expresses his deep interest in the Romans, his thanksgiving for them and his desire to see them that he might impart some spiritual gift. He also states his obligation to preach the gospel to all men.

3. THEME (1:16-17):

After his salutation and expression of his personal feelings, Paul introduces the theme of the epistle. He states that he is not ashamed of the gospel and is ready to preach the gospel even in Rome. It is God's power for the salvation of everyone through faith because it reveals God's righteousness.

**H. THE POWER OF GOD:**

Paul states that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). In his epistle to the Corinthians he writes that our faith will stand in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:5).

The Greek word "dunamis" translated "power" gives us our word "dynamite" (explosive power). The gospel is the dynamite of God. Moral reform and social schemes are impotent to penetrate human wickedness. The gospel overcomes the greatest resistance, penetrates the hardest conscience and softens the most obstinate heart.

LESSON TWO

SELF HELP TEST

A. What six words sum up the doctrine developed in this epistle?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Write out the verse giving text which is the theme of this epistle.

C. Write out the outline to be followed in the study of Romans.