

Romans 1

Romans is written to the church in Rome, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. There seems to be an underlying misunderstanding. Paul is trying to remove confusion and bias from the church. Somehow, the members of the church had established a view of self and sin that needed to be corrected. Paul has to go down a bit of a *rabbit hole* in order to re-clarify the gospel. Paul's clarification includes an amplification of the underlying purpose behind the Old Testament writings. The New Testament is largely a commentary on the Old Testament. For example, the Jews were confused about their own righteousness versus God's righteousness. It also addresses how the premium that Greeks had put on higher knowledge; compared to the simplicity of the gospel. Both groups are chasing satellites; and missing God.

²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1)

Read Romans 1:1-7: Paul has to provide some background as to why he should be teaching these self-appointed experts on religious matters. The Jews had fallen into the belief that only certain, special Rabbis were authorized to interpret the bible. Moreover, the Jews took it upon themselves to write a bunch of books that they considered to be fences around the bible. The Mishna and other Rabbi writings were full of examples of what God must have meant...instead of encouraging the people to prayerfully figure it out for themselves. Most of the people could not read. In other words, the religious leaders had inserted themselves in between God and man. Similarly, the Greeks were all about higher learning. They wanted to be impressed with the latest views and philosophies; instead of reality, and the fundamentals for life.

Paul begins by offering his credentials. Paul is considered to be one of the most insightful interpreters of scripture, with many years of studying under the best teachers. Even so, Paul came to realize that all of his learning and credentials was a distraction from knowing God.

...rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law,

blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet 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 ⁹ and 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; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, (Philippians 3)

Paul was authorized by God-himself to teach this material. A bondservant is someone who offers himself to be in full-time service to his master. That would require an extra special master. Paul is also a special apostle. Secondly, his information lines up with the existing holy scriptures. The subject matter is Jesus; not protocol or strange ideas. The Gentiles wanted to debate new information about eternity and heaven. Without Jesus, that is just a world religions class.

Read Roman 1:8-15: Paul always starts out with a compliment. You can teach more to an open and willing mind. When a person is taken back or insulted, they close up and recoil. When hearing becomes painful, we automatically try to justify our actions, dismiss it, or become depressed.

Read Romans 1:16-32: Why does Paul even say that he is not ashamed of the gospel? The spirit of antichrist wants to shut down the gospel. Unbelievers tell us that the message belongs to simpletons. They claim that it is not for thoughtful or contemplative people. Christians must overcome ignorance, bias and predisposition. Paul is going to walk us all through the necessity of finding salvation in Christ alone. Not good works, not heritage and family, etc..

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. (1 Peter 3)

Paul begins by stating that salvation comes from faith in Christ. It doesn't come from bible knowledge, Jewish ancestry, or theology training. It is also something that transfers from one born-again believer to the next. We are called to share what God has revealed to us to others, that they also may become saved.

Accordingly, we have to repeatedly walk through history, prophecy, science and archaeology to prove ourselves. The bible is a self-interpreting book that does not need to be added to. The dark forces of this world want to shut us up. Paul is essentially saying to all of his critics and nay-sayers: "To the contrary!"



Is it that the bible is just that hard to understand? It is actually straight forward; and it is built on repeating constants. God's nature does not change, and man is a hopeless sinner. That dilemma between God and man is where Jesus comes in. The entire Old Testament is a portfolio of how man has acted immorally towards God and towards his neighbor since the beginning.

Being ignorant about God and his plan for mankind is bad enough. What is much worse is willful ignorance. Many people do not want it to be true. They do not want to be responsible for their actions to a righteous judge. Mischaracterizing the message is a lame attempt to shed this culpability. Men have carried out character assassination to undermine the messenger's credibility.

Even for those who cannot read, we have a common language. The universe and nature confirm that someone is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator and sustainer of everything that we see in the sky and on the ground. It does not take an astrophysicist to see how the earth perfectly correlates to the sun and moon. It does not take a genius to see how our air is a very specific blend of oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen, required to sustain us. Any deviation produces death.

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your

eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! (Psalm 139)

Wicked men have lied about God since the beginning. They want to escape any responsibility for their actions. Instead of repenting, they try to discredit the idea of God. Our societies moral boundaries are based on the biblical details. To say that these rules never existed makes illegal activities more acceptable. This intellectual dishonesty makes God angry.

God has shown us that when we lie about the direction of true north; our own internal compass becomes confused and obscure. The deceiver becomes deceived by himself. God turns the table on the guy that thinks he is able to pull one over on his neighbor. We see a lot of otherwise-smart people make some morally-insane decisions. Their logic becomes influenced by their desires and lusts.

He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence. ⁸ Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land, (Psalm 101)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6)

We live in a post-Christian society in some respects. They have tried to remove God from the schools and courts and the public square. The bible has been taken out of the school curriculum and replaced with theories of evolution and alien creation. The result has been declining test scores. Some judges have ignored our founding principles and advocate for unbiblical solutions and unhealthy lifestyles. The result has been an upsurge in mental illness and crime.

When you honor God with your lifestyle, your life will be blessed. When you are open to any alternative lifestyle, your life becomes chaotic and confusing and disheartening. God tells us that he is the origin and definition of wisdom. To take God out of your thinking is equivalent to removing wisdom from your mind. You become more animal-like and appetite-driven.

The basic tenants of God, family, work, and society become so confused that life becomes unsustainable. When each man is only for himself, it causes chaos, and disorder.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5)

A society cannot survive without adhering to God's laws. If everyone lives unto themselves, it is just a dog-eat-dog free-for all. That is what happened just before Noah's Flood. The whole world became a place of violence.

For some reason, man likes to create gods in his own ego-centric image. He sees himself as having the best plan. We all seek an echo chamber. What kind of a god could I make with my hands? It's ludicrous.

He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak; He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it. ¹⁵ Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships it; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. (Isaiah 44)

Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. ⁵ They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; ⁶ They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; ⁷ They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. ⁸ Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them. (Psalm 115)

We tend to think that you do not have to be a Christian to have common sense. These verses are telling us that we are heading towards better ideas, or we are heading towards worse judgment. You cannot reject God without your foundations weakening. How crazy is it that the Egyptians worshipped bugs and animals? How absurd is it that the Greeks worshipped the planets as mythological gods? How nutty is it that in Africa and Indonesia almost anything could be your god? Throughout history, God has been in the business of debunking false gods. They are dangerous top depend on.

Leaving biblical thinking is not just a one-off, and missing of the target. It begins a cascade of worsening effects. Today, we have mentally-ill transgenders who have been convinced that they are something else. They become so committed to their cause that anything that challenges their position becomes wrong. That is a major hole in anyone's logic. God made beauty and simplicity with hidden complexities woven into all creation and rightful living. Everything else does not work. Why is it that the communists and transgenders and Islamists find common ground against God? They should not have any commonality. The truth is that there are hidden demonic forces at work here.

They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons, not to God, To gods they did not know, (Deuteronomy 32)

Once you commit to becoming godless, you devolve. You become more angry and harmful to society.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. (Matthew 24)

Psalm 1 follows the progression from bad information to bad company and bad practices to hate for anything godly.

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; (Psalm 1)