

Depicting the Gentiles

Romans 1

- McGarvey: written by P in the prime of his ministry | *P = Paul; R = Romans; Chr. = Christians*
- Rome's Jewish community was mainly poor
- Claudius [emp] expelled Chr. from R in the 40s ad. Church comprised of Gentile Chr. exclusively until Claudius' death > immediately overturned at death
- Probably written ~56-57ad; dictated to a scribe, Tertius [16:22]; probably delivered by Phoebe [16:1-2]
- Largest city in the world, capital of Roman Emp.; like NYC to USA, London to Great Britain, Tokyo to Japan; political, financial, social hub of the world
- Nero – emperor; end of his reign
- Jews from Rome were at Pentecost [Ac. 2:10]. When fled [8:1-4], they went back home.
- Why placed 1st in epistles? Longest [7100 words]; Paul's masterpiece; logically follows Acts. Acts gives conditions of salvation; Romans gives the grounds. Acts tells you "what" to do; Romans tells you "how."
- P never been to R; written Acts 20:2-3
- Key words:
 - Righteousness – 66x
 - Law – 75x
 - Faith, belief, believe – 61x
 - Sin, sinner, sinful – 58x
 - Death, die, kill – 48x
 - Flesh, fleshly, carnal – 30x
 - Grace – 25x
 - Holy – 24x

1. Prescript – Romans 1:1-7

- First 7 words are 1 sentence; 93 Greek words
- 1: servant – Greek – slave; more than ½ of population were slaves
- 2: wanted all to know good news of Jesus, firmly rooted in OT scriptures

- 3: focus shifts to Jesus
- 4: Jesus was also fully God
- 5: full circle: back to himself.
- 6: called – same as v. 1 – divinely called
- 7: lovely greeting to them

2. Reason for Writing – Romans 1:8-15

- 8: thanksgiving; whole world – Roman Empire
- 9: P did not limit his prayers to places he had labored
- 10: prosperous journey: lit. good + way
- 11: desired to give some spiritual gift; established: Greek: to fix, make fast
- 12: long to see you because it will help you; helping you helps me
- 13: Ch. 15 explains more what prevented him
- CEV “I want to win followers to Christ in Rome.”
- 14: final reason for writing – had a debt to pay
- 15: eager, even after 30 years of ministry
- Many wanted to visit R as a sightseer; P wants to go as a messenger of God!

3. Thesis Statement – Romans 1:16-17

- 16: power – Gk: dunamis – Eng: dynamite; R empire noted for their power; truly in Gospel
- Salvation – Gk: deliverance
- 17: Hab. 2:4: destruction of Chald.; God would raise them up to punish Judah; Hab. Wonders why God would do this when Chald. Were more wicked. Point: “Righteous man will turn to Me even when things look bad and I will reward him by keeping him safe.”

4. Gentiles Subject to God’s Wrath – Romans 1:18-32

- 18: comprehensive term for all wrongdoing
- 19: 2 ways God revealed Himself: creation [1:20] and conscience [2:21]
- 20: point not to prove that God is but who; paradox: invisible things seen
- 21-22: had known God in the past, suppressed their knowledge = ignorant
- 23: man has built in desire to worship
- 24: He will not stop you if you go away from Him. It breaks His heart but because of His love for you He lets you go.

- 25: lit. the lie
- 26-27: clearest & strongest treatment of homosexuality; passion – always bad in NT
- 28: unbelief a deliberate and calculated act. “If God is not, then nothing is morally wrong.”
Fyodor Dostoevsky [1821-1881]
- 29-31: illustrating man’s depravity with a list of 20 sins; not every sin but a list of typical sins
 - Unrighteousness: generic for all wrong
 - Wickedness: generic all evil & harmful
 - Greed: desire for more & more
 - Evil: most generic for all things bad
 - Full of envy: resentment at fortune of others
 - Murder: killing someone else
 - Strife: contention, debate KJV
 - Deceit: lit. bait, for catching
 - Malice: bad + moral in Greek
 - Gossips: whisperers KJV
 - 30: slanderers: assassins of character
 - Haters of God
 - Insolent: overbearing, wantonly violent
 - Arrogant: lit. appearing from above [looking down]
 - Boastful: wanderer – like a snake oil salesman
 - Inventors of evil: new ways to satisfy greed
 - Disobedient to parents: unwilling to be persuaded
 - 31: w/o understanding: foolish in v. 21; discernment
 - Untrustworthy: breaks agreement or covenant
 - Unloving: sad world – should be natural like for parents or children
 - Unmerciful: ruthless
- 32: ordinance: legal term – what God has deemed as right
- Their downward journey was now complete

Lessons:

1. There is no distinction or differentiation in God's eyes – **ALL** are needing of salvation!
2. There is power in the Gospel of Christ! If we want that power in our lives, we must be obedient.
3. God is clearly seen even in nature; we must not ignore Him.
4. God doesn't sugarcoat sin – it is worthy of death [Romans 6:23]. Thankfully, we can have our sins forgiven!

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accompanying PowerPoint, no. 111, is available online

the first in a series of notes on the epistle to the Romans, chapter-by-chapter

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