

“Romans, Dispensationally Considered – Part 2

Introduction:

- ***You will remember where we began last time, with The Word, the Words and the Words of Truth, as written by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians in his first letter. He begins by referring to the prophet Isaiah, chapter 64 and verse 4, an amazing statement indeed:***

1 Corinthians 2:9-14

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- ***We saw here how it was the “spiritual words” that we need for our salvation and our lives and without those words we are most miserable without hope in the world as are all others, who cannot know “the things that are freely given to us of God”!***

Now we go off to Paul’s Letter to the Romans, Dispensationally Considered, to see more of what those things are that are freely given to us by Almighty God.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, ...

- ***Paul refers here at the beginning to the gospel which he calls by a number of descriptive names, including what we see here in verse 1, the gospel of God, but also the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of his son, or simply THE gospel, and others. And finally, he calls it his Gospel. In the Acts it is recorded that he called this “the gospel of the grace of God”. Amen. He keeps on revealing more and more***

about that until he reaches the very end of this letter where he adds, praise God:

Romans 16:24-27

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

- *The context for this gospel revealed to Paul is pointed to there in the first verses of the letter. There we see the man Paul, a Hebrew of Hebrew indeed and a leading Pharisee of his time, as all mankind, living under the condemnation of unrighteous sinners who are apart from the knowledge and glory of God and exalt not the holiness and righteousness of Almighty God but rather the depravity of their own hearts and minds. Saul was such a sinner indeed when the Lord intersected with him though he had lived and taught as a pharisee and indeed not just any pharisee, for as he tells the Jews gathered in Jerusalem at his first defense (Acts 22:1 and following).*

“I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.”

- *There are a number of reasons why he dwells so much on this, his testimony. One is that his authority as apostle was always being challenged. But another is the simple but essential fact that God’s work, what the Lord is doing, is essential for us to understand. If we do not and assume that the Lord is always engaged in exactly the same work we may miss “the rest of the story”. But missing that leads to confusion and ultimately to the rejection of the truth of God. These were his words on that day before a crowd of accusers and sinners:*
- *Those first words in Romans therefore set the stage so well for what follows, for it was God himself who made Saul his servant and called him as an apostle and sent him forth as the bearer of this wondrous good news of his grace: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an*

apostle, separated unto the gospel of God ...”. ***Though Paul was as religious as he could be, he was nevertheless a sinner in need of salvation.***

- ***So Paul was himself the subject of this saving power as we see revealed in 1 Timothy 1:***

1 Timothy 1:15-16

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

- ***So Paul was our forerunner or pattern in this matter of salvation by grace through faith alone as Almighty God intersects with our lives to accomplish his mighty and glorious purpose in our free and full salvation.***

Paul is our example today of how God was working then and it is the same today. But it was not always so. For the Lord God had changed his work and his objectives significantly once the cross work of our Lord Jesus had been accomplished and once Israel had rejected the offer of their promised Kingdom by their risen savior and Lord, even their Messiah. His words there in 1 Timothy, “that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering” and then these: “ ... for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” show the significance of that change in what the Lord was doing — if we would only receive it.

Back to Romans now:

- ***Verse 5 — “By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name ...”: Verses 2 - 4 are parenthetical (please change the second parenthesis from what the KJV has).***

So it was the ascended Christ Jesus who had called Paul by his grace and established him as apostle of the Gentiles, the nations, of this sin-cursed planet. Praise God. This letter therefore is authoritative indeed, not only for the Roman believers but for us as well.

- *What should not be ignored or discounted is what is written here for our understanding, for the word of God rightly divided teaches us so much if we would comprehend its full meaning. It is our only defense often against false teachers on every side as the apostle writes in 2 Timothy mentioning the names of two of them, these two that even dared to deny our blessed hope:*

[READ] 2 Timothy 2:14-19

14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

- *It is therefore critically important to understand dispensational distinctives when the scripture presents them. In our study of the Romans, Dispensationally Considered, we shall see many of those. And several are found here early in this marvelous letter.*
- *So what is this letter all about? First of all it is about the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. But there is much to that as he writes here. And the context of his use of this simple word is intended by the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of that gospel that as he writes here saved him and called him into this “apostleship for the Gentiles, the nations”. It is of course therefore this word of the living God and these very words of God that Paul has written here. For it is the gospel of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of his son, or simply THE gospel. And it is Paul’s Gospel and the Gospel of the Grace of God! Amen. For his is our example of salvation by grace through faith alone. Again, Amen.*
- *The next words here in Romans chapter one continue that theme of the profound and deep difference between the things of the flesh and those of the spirit.*

Paul here in these first verses reveals something new but something old had already been revealed, hadn't it? Let's read the verses again we looked at last time:

[READ] Romans 1:1-4

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

- ***In these first verses we have seen how Paul introduces the letter to its recipients but in a most amazing way indeed, by first writing so very much in just a few words about the real subject of his writing, his precious savior, the Lord Jesus. But who was this Jesus Christ that had made all the difference to the man Saul, now called Paul?***
 - ***Verse 2 — “(Which [better, “who” as verse 3 explains] he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)...”: From Genesis chapter 3 onwards, the very theme of the Old Testament had been exactly this, the Seed of the Woman, Gen. 3:15-16.***
 - ***Verse 3 — “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ...”: Now we see the two-fold division between the flesh and the spirit. Firstly according to the flesh, Christ was “made” of the “seed of David”. So much had already been revealed that was foundational to the gospel Paul preached. To begin with, it was all about God's son, who was the one scripture was all about, even from the beginning in Genesis. For it had been “promised before” that the Lord God would not leave mankind in a state of sin and rebellion and under his wrath with eternal death the inevitable end of it all. It was the Seed of the Woman that would make the difference. And believers from that time forward would believe on that Seed of the Woman and on that basis they were “saved”. Lord willing there will be more teaching on that subject next time or the following.***

- *Verse 4 — “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead ...”: But the revelation according to the flesh was not all there was, for he goes on now to the spirit!! The resurrection has made now all the difference.*
- *This contrast between flesh and spirit will be so important as we continue in the letter, Dispensationally Considered! And there is so much more here in these few words but we must go on today to see from the mountain tops of the revelation Paul gives here the whole scope of this letter.*

Our Outline Today:

- *Paul’s Focus on the Gospel is Dispensational — A Change Had Occurred*
- *Paul’s Focus on the Gospel is Dispensational — Romans One Reveals It*

I. Paul’s Focus on the Gospel is Dispensational — A Change Had Occurred:

- *How had the Lord God marked this change in how he was working? Paul answers that question in his writings to the Romans and the Galatians and elsewhere. The book of Acts also gives the history of that change.*
- *His testimony is key to our understanding in so many ways. Note the words “separated unto” in verse 1. To what might this refer, for there are two other places where his “separation” is revealed in the sacred word of God:*

[READ] Galatians 1:13-18

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

- ***This surely marks a significant change from what had gone on before during the Pentecostal period. And there is more, another separation:***

Acts 13:2-4

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

- ***So the Lord had raised up a new apostle for a new work, entirely separate from what he had been doing through the twelve. The latter had been sent primarily to the Jews as many scriptures show and it was to the Jews that they had gone preaching the gospel, in this case, it was the gospel they had been taught by the Lord Jesus in his earthly ministry, the Gospel of the Coming Kingdom. Some references on that would be chapters 10 and 11 regarding Peter and his vision and Acts 11:19 regarding them all. For they preached the word only to the Jews. The reason was that the plan of God was for the Gentiles to be saved through a redeemed Israel.***
- ***So there was something entirely new happening here. It was the same Lord Jesus who was being preached after his glorious resurrection had displayed his glory as God's promised son and the long awaited Seed of the Woman. But something new was now occurring. Let us consider what that was today. For as written in the letter to the Galatians, the Twelve had agreed with Paul that they would go to the Jews with "the gospel of the circumcision" while Paul would go to the Gentiles with "the gospel of the uncircumcision". They were clearly different as for the one the Law was still the center of teaching and life and the gospel itself reflected that. But Paul's teaching regarding the gospel was very different and explicitly set that Law aside:***

[READ] Galatians 2:1-5

1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Galatians 2:6-9

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me:

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

- *So we see a large change here, for the Twelve had been ministering under the terms given to them before the cross seeking the acceptance by the Jews of Christ Jesus as their Messiah. But for Paul the Law was a corruption of the gospel as verse 5 here and so many other verses in Acts 15 and elsewhere make clear. So there was an agreement for the Twelve had to put the commission given to them by the Lord on hold since the Lord God was changing the plan so greatly through Paul. That earlier commission was given as recorded in Matt. 28 (and Mark 16):*

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

- *But why would they have been willing to now change the plan so greatly, you might ask? Because they had been convinced by God to do so by signs and miracles and by Paul's testimony to them. The meeting recorded in Acts 15 and the Galatians account gives the details of that. If only the organized church down through the ages was also so willing.*

II. Paul's Focus on the Gospel is Dispensational — Romans One Reveals It:

- *So some very significant changes had occurred. What were some of them, we sincerely desire to know? Well, the next verses in the Romans provide the key to understanding that most important question.*
- *It is so important to read these next verses here since in them the apostle defines the content of this "good news" so well, for you will remember, these were the verses that captured Luther's heart & mind and the Lord God ultimately used the revelation here to bring about the Reformation in Germany and then throughout Europe and America. Of course the salvation of us all has been dependent on the truth of that Pauline gospel, hasn't it?*

Let's read these verses again:

[READ] Rom. 1:16-18

16 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.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

- *Note that it was now both the Jew and the Greek, not just the Jews. But also there is that most essential distinction regarding the righteousness of God. Previously, it was Moses Law that dominated the thinking of all necessarily. Paul taught clearly in the letter to the Galatians this:*

[READ] Galatians 3:7-13

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before *[this is a parallel statement to that one of Rom. 1:1]* the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

- *So we see here the same reference to Hab. 2:4: "... the just shall live by faith"! But Paul says much more here than he did in the opening words of the Romans.*
- *The true depth of meaning here is, may seem beyond our comprehension, beyond our understanding. But God the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us with that, isn't he? And as we consider Paul's letter to the Romans, Dispensationally Considered, that will be so often made clear to us, Lord willing.*
- *The focus in Luther's mind was here in Romans 1, you will recall. His focus was on the gospel that called Saul, a great sinner indeed, into the realm of God's abundant grace. And through that word of the gospel of grace that monk and university professor was also called. Praise God.*
 - **Verse 16** — "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.": ***BOTH the Jew and the Greek. It went to the Jews first through Paul — and then it went to the Gentiles.***
 - *The gospel of grace is the power of God unto salvation, not the Law.*

- ***Gentiles, yes, but only through Israel's "rising" — Is. 60:3. For the Gentiles were to be evangelized after Israel's elect calling during the Tribulation period:***

Isaiah 60:1-3

1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

- ***But now, under grace, it is through Israel's "fall" — Rom. 11: 11-12, that the Gentiles would be saved. And indeed this is true for Jews also today, since there is neither Jew nor Greek today! All Jews are as Gentiles in the Lord's sight today. This is well stated in Romans 11:***

Romans 11:11-13

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

- ***Back to Romans chapter one and the magnificent verse that changed Martin Luther's life so completely and so many others as well:***
- ***Verse 17 — "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.": The content of this gospel is most significant indeed... what does this reference mean in the context there in Habakkuk? Calvin writes that it "seems" that Paul got it all wrong when he quoted from Habakkuk in three places — in Romans, in Galatians, and in Hebrews. But then he concludes that he got it right after all! And he then writes many pages about how right he was.***

So we see here that it is the gospel that reveals the righteousness of God by faith today, and not the Law. And this is one of the most fundamental teachings of the Apostle Paul in this letter, in the Galatians, and elsewhere. It is not the Law therefore that teaches us about the righteousness of God. It is the gospel itself that so teaches us because the gospel teaches us about the righteousness of Christ as he became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God by faith. This is a fundamental teaching of the word of God rightly divided.

What was Habakkuk saying there? Just a hint here would be good since we do not have time today to look into it further. That prophecy in Habakkuk is about the events leading up to the crucifixion and also later during the Great Tribulation there will be world alignment worshipping satan's emissaries and the anti-christ and false prophet and beast will be exalted with their evil lies and unrighteousness promoted everywhere. On the other side only Christ with his perfect righteousness and his without blemish righteous life continued even into the cross events themselves. The righteous one lived also by faith as he became the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. It is that righteous life and work that has been imputed to us, praise God. That was likely Paul's intent as he refers to Hab. 2:4. Onward to the final verse for today:

- ***Verse 18 — “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ...”: This is a universal statement indeed about fallen man and his unwavering lawlessness and sin. Next time Lord willing we will look into this and the following verses further.***
- ***What therefore must we learn about this and about the truth of God, Dispensationally Considered?***
 - ***Christ came into this world as the Seed of the Woman and not of the man Adam. Through his perfect humanity he became our perfect sacrifice for sin and for the sin of the world.***
 - ***Christ was raised from the dead for our justification (Rom. 4:31).***

- *All of our salvation therefore is by grace through faith without reference at all to law and its required works.*
- *Apart from that completed work there is no salvation possible. Amen. Praise and thanks be to God for his perfect work through our Lord Jesus.*
- *And finally, there must be much more too, because this has nothing to do with the promises given to the nation of Israel which are national, earthly, and therefore “carnal”. For our promises are heavenly.*

There is so much even now still unrevealed that God has prepared for them that love him and are planned to be “freely given” to us by his rich grace. Amen.

Conclusion and Application:

Romans 11:11-36

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

12 Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which* are my flesh, and might save some of them.

- *We begin here next time, Lord Willing. Enjoy!*