

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Servant and Apostle"
Romans 1:1

Rom
1:16, 17
Luther
corrected

INTRODUCTION

1. Here is a book greatly used of God. Luther was transformed by reading the first chapter. Wesley was moved as it was read in a prayer meeting at Aldersgate. Chrysostom had it read to him twice a week. Coleridge said Romans is "the most profound writing that exists."

2. Romans was written on Paul's third missionary journey from Corinth (Acts 20:2, 3; Rom. 15:25-27). Probable date about 56-58 A.D. when Augustus was emperor.

3. Their key verses for the book are Romans 1:16, 17. The theme is "The JUST shall live by faith (1:17). This is to be compared with Galatians which focus on SHALL LIVE (3:11) while Hebrews underscores FAITH (10:38).

4. An overview of the epistle centers around the doctrine of righteousness: 1. Righteousness registered (1:1-17). Righteousness required (1:18-3:20). 3. Righteousness received (3:21-5:21). 4. Righteousness realized (6:1-8:39). 5. Righteousness rejected (9:1-11:36). 6. Righteousness reproduced (12:1-15:13). 7. Righteousness represented (15:14-16:27).

5. The author Paul is described in a variety of ways. Note them:

1. PAUL - his name

Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29). It is probable that at the time of his circumcision, his father gave him the name Saul, the only Jewish king descended from Benjamin (cf. Phil. 3:5). As a Roman citizen, he was probably given the name Paul ("little"). It is also probable that after his work among the Gentiles was started, he went only by the Roman name Paul (Acts 13:9).

2. PAUL - his servanthood

Literally this means Paul was a "bond-slave" and that personally "of Jesus Christ." It is the most honorable of all titles. This relates to an O.T. experience in which a slave could be bound forever to his master (cf. Ex. 21:1-6). For Paul, he affirmed:

I love, I love my Master
I will not go out free
For He is my Redeemer
He paid the price for me

2 Cor 11:2 - Paul
to present bride to Christ

Mark 10:
43, 44

*I would not leave His service
It is so sweet and blest
And in the weariest moments
He gives the truest rest.*

3. PAUL - his servanthood

The verbal "called" is like a past passive participle implying that Jesus Christ is the Agent. It was not a self-made matter; rather, God had selected and equipped him. Paul was one who could do nothing but be an apostle (cf. Jer. 23:16, 21). Paul received the call on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:15; 26:17), hence it coincided with his conversion. It was confirmed in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 9:28; 22:17-21). It was later confirmed by the church (Acts 13:2, 3). His apostleship was a great honor to him (1 Cor. 15:9).

4. PAUL - his separateness

Here is a magnificent truth. Paul was "set apart" for a specific work. That's what separation is; not merely separating from something but to something. Here it is to the Gospel of God. Paul wrote this to the Galatians (1:15, 16). Jeremiah said the same (1:5). Paul's commitment was to the Gospel, i.e. God's good news. This is what the world needs (1 Cor. 15:1-5). CONCLUSION Here is God's man with God's message to God's people (cf. Haggai 1:13). Oh, that we would heed the message of divine grace still proclaimed today. Do you?

*Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?*

*I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face;
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.*