

Romans 1:1-7

Introduction

One of the greatest needs of the church today is the recovery of sound biblical preaching. We need preaching that faithfully explains and applies the text, that courageously confronts sin, and boldly proclaims the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. How do we practice sound biblical preaching in the local church?

We practice, the systematic, expository proclamation of God Word that endeavors to preach and teach the whole counsel of God.

2 Tim 4:1-2 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

This directive was not meant only for Timothy. It is the duty of every Christian minister and church to heed this admonition.

Martyn Lloyd Jones preached through Romans over a period of thirteen years (1955-1968) in 366 sermons.

There is a great benefit to savoring each individual verse or even phrase within Paul's magisterial letter, but we must also reckon with the reality that Romans would have probably been heard in one sitting by the church at Rome.

Throughout the series, we want to have a sense of the whole of the book, and with each particular verse or passage, we want to keep the big picture in view.

Paul's epistle to the Romans is one of the best-known books in the Bible.

Throughout church history this letter has influenced many well known Christians.

Augustine (354-430) says he was converted by reading Romans.

Martin Luther's (1483-1546) reflections on **Rom 1:17**, caused him to break with the common understanding of salvation promoted by the church, and eventually embrace the gospel of free justification by faith alone. **John Calvin (1509-1564)** noted that this one epistle was the key to unlocking the treasures of Scripture.

Christians who willingly ignore this epistle, do so to the impoverishment and detriment of their faith.

Each and every generation must take possession of the truth. We cannot assume that if our fore-fathers embraced these truths that we will automatically do so also.

Summary

In Romans, Paul gives a sweeping treatment of the nature of the Gospel and the power of God unto salvation: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile, with the pastoral aim to bring about the obedience of faith among his recipients.

1. Basic Background

The apostle Paul wrote this epistle, as the opening statement clearly indicates vs. 1, somewhere between **AD 55 and 58**. **He probably wrote the letter from Corinth** Paul probably had a number of reasons for writing, which included the desire to address the Jewish-Gentile tensions and to apply the gospel in its fullest sense to the church at Rome.

2. Key Themes

In the book of Romans, Paul gives us a panoramic view of the breadth, height, and depth of the gospel. At the same time Paul addresses specific subjects such as general and special revelation, the universal sinfulness of all humanity, justification by faith alone, union with Christ, sanctification, freedom from the law, adoption, prayer, the order of salvation, suffering, election, preaching, and the Christian life in its various aspects and relationships inside and outside the church.

3. Redemptive-Historical Context

Many who come to the New Testament assume that the last days immediately anticipate the last slice of history before the return of Christ and that the new heavens and earth do not begin until after Christ returns.

By contrast, when New Testament authors talk about the last days and the in-breaking of the new creation, they mean that the last days begin with the first advent of Christ in his incarnation and that he inaugurates the new creation through the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (**Acts 2:22-35; 1 Cor. 15:45**).

The structure of redemptive history helps us understand both the big picture of Paul's letters and also key passages his writings.

When Paul discusses many present redemptive realities, we can genuinely say that the new creation is here and that the last days have dawned BUT we do not want to say that the present evil age in which we currently live has been totally eliminated.

The present age will not pass away until Christ's return.

Hence, when references appear to this present evil age, the age to come, the inaugurated new creation, or the already-not-yet, we need to be familiar with the structure of redemptive history.

4. Eager Anticipation

Whilst all of Scripture is a mine with many precious gems and stones, the particular shaft that we call Romans is exceptionally adorned.

May we come to Paul's famous letter and fall in love with Christ and be thankful for the life-changing message of His gospel.

Like Augustine, let us "take it up and hear!"