

ROMANS 55 – PAUL’S PRIESTLY SERVICE

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ROMANS 15:14-21

PROLOGUE: ONGOING THEME OF ROMANS

- THE DICHOTOMY OF JEW AND GENTILE HAS BEEN PAUL’S ONGOING THEME THROUGHOUT THE EPISTLE HIGHLIGHTING BOTH THEIR SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES
 - SIMILARITIES
 - BOTH ARE LOST: ONE BY THE LAW AND THE OTHER WITHOUT THE LAW
 - BOTH CAN BE SAVED. SALVATION IS THROUGH CHRIST ALONE APART FROM WORKS OF THE MORAL LAW
 - DIFFERENCES
 - FOR SEVERAL MILLENNIUM GOD HAD SET THE GENTILES ASIDE AND WORKED THROUGH THE JEWS
 - FOR SEVERAL MILLENNIUM GOD HAS SET THE JEWS ASIDE AND WORKED THROUGH THE GENTILES

PROLOGUE: JESUS DID GO TO THE GENTILES

- JESUS FREQUENTLY WENT TO THE GENTILES EVEN THOUGH HIS **FIRST** PRIORITY WAS TO THE LOST SHEEP OF ISRAEL; PAUL FOLLOWED THIS SAME EMPHASIS VISITING SYNAGOGUES BEFORE GOING TO THE GENTILES IN EVERY CITY HE VISITED
 - HE OFTEN PERFORMED HIS MIRACLES ON THE JEWS WHO COULD REFERENCE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC MIRACLES; THIS DID NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO SAVING FAITH (NINE LEPERS)
 - JESUS TESTED GENTILES TEACHING THEM THAT FAITH IN HIM AS GOD IS WHAT ANSWERED THEIR REQUESTS FOR MERCY AND NOT SIMPLY MIRACLES FOR MIRACLES SAKE
 - GENTILES MORE OFTEN RESPONDED IN FAITH WHILE JEWS HAD THE EXPECTATION THAT GOD WAS SUPPOSED TO DO FOR THEM SINCE THEY WERE CHOSEN PEOPLE; UNREPENTANT (MAT 23:7-9)

PROLOGUE: CHRIST THE LIGHT TO THE GENTILES

- CHRIST HAD A DUAL MINISTRY AS PAUL STATED
 - GOD SWORE BY TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS TO FULFILL HIS OATHS TO ABRAM (HE 6:13-20)
 - FIRST WAS HIMSELF SINCE HE COULD NOT LIE (JK 1:13, 18-19)
 - SECOND WAS CHRIST, GOD, WHO IS THE VERY IMAGE OF GOD AND SECURED OUR SALVATION (JO 14B:11)
 - CHRIST ALSO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO ENCOUNTER GENTILES SHOWING HIS APOSTLES THAT SALVATION WAS NOT JUST FOR THE JEWS BUT FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE, FULFILLING SCRIPTURE
 - PAUL SHOWS VIA ISAIAH THAT SALVATION CAME THROUGH THE JEWS AS JESUS WAS THE ROOT OF JESSE, PRECEDED DAVID, AND WILL ALSO RULE OVER THE GENTILES AS THE JEWS (PS 117, 9-10)
 - AS THE SAMARITAN STATED, "WE KNOW THAT THIS IS INDEED THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD" (JO 4:42)

CONVINCED BY PROOF

- PAUL BEGINS THIS SECTION WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HE IS CONVINCED BY THE EVIDENCE THAT THE ROMANS TO WHOM HE IS WRITING ARE SAVED IN CHRIST; TRUE GOSPEL
 - REMEMBER, PAUL IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH AT ROME AS THE NEW CENTER OF THE GOSPEL AS THE JERUSALEM CHURCH WILL NOT LONG SURVIVE THE JEWISH ONSLAUGHT
 - IN A.D. 70 TITUS BASICALLY DESTROYED JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE, USING THE BOOTY TO BUILD THE COLOSSEUM PROVING THE WISDOM OF HIS ACTIONS THOUGH HE WAS ALREADY EXECUTED
 - PAUL IS NOT SIMPLY BUTTERING THE ROMANS UP FOR HIS PURPOSES, HE IS CONVINCED BY ALL HE HAS HEARD THAT THE ROMANS HAD RECEIVED THE TRUE GOSPEL AND THUS WERE TRULY SAVED
 - MANY FALSE GOSPELS WERE DRIFTING ABOUT THE VARIOUS REGIONS (CORINTH'S CHURCH)

FULL OF GOODNESS

- CHRIST STATED GOOD OR GOODNESS COMES ONLY FROM GOD; THUS, FOR PAUL TO STATE THAT THEY WERE FULL OF GOODNESS MEANS THEY HAD THE NEW NATURE; I.E., SAVED (PH 10:18)
 - THIS IS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE LOST, ALL WHO DIE WITHOUT THE NEW NATURE, AS THEY ARE FULL OF DARKNESS; I.E., UNGODLINESS (ἀσέβεια) (MT 6:2-25; RD 1:18)
 - GOODNESS (ἀγαθωσύνη agathōsynē) COMPOSED OF TWO GK WORDS: ἀγαθὸν MEANS GOOD OR GOODNESS AND οὐνὴν WHICH MEANS WITH OR JOINED TO; HENCE, THE ROMANS WERE JOINED TO GOODNESS AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR TESTIMONIES WHICH PRECEDED THEM
 - THEIR UNHERALDED TESTIMONIES CONVINCED PAUL THEY HAD RECEIVED THE CORRECT GOSPEL

BEYOND GOODNESS

- ANOTHER REASON PAUL WAS CONVINCED THEY HAD THE GOOD DOCTRINE OF CHRIST WAS AN ATTRIBUTE OF THE GOSPEL MISSING FROM CHURCHES LIKE CORINTH
 - THESE CHRISTIANS WERE SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS SO MANY COULD COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND BE SAVED; GROWTH
 - THEY WERE ALSO INSTRUCTING EACH OTHER IN THE GOSPEL; BUILDING AND DEVELOPING EACH OTHER IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FAITH; UNITY
 - CHRIST PRAYED HIS WORDS WOULD SAVE OTHERS AND HIS LAST WORDS TO THE APOSTLES WERE TO MAKE DISCIPLES EVERYWHERE (MT 28:18-20; LD 17:30-24)
 - THE ROMANS WERE OBEYING CHRIST REFLECTING THE EFFECTS OF THE TRUE GOSPEL

WHY DID PAUL WRITE TO THEM?

- IF THE ROMANS HAD THE CORRECT GOSPEL AND WERE SPREADING THIS KNOWLEDGE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, WHY DID PAUL WRITE TO THEM?
 - AS OF YET THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL CANON OF SCRIPTURE AND PAUL WAS UNSURE OF THE SOURCE OF THEIR GOSPEL; I.E., WHAT DID IT INCLUDE OR WHAT DID IT NOT INCLUDE?
 - AS AN APOSTLE AND AN ELDER PAUL WAS COMPELLED TO WRITE THEM, INSTRUCTING THEM IN THE GOSPEL HE RECEIVED DIRECTLY FROM CHRIST (2CO 1:21-4; GA 1:11-17)
 - PAUL WROTE THEM TO EXPAND ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING BASED ON HIS KNOWLEDGE BOTH FROM CHRIST BUT ALSO FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH THEY COULD NOT RECEIVE FROM GENTILES

WHAT IS A MINISTER?

- PAUL JUSTIFIES HIS WRITING TO THE ROMANS BECAUSE HE IS A MINISTER; WHAT IS A MINISTER?
 - MINISTER (leitourgos) IS A COMPOUND GREEK WORD; leitō MEANS PEOPLE AND ourgos MEANS WORK; THUS, A MINISTER IS ONE WHO WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE
 - NOT AS A POLITICIAN OR A FALSE TEACHER WHO PRIMARILY WORKS FOR PERSONAL GAIN WHILE CLAIMING TO WORK FOR OTHERS (2TH 2:15-18; 2CO 8:13, 18)
 - PAUL WORKED FOR OTHERS WITHOUT GAIN FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (1CO 9)
 - THUS, PAUL STATES HE IS A MINISTER OF CHRIST TO THEM INSTRUCTING THEM IN THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST (2TH 2:12)

PRIESTLY SERVICE OF CHRIST

- PAUL DESCRIBES HIS DUTY TO THE ROMANS AS A PRIESTLY FUNCTION GIVEN HIM BY CHRIST
 - CHRIST IS THE HIGH PRIEST, BUT EVERY HIGH PRIEST HAD PRIESTS TO HELP WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY FUNCTIONS OF OFFERINGS (EX 28:1, HE 4:14-16)
 - PAUL’S OFFERINGS ARE NOT ONLY HIMSELF BUT ALSO THOSE TO WHOM HE MINISTERS, I.E., THE GENTILES WHO HEAR AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION; LIKE CHRIST (JO 17:17-21)
 - CHRIST PRAYED THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE TO BE MADE HOLY BY HIS WORD
 - PAUL WRITES THAT THE SPIRIT SANCTIFIES, MAKES HOLY, HIS SACRIFICE OF THE GENTILES
 - PAUL DOES NOT CLAIM CREDIT, GLORY IN SELF, BUT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT SALVATION AND GROWTH IS FROM THE SPIRIT WORKING THROUGH HIM (CHARISMA) (1CO 3:16)

PRIESTLY DIFFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT (HE 10:1-4)

- PRIESTS CAME ONLY FROM AARON
- PRIESTS PRIMARILY PRESENTED BLOOD SACRIFICES
- PRIESTS RESTRICTED FROM THE HOLY AND MOST HOLY PLACE; HIGH PRIEST ONLY
- FAILED PRIESTHOOD OF THE FLESH

NEW TESTAMENT (HE 10:11-20)

- PRIESTS COME FROM CHRIST; ALL SAVED
- PRIESTS PRESENT THEMSELVES AND THOSE UNDER THEIR MINISTRY AS SACRIFICES
- ALL SAVED ENTER HOLY PLACE BY PRAYER AND THE WORD BY CHRIST’S BLOOD
- CHRIST’S PRIESTHOOD NEVER ENDS

PAUL REFERS BACK TO INDIVIDUAL SACRIFICE

- PAUL’S USE OF THIS OLD TESTAMENT ANALOGY OF PRIESTLY OFFERINGS HARKENS BACK TO HIS OPENING TO THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE (RO 12:1-2)
 - EACH BELIEVER IS A SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE SON AS EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD WHICH IS OUR WORSHIP IN ACTION (EP 5:23-32)
 - IT IS THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD WHICH BINDS EVERYONE TOGETHER (σύν) INTO ONENESS WITH CHRIST AND THE FATHER; BODY OF CHRIST (RO 12:4-5, EP 4:6-7, 15-16)
 - THUS THE CHURCH IS AN EXTENSION OF THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE (συναγωγή); TO LEAD OR MEET TOGETHER TO DEVELOP UNITY IN UNDERSTANDING BASED ON STUDYING OF THE WORD; HOWEVER UNITY BECAME BASED ON SELF-WORKS WHICH REJECTED CHRIST’S TRUTHS (EX 4:13-26)

PAUL’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHARISMA

- PAUL GIVES US THE MOST SUCCINCT DEFINITION OF CHARISMA WITHOUT MENTIONING THE WORD
 - PAUL’S PRIDE IN HIS WORK IS NOT BECAUSE OF HIS EFFORTS BUT THE WORK OF CHRIST VIA THE SPIRIT THROUGH HIM SO THAT ALL GLORY BELONGS TO CHRIST WHICH IS SHARED WITH PAUL
 - PAUL’S GOSPEL IS AUTHENTICATED WITH SIGNS AND WONDERS INHERENT IN THEIR DEFINITIONS
 - SIGNS (σημείων *semeion*) – THESE MANIFESTATIONS AUTHENTICATED BOTH THE MESSENGER AND THE MESSAGE; GOSPEL (εὐαγγελίου) LITERALLY MEANS: GOOD (εὖ) MESSAGE (αγγελίου)
 - WONDERS (τέρατα *terata*) – REFERS TO THOSE MANIFESTATIONS THAT DISRUPT THE LAWS OF NATURE DOUBLY REINFORCING THE SIGNS AND THUS THE MESSENGER AND MESSAGE



PAUL’S SERVICE TO THE GOSPEL

- PAUL WAS ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC CHURCH PLANTERS OF HIS DAY
- PAUL IS GIVING THE ROMANS HIS CREDENTIALS
- BY GIVING THEM HIS GOSPEL HE IS TYING ALL HIS WORKS INTO ONE CHURCH
- NOT ALL THESE CHURCHES HAD THE STABILITY OF ROME

PAUL’S LOVE OF HONOR

- THIS IS NOT THE HONOR OF PEOPLE FOR ALL SUCH HONOR ONLY PRODUCES KLEOS, NOISE THAT IS ITS OWN REWARD BUT NOT FROM GOD (MT 6:1-5; 1CO 13:1)
 - PAUL’S HONOR, τιμή, IS THE MORAL CODE HE INHERITED FROM CHRIST SENT BY THE FATHER TO GIVE THE GOSPEL TO THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK IT (JO 5:4-11; PH 3:6-11)
 - ENGLISH WORD AMBITION IS THE GREEK WORD (φιλοτιμῶμαι *philotimeomai*) WHICH MEANS THE LOVE (φίλο) OF HONOR (τιμῶμαι) BUT NOT FROM SELF BUT FROM ANOTHER (CHRIST) (ομαι)
 - PAUL IS NOT BRAGGING ABOUT THE SELF AMBITION WHICH COMES FROM SELF FOR GAIN
 - PAUL’S HONOR COMES FROM CHRIST WHO WILL SAY TO HIM, “WELL DONE FAITHFUL SLAVE” (LK 19:12-27)

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO STRANGERS

- PAUL’S AMBITION IS TO GO WHERE NO ONE HAS RECEIVED THE GOSPEL
 - POSSIBLY THIS EXPLAINS WHY HE HAS YET TO VISIT ROME, THEY OBVIOUSLY HAVE THE GOSPEL, HIS LETTER IS SIMPLY TO EXPAND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUE GOSPEL POINTING THEM TO HOW GOD WORKED THROUGH THE JEWS FOR THEIR SALVATION
 - PAUL DOES NOT SEEK TO BUILD ON THE WORK OF OTHERS; AGAIN, A BLOW AGAINST SELFISH AMBITION
 - PAUL IS COMPELLED TO TAKE HIS MESSAGE WHERE OTHERS HAVE NOT VENTURED IN FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE (OLD TESTAMENT) (IS 53:1-3)
 - HE MENTIONS THIS TO EXPLAIN WHY HE HAS NOT VISITED ROME, MAYBE TO PREVENT SOME SLIGHT

PAUL’S UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE

- PAUL’S DESIRE TO MAKE THE ROMAN CHURCH THE NEW CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY WORKED BUT WITH UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES BECAUSE SATAN...
 - PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES THE GOOD FAITH OF THE ROMAN CHURCH AND ITS MISSION TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO OTHERS AND TO GROW ITS MEMBERS
 - PETER HAD NOT THE SAME UNDERSTANDING OF DOCTRINE PAUL POSSESSED, HIS OWN WORDS, NOR IS THERE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE PETER VISITED ROME (BABYLON) (1PE 5:13-14; 2PE 3:14-18)
 - THIS MAKES PAUL THE FATHER OF WHAT WOULD LATER BECOME ROMAN CATHOLICISM BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENCE OF FALSE TEACHERS WHO CREEPT IN CAUSING DIVISION AND LATER FALSE DOCTRINES (EPHESUS THEN LAODICEA CHURCHES AS EXAMPLES) (RE 3:1-7, 3:14-22)

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WHAT IS YOUR OFFERING TO CHRIST?

- IN TWO DIFFERENT PARABLES IT APPEARS THAT CHRIST IS SAYING THAT EACH BELIEVER IS GIVEN A MISSION IN LIFE ONCE SAVED, TO BRING OTHERS TO CHRIST
 - PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (35 KILOS) – SIGNIFICANT SUM GIVEN TO THREE SLAVES TO INVEST DEMONSTRATING THEIR FAITHFULNESS TO THEIR LORD; TALENT REPRESENTS ONE’S SOUL (MT 25:14-30)
 - PARABLE OF THE MINAS (1/60 OF A TALENT) – PALTRY SUMS GIVEN TO THREE SLAVES TO USE DEMONSTRATING THEIR FAITHFULNESS TO THEIR LORD; MINAS REPRESENTS ONE’S WORK (LK 19:11-27)
 - NO ONE SEES WHERE YOU ARE INVESTING YOUR SOUL, EXCEPT CHRIST; HOWEVER, EVERYONE SEES HOW YOU ARE INVESTING IN OTHERS WITH THE GOSPEL (RD 4:13-17, JA 2:18-26)
 - WHAT IS YOUR OFFERING TO CHRIST? IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BELIEVE IN GOD; DEMONS BELIEVE (1CO 3:11-15, JA 2:19)