

The Book of Romans

(in outline form)

(Revised Edition)

Roy E. Gingrich

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INTRODUCTION BY DR. ADRIAN ROGERS

It is with joy and gratefulness that I write this Introduction to Roy Gingrich's *Outline Commentary on the Bible book of Romans*.

The book of *Romans* itself has been called the Constitution of Christianity. Indeed, I have often said that if I had to be shipwrecked on an island with only one book, it, of course, would be the Bible; and if I could choose only one of the sixty-six various **books** that make up the Bible, that one book would be without doubt the book of Romans.

Dr. Gingrich is a scholar, but he is not an armchair theologian. He puts warm and sympathetic hands on deep and doctrinal truth. God has given to him the ability to understand the Word of God and to outline it and apply it in a way that others can quickly assimilate and effectively use.

Dr. Roy Gingrich's reputation as a Bible scholar spans a number of years. He has not come lately to the scene. His scholarship and character have stood the test.

Dr. Gingrich is a veteran pastor, having pastored for nearly one-half century. He has taught with distinction the Bible at Crichton College and has written 100 commentaries on Bible books and Bible related subjects. God has blessed and anointed his ministry as a Bible conference speaker through the years.

Pastors will benefit from this book in their sermon preparation and devotional study. Lay teachers will find invaluable help, and every Christian who wants to go deeper into the marvelous grace of God will be enriched through this study.

Read it and be blessed.

Dr. Adrian Rogers, Pastor

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INTRODUCTION BY DR. JAMES B. CRICHTON

Perhaps no more suitable introduction could be written to *The Epistle to the Romans* than William Tyndale's prologue to this epistle which appears in the A.D. 1534 edition of his English 'New Testament— "Forasmuch as this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament and most pure Evangelion (that is to say, glad tidings) and also a light and a way into the whole Scripture, I think it meet that every Christian man not only know it by rote without the book but also exercise himself therein evermore continually, as with the daily bread of the soul. No man can verily read it too oft or study it too well, for the more it is studied the easier it is, the more it is chewed the pleasanter it is and the more groundly [grindingly] it is searched the more precious things are found in it, so great treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein."

No book of the Bible has exercised a more profound influence on the theology of the church than has *The Epistle to the Romans*. Chrysostom had it read to him two times each week. Martin Luther speaks of it as "The chief book of the New Testament." Melancthon, in order to become more thoroughly acquainted with it, copied it twice with his own hand. Many other great scholars have highly valued the book.

Three supremely important qualities characterize a good commentary: exegetical integrity, doctrinal consistency, and personal application. This commentary by Mr. Roy Gingrich possesses these three qualities.

Mr. Gingrich has been careful and faithful in the exegesis of the text. His aim has been, first of all, to explain precisely what the Bible means in any given passage. Furthermore, he has faced the problems that arise in correlating one passage with another. And, finally, he has applied, as every true preacher ought to apply, the truth of God in the Bible to our consciences.

We covet for this commentary a wide ministry. May the study of *The Epistle to the Romans* and of this commentary enable you, dear reader, to experience the truth of Richard of Chichester's famous prayer, that is, ...

"To know Jesus Christ more clearly, to love Him more dearly, and to follow Him more nearly."

James B. Crichton, B.A., Th.M., Th. D.

President, Mid-South Bible College

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(The above Introduction is taken from the author's 1981 edition of his commentary on *Romans* and is reused by permission of Mrs. Margaret Crichton)

PREFACE

God will bless and assist any gospel minister who prayerfully attempts teaching the great and deep doctrines of *condemnation, justification, sanctification, glorification, and election* outlined in The Epistle to the Romans. Whenever and wherever these great and deep doctrines are faithfully taught and faithfully received, they always produce great and deep Christians.

The author of this book has experienced unusual assistance from God as he has taught *The Epistle to the Romans* at Mid-South Bible College (now Crichton College) and in local churches. The results of this teaching, as seen in the lives of the auditors, have been very encouraging.

The author expresses his thanks to Miss Thelma Bowers for her diligent and skillful work of typing and preparing the manuscript for this book. Her labor is of love, done unto the Lord. Thanks is also extended to Mr. Neal Johnson for his preparation of the cover design. Others have helped in this book's publication. Thanks!

This commentary in outline form is presented with the prayer and hope that it may be of some value in helping Christians to a better understanding and appreciation of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

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(The above Introduction and Preface were taken from the 1993 edition of this book)

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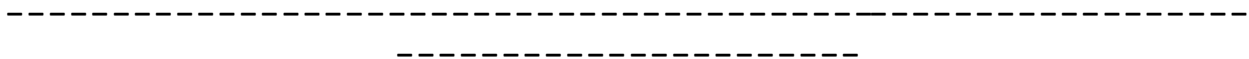
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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK—The Apostle Paul

A. HIS IMPORTANCE

He was an apostle, the apostle to the Gentiles, the greatest of the apostles, and the author of thirteen of the twenty one New Testament epistles. No man other than Jesus Christ has had greater influence upon the course of this world than that of Paul of Tarsus.

B. HIS LIFE'S CHRONOLOGY

1. *His birth* ?
2. *His witness to the stoning of Stephen* A.D. 35?
3. *His conversion* A.D. 36?
4. *His sojourn in Arabia and Damascus* A.D. 36–39
5. *His stay in Tarsus* A.D. 39–44
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7. *His first missionary journey* A.D. 45–48
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13. **His first Roman imprisonment** A.D. 61–63
14. **His years of release from prison** A.D. 63–65
15. **His second Roman imprisonment** A.D. 65–67
16. **His death** A.D. 67

II. THE ADDRESSEES OF THE BOOK—The saints in Rome

A. **THE CITY OF ROME**

1. **Its importance**

Rome, with more than two million inhabitants, was the largest and the most important city in the world. It was the capital city of the mighty Roman empire. All roads led to Rome.

2. **Its inhabitants**

Approximately half the population were slaves. The vast majority of the free citizens despised physical labor, lived on public and private charity, and loved nothing more than the sensual enjoyment of the bloody gladiatorial shows.

In the city were elements from many nationalities. The Emperor Claudius had expelled all Jews from Rome during his reign but large numbers had returned after the ascension of Nero. There were at least seven Jewish synagogues in Rome at the time *Romans* was written.

3. **Its religious condition**

The following statements were true concerning Rome and the whole of the Roman empire:

The Greek philosophers of the 5th Century B.C. had discredited the native polytheism of the peoples of the Mediterranean and the Near Eastern worlds and had given these peoples only dry as-shucks pagan philosophy as a replacement for their former practice of polytheism. This left an unfulfilled religious and moral hunger in these peoples' hearts which they were trying to fill by embracing imported Oriental religions and by embracing the Jewish religion, Judaism, a legal religion in the Roman empire. Many of these Gentiles had become Jews through circumcision (these were called "proselytes of righteousness"); others of the Gentiles attended the Jewish synagogues and were favorable toward Judaism but had not become circumcised (these were called "God-fearers" or "proselytes of the gate"). These Gentile proselytes, who were found in large numbers throughout the Roman empire, proved themselves to be fertile ground for the gospel message of Christianity.

B. **THE CHURCH IN ROME**

1. **Its origin**

We do not know by *whom* the church was founded. It is certain that it was not founded by the Apostle Peter as is claimed by the Roman Catholic Church. It probably was founded by some of Paul's converts who had moved to Rome from other parts of the Roman empire. Secular history and the Bible reveal that large numbers of citizens moved about freely within the bounds of the empire. We do not know *when* the church was founded. It must have been founded long before *Romans* was written for certain statements in *Romans* indicate that the church at Rome was established and well taught at that time.

2. **Its membership**

From the contents of the letter it is clear that the church was made up of both Jewish and Gentile converts. The Gentile members probably were the most numerous.

Probably many of the Gentile members were formerly Jewish proselytes and so were, like the Jewish members, well acquainted with Moses' law.

3. **Its fame**

Because of its strong and established faith and because of its location in the hub city of the Roman empire, this church was well known throughout the Roman world.

4. **Its interest to Paul**

Paul was the apostle of this church, he knew of its fame, he knew many of its members (chapter 16), and he yearned to visit it, but he had been providentially hindered from doing so.

III. **THE PLACE AND THE DATE OF THE WRITING OF THE BOOK—It was written from Corinth, in the Spring of A.D. 58**

The epistle was written in the Spring of A. D. 58, during Paul's three months' stay in Corinth (Acts 20:3), at the close of Paul's third missionary journey (A.D. 54–58). The letter was penned as Paul prepared to leave Greece bearing a great Gentile love offering to the poverty-stricken saints of the Jewish mother church in Jerusalem, 15:25–28.

IV. **THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE BOOK**

A. **IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A DOCTRINAL BOOK**—The new Testament has *five historical books* (Matthew through Acts), *twenty one doctrinal books* (Romans through Jude), and *one prophetic book* (Revelation)

B. **IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A PAULINE EPISTLE**—The New Testament has thirteen Pauline epistles and eight Non-Pauline epistles (counting Hebrews).

C. **IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL EPISTLE**—Paul wrote *two eschatological epistles* (I Thessalonians and II Thessalonians), *four soteriological epistles* (Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians,

and Galatians). *four Christological epistles* (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon), and *three ecclesiastical epistles* (I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus).

D. IT IS CLASSIFIED AS A CHURCH EPISTLE—Paul wrote *nine church epistles* (Romans through II Thesalonians) and *four personal epistles* (I Timothy through Philemon).

V. THE OCCASION FOR THE WRITING OF THE BOOK—The apparent soon-coming realization of Paul's long-cherished plan to visit Rome.

The occasion for writing did not come from any internal condition or problem within the church but rather arose from the providential unfolding and realization of Paul's long cherished plans. Paul had for a long time planned to visit Rome but had been providentially hindered from doing so, Acts 19:21; 23:11; Romans 15:22, 23. But now he has completed his missionary labors in the eastern Roman provinces and he feels free to carry the gospel to the western Roman provinces, even to Spain, the farthest province in the West, 15:19–28. When he hears that Phoebe plans to visit Rome, he decides to write the Roman church to inform them that after he visits Jerusalem he plans to visit the Roman church as he makes his way westward to Spain. Phoebe can carry Paul's letter with her when she leaves Cenchrea (a seaport for Corinth) for Rome.

VI. THE REASONS FOR THE WRITING OF THE BOOK

A. THE PERSONAL REASONS

1. To explain his absence (1:13; 15:19–22)

The Roman largely-Gentile church was likely asking the question "Why hasn't the apostle to the Gentiles visited us?"

2. To request prayer (15:31)

a. For deliverance from the evil plots of unbelieving Jews of Judea (15:31)

Paul knew what awaited him in Jerusalem.

b. For acceptance of the great Gentile love offering by the Jewish Christian church in Jerusalem (15:25–28, 31)

Paul, bearing this offering, left for Jerusalem shortly after he had penned his letter to the Romans.

B. THE DOCTRINAL REASONS

1. To correct the heresy of legalism

a. The teaching of legalism

Legalism teaches salvation by *works* (that man can *merit* salvation by law-keeping). Legalists use a variety of laws as their standard: *the law of conscience, the law of Moses, the golden rule, the Sermon on the Mount, and the law of doing the best you can.*

Some legalists teach that salvation is attained *by faith plus works*. In Paul's day, many legalists taught salvation *by faith plus circumcision and the keeping of Moses' law*. Today, many legalists teach salvation *by faith plus baptism and the keeping of the Ten Commandments*.

b. The perennial presence of legalism

From the days of Adam, men have devised many schemes of salvation-by-works. These human inventions have one thing in common: *Salvation is not received as a gift but is earned by law-keeping.*

c. The refutation of legalism in the book of Romans

Paul answers this heresy in his section on justification, 3:21–5:21.

2. To correct the heresy of antinomianism (license)

a. The teaching of antinomianism

Antinomianism teaches that a Christian is free from *all* law, that he is free to do as he pleases.

The truth is—the Christian is free from the law of sin and death, Rom. 8:2, that he might become obedient to the law of the Spirit, 8:2.

b. The presence today of antinomianism

Many today abuse the doctrine of eternal security, making it teach that since the Christian is eternally secure, he can do as he pleases (that he can continue in sin).

c. The refutation of antinomianism in the book of Romans

Paul answers antinomianism in his section on sanctification, 6:1–8:17.

Note—Ephesians 2:8–10 answers both *legalism* and *antinomianism*: (1) *We are saved by faith alone*, Ephesians 2:8, 9; (2) *the faith which saves is never alone*, Ephesians 2:10.

C. THE DISPENSATIONAL REASONS

To answer the following Jewish questions:

1. **Has the apostle Paul no concern for Israel?**—Paul's answer is given in 9:1–5.
2. **Why has Israel as a nation been set aside?**—Paul's answer is given in 9:6–10:21.
3. **Is the rejection of Israel complete (total)?**—Paul's answer is given in 11:1–10.
4. **Is the rejection of Israel permanent (final)?**—Paul's answer is given in 11:11–36.

All of these questions were being asked by unsaved Jews and they had to be answered if these Jews were to cease their opposition to the gospel.

- D. **THE PRACTICAL REASON**—To give instructions concerning local problems, 12:1–15:13.
- E. **THE EVANGELICAL REASON**—To prepare a missionary base. Paul desires that the Roman Christians consider their church as an advance missionary base from which Paul will go forth to evangelize Spain. Paul seeks their cooperation and assistance in this planned missionary work.

VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK

A. **IT IS THE MASTERPIECE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL**

In our Bible, it properly occupies first place among the Pauline epistles, not only because of its *length* but also because of its *contents*.

B. **IT IS THE SUBJECT OF MANY COMMENTARIES**

There are in existence more commentaries on the book of Romans than on any other Bible book.

C. **IT IS ONE OF THE FOUR KEY BOOKS OF THE BIBLE**

These are (1) *The Book of Genesis*, (2) *The Gospel of John*, (3) *The Book of Romans* and (4) *The Book of Revelation*.

1. ***The Book of Genesis* deals with *the roots of Christ*.**
2. ***The Gospel of John* deals with *the person of Christ* (He is the divine Son of God).**
3. ***The Book of Romans* deals with *the work of Christ* (He justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies all who believe).**
4. ***The Book of Revelation* deals with *the Second Coming of Christ* (He is coming to judge His enemies and to set up and establish His Kingdom here on the earth)**

D. **IT TEACHES THE FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINE OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY** (the doctrine of *justification by faith*)

Romans establishes this doctrine, *Galatians* re-establishes this doctrine.

E. **IT IS ONE OF THE MAJOR BULWARKS OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY**

A correct understanding of the book's first eight chapters inoculates against most modern heresies in the realm of soteriology.

F. **IT EXERTED A PROFOUND INFLUENCE UPON BOTH LUTHER AND WESLEY**

G. **IT HAS GREATLY INFLUENCED THE COURSE OF THE CHURCH**

Romans and *Galatians* sparked the Protestant Reformation and have sparked all the subsequent great spiritual revivals of the church.

H. **IT HAS RECEIVED MANY ELOQUENT TRIBUTES**

1. **Godet**—“If all the Bible were a ring, *Romans* would be the gem and *the eighth chapter of Romans* would be the sparkle.”
2. **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**—“*Romans* is the most profound book in existence.”
3. **Martin Luther**—“It can never be read or pondered too much and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.”

VIII. **THE THEME OF THE BOOK (1:16, 17)—Salvation is for everybody on terms available to everybody.**

IX. **THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK**

- A. **IT IS A LOGICAL BOOK**—Possibly no more logical work has ever been penned.
- B. **IT IS A SYSTEMATIC BOOK**—Everything is in its proper place.
- C. **IT IS A PROFOUND BOOK**—The greatest theologians of the past nineteen hundred years have confessed their inability to fathom the depths of the book.
- D. **IT IS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE BOOK**—Donald C. Barnhouse spent twenty years in teaching this book to his church in Philadelphia. Yet much remained to be taught. The book was not exhausted.
- E. **IT IS A UNIVERSAL-OUTLOOK BOOK**—Universal sin, universal condemnation, and a universal gospel offering universal salvation are prominent features of the book.
- F. **IT IS A SOTERIOLOGICAL BOOK**—No other Bible book elaborates the plan of salvation so fully and completely as does *Romans*.
- G. **IT IS AN OLD-TESTAMENT-GROUNDED BOOK**—This book directly quotes Scriptures from at least fourteen Old-Testament books. Many of its quotations are from the *Psalms* and from *Isaiah*. *Romans* quotes more Old Testament passages than do all the other New Testament epistles combined.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

PART ONE—THE INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE (1:1–17)

I. **THE AUTHOR’S SALUTATION (1:1–7)**

A. **THE AUTHOR (1:1–5)**

1. **His name**—“Paul” (1:1)

His Hebrew name was *Saul*. His Greek name was *Paul*. He probably began using his Greek name shortly after his call to be an apostle. The Bible's first use of his name "Paul" is recorded in Acts 13:9.

2. **His offices (1:1)**

- a. **A servant (a "doulos")**—Paul was a voluntary love slave of his Master, Jesus Christ. He was a person who delighted to do Christ's will.
- b. **An apostle**—Paul was "called to be an apostle." He was not a self-appointed nor a man-appointed, but a Christ-appointed, apostle (an apostle was a person directly called, commissioned, and empowered by Jesus Christ to found and establish the church of Jesus Christ here on the earth).
- c. **A separated one**—Paul was separated by God from all secular occupations that he might devote himself fully to the gospel of God. The preaching of the gospel was his *vocation*, all else was *avocation*.

3. **His message**—The gospel (1:1b–4)

- a. **The source of the gospel**—It is "of God." The gospel is not of human, but of divine, origin.
- b. **The promise of the gospel**—It was promised by the prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures. The gospel is *good* news but it is not *new* news. The Old Testament, both in type and in prophecy, foretold the coming of Christ and the gospel, Psalm 32:1, 2; Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 10:1; 1 Peter 1:10. The Jewish moral law pointed to the need for Christ and the Gospel. The Jewish ceremonial law pointed to the Christ and the Gospel that were needed.
- c. **The subject of the gospel**—"God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord." "God's Son" refers to Jesus' person. "Jesus" refers to His human nature. "Christ" refers to His divine nature. "Our Lord" refers to His position as the head of the church.

Concerning *Jesus' human nature*, He "was made (born) of the seed of David." Concerning *His divine nature* ("the Spirit of holiness"), He was "powerfully declared (proved) to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead."

4. **His apostleship (1:5)**

- a. **The source of his apostleship**—"Jesus Christ, our Lord." Jesus Christ was the author of the grace (general favor) shown to Paul and of Paul's call to apostleship.
- b. **The goal of his apostleship**—It had a two-fold goal: (1) *The proximate goal*—That sinners might be saved; and (2) *the ultimate goal*—That Christ might be honored and glorified.

B. **THE READERS (1:6, 7a)**

1. **They were "the called of Jesus Christ"**—In the New Testament epistles, "the called" always refers to those effectually called by *the effectual call* of the gospel, while in the gospels "the called" refers to those invited by the general call of the gospel. The general call (which is received by many of the non-elect) may be rejected but *the effectual call* (which is received by the elect) is never rejected.

2. **They were “in Rome”**—The readers were “in Rome” *geographically* but they were “in Christ” *positionally*.
 3. **They were “beloved of God”**—God loves all men but the faith and obedience of His children allow Him to fully express His love toward them.
 4. **They were “called to be saints”**—At the moment we believe, we become “saints,” positionally sanctified persons (persons set apart *from* the world *unto* Christ).
- C. **THE WISH**—“Grace [Greek, “charis”] to you and peace [Greek, “eirene”] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:7b). Grace bestows peace (a feeling of well-being, prosperity, fullness). Both grace and peace come from God through Jesus Christ.

II. THE AUTHOR’S BROTHERLY CONCERN (for the saints in Rome) (1:8–13)

A. **HIS THANKSGIVING FOR THEM (1:8)**

He thanks God, not only for *their faith*, but also for *the quality of their faith*. They had a strong and zealous faith (not *saving faith* but *persevering faith*) which was known and commended throughout the Mediterranean world (note that it is through the mediation of Jesus Christ that our thanksgiving and prayers are acceptable to God).

B. **HIS PRAYERS FOR THEM (1:9, 10)**

Note four things concerning his prayers:

1. **He prays for a church he has never visited**—Paul feels it necessary to add an oath because the readers will be surprised to read that he takes such an interest in a congregation he has never visited. His witness to his oath is God, whom he serves in his spirit (from his heart), this service finding outward expression in preaching and promoting the gospel.
2. **His prayers are unceasing (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)**—Paul prays for the Romans, not *continuously*, but *continually*.
3. **His prayers are definite**—He prays that he may now, after waiting for so long a time, be permitted to visit his readers. Christians need to pray for *definite* things. Most prayers are vague and general.
4. **His prayers are conditioned by God’s will (“by the will of God”)**—All of our prayers should close with “nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

C. **HIS DESIRE TO VISIT THEM (1:11–13)**

1. **Why he desires to visit them**

- a. **To encourage (“comfort”) them (1:11, 12)**—He desires to share with them his spiritual gifts that they might be encouraged and confirmed in both doctrine and conduct.

- b. **To be encouraged (“comforted”) by them (1:12)**—Even apostles need encouragement, 1 Corinthians 12:21.
 - c. **To bear fruit among them (1:13)**—He desires to win converts to Christ in Rome as he has in other areas of heathendom. All Christian ministers and all other Christians have a two-fold duty: (1) to *make converts*, 1:13; and (2) to *mature converts*, 1:11.
2. **Why he had not visited them before (1:13)**—He had often intended to come but had been hindered hitherto. See 15:22, 23 for the hindrance.

III. THE AUTHOR’S READINESS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE HEATHEN (including those at Rome) (1:14–16a)

(In 1:14–16a, Paul *leads* to his theme; in 1:16–17, Paul *states* his *theme*; in 1:18–8:39 [the doctrinal part of the epistle], Paul *develops* his theme.)

A. **PAUL’S READINESS TO PREACH (1:15)**

Paul is ready to preach to the unsaved anywhere. If God wills that his hearers be the citizens of Rome, there is nothing in him which would hinder the fulfillment of this will.

B. **PAUL’S REASONS FOR HIS READINESS TO PREACH (1:14, 16a)**

1. **He is obligated to preach to all men (1:14)**

His divine commission is a general one. He is sent to preach the gospel to *all nations* (“Greeks and Barbarians”) and to *all classes* (“wise and unwise”). He is in debt to fulfill his commission.

2. **He is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (1:16a)**

Although the gospel was scorned as *weak* by the Jew and was scorned as *foolish* by the Greek, 1 Cor. 1:22–24, yet Paul was not ashamed of it for it is efficacious to save all men.

IV. THE AUTHOR’S THEME (1:16, 17)

A. **THE SUMMARY OF THE THEME**

The theme may be summarized as follows: the gospel is able to save “*everyone*” who “*believes*.” Here we have in a nutshell the two great doctrines elaborated in this epistle: (1) Salvation is for everybody and (2) salvation is for everybody on terms available to *everybody*. So here we have the *universality* of the gospel and the *suitability* of the gospel.

B. **THE FIVE THINGS STATED IN THE THEME**

1. **The gospel is powerful**—“It is the power of God”

God’s *physical power* was manifested in creation and is constantly being manifested in His providential upholding and guidance of all things. His *moral power*, Prov. 21:1, operates through Christ

and the gospel and is manifested toward all believers. This power changes sinners into saints, not by *physical force* but by *moral persuasion*. See Ephesians 1:19; 3:7.

2. **The gospel saves**—“unto salvation”
 - a. It saves from sin’s *penalty* (doom) through *justification*.
 - b. It saves from sin’s *power* (dominion) through *sanctification*.
 - c. It saves from sin’s *presence* (domain) through *glorification*.

As Christians: (1) we *have been* saved (justified), Titus 3:5; (2) we *are being* saved (sanctified), 1 Thessalonians 5:23; and (3) we *shall be* saved (glorified), Romans 13:11.

3. **The gospel demands belief**—“to everyone that believeth”
 - a. It demands *faith*, not *works of law*.
 - b. It demands *vital faith*.

Vital, saving faith involves three things:

- (1) **Knowledge** (a hearing of gospel truth)
- (2) **Acknowledgment** (a mental assent to gospel truth)
- (3) **Committal** (an appropriation of gospel truth)

4. **The gospel is universal**—“to the Jew first and also to the Greek”
 - a. **It is “to the Jew first”**—This refers to *precedence*, not to *preference*. The Jew was better prepared, so he was given the first opportunity of hearing and accepting the gospel. This precedence extended until A.D. 70, at which time the Jewish nation had been fully reaped, Matt. 3:11, 12.
 - b. **It is “also to the Greek”**—The gospel is also for the Greek (the Gentile).
5. **The gospel reveals God’s by-faith righteousness**—“for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith”

- a. **What “God’s righteousness” is**

- (1) **It is what God is**

He, in character, words, and deeds, is the standard, the perfect moral being who fulfills all the claims of right, who is everything that He should be.

- (2) **It is what God demands**

God demands of all His moral creatures perfect conformity to His revealed law, His standard of right, as a requirement for acceptance and salvation.

(3) It is what God provides (as a gift)

(a) God provides an imputed, justifying righteousness, based upon Christ's death

Christ at His first coming kept the law's *precepts* (this He did in His life of *active obedience*) and He paid the law's *penalty* (this He did in His act of *passive obedience* on the cross).

When a sinner believes on Christ, a double imputation takes place. God imputes Christ's penal death to him and then He imputes Christ's righteous life to him. The believing sinner is then looked upon as having paid the law's penalty in the person of his substitute, Jesus Christ, and as having kept the laws precepts in the person of his substitute, Jesus Christ.

On the ground of this double imputation, God declares the believing sinner to be justified (to be righteous, to be in right relationship to God and His righteous laws). As a result of this declaration, this believing sinner is righteous in his *standing* (but not in his *state* or *character*).

A believer is not justified on the ground of *legal works* (works performed by him in the wisdom and energy of the flesh) nor on the ground of *evangelical works* (works performed by him in the wisdom and energy of the Holy Spirit) but on the ground of *imputed works* (works performed by Christ which are imputed to him when he believes on Christ).

The believer's justification is permanent because of Christ's High-priestly ministry in heaven for His people here on the earth, Heb. 7:25.

(b) God also provides an imparted, sanctifying righteousness, based upon Christ's risen life

When a sinner believes on Christ, God not only (through imputation) frees him from guilt, condemnation, and punishment, and justifies him, but He also imparts to him that which was lost to man in the fall, the Holy Spirit and His divine life, Romans 8:2, 9; 2 Peter 1:4. This divine life (working in the believer through the Holy Spirit) gradually subdues the sin nature yet in the believer and finally, on resurrection morning, it will reign triumphantly in him.

So, in summary, at the moment of belief, the sinner *loses his condemnation* and *receives God's righteous life*. He is looked at as though he had never broken God's laws and is empowered for the keeping of God's laws. God's freely-given righteousness provides this *negative* release from condemnation and this *positive* bestowal of righteousness (the Holy Spirit and His divine life).

(c) God also provides a completed, glorifying righteousness, based upon Christ's coming

At Christ's coming, the saints of the church age will be resurrected or translated and the Holy Spirit and His divine life will then be applied to our bodies as well as to our souls, Romans 8:10, 11. We will

then be completely righteous for we will then be motivated and empowered both inwardly and outwardly by the holy life of God.

b. **How “God’s righteousness” is obtained**—“from faith to faith” (1:17)

(1) **It is not “attained” by works (legalism)**

Man can not “attain” the righteousness demanded by God through human works of law-keeping because these works are *incomplete* in quantity (all of life’s acts must be acts of obedience to God’s laws, if we are to be saved by law-keeping) and *imperfect* in quality (*they* are selfishly motivated, motivated by *fear of punishment or hope of reward*). In fact, man must be forgiven of all these “dead works” for they are selfish and sinful, Hebrews 9:14.

(2) **It is “obtained” by faith**

“From faith to faith (out of faith unto faith)” modifies, not “is revealed,” but “the righteousness of God.” The gospel reveals an out-of-faith-unto-faith righteousness of God. This means that righteousness is by faith alone. It means that righteousness comes *out of faith* as a source and that righteousness is granted *unto faith* as a reward.

Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to confirm his teaching that righteousness is by faith alone. “The righteous shall live by faith” means “he that is righteous by faith shall live (shall receive that life which Christ gives).”

c. **Why a revelation of “God’s righteousness” is needed** (1:18)

Everywhere else (outside the gospel) only *the wrath of God* is revealed. All men, Jews and Gentiles, have fallen short of attaining righteousness by works, are under condemnation and are awaiting the infliction of God’s wrath, so a revelation of God’s by-faith righteousness is needed.

PART TWO—THE BODY OF THE EPISTLE (1:18–15:13)

(The body of the epistle deals with *God’s righteousness*. In this section, we have *the need for God’s righteousness*, 1:18–3:20, *the provision of God’s righteousness*, 3:21–8:39, *the defense of God’s righteousness*, chapters 9–11, and *the practice of God’s righteousness*, 12:1–15:13)

I. **THE NEED FOR GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS** (or this section could be called “**Universal Condemnation**”), 1:18–3:20

(This section is a parenthesis between 1:17–3:21. It reveals the universal need for God’s righteousness because of the universal failure of men to attain righteousness by works of law. First, *Paul charges the Gentiles* with failure to observe the law of nature and so with being under condemnation and in need of God’s righteousness, 1:18–32; then *Paul charges the Jews* with failure to observe the law