**Introduction to Romans – RO01-01**

Please open your Bibles to the Romans for this which is the first in a new series of studies. This evening we are going to look at the entire book of Romans. We're going to do this in order that we may have an overview of this book in order to get a look at the forest as a whole in all of its full magnificent glory and beauty. Then in the future we will start looking at the trees one by one.

**Paul**

This is the gem of the New Testament. This book is absolutely unique. It is in the category by itself and it is the finest of all that the Apostle Paul probably wrote. It is a distinctive in every way. It was written about the year 58 A. D. Now all of you are acquainted I know with the Apostle Paul. He wrote the book. He was born probably about the same time that Jesus Christ was born. Shortly after the death of Christ you remember that Stephen was stoned for his testimony in Jerusalem by the Jewish leaders and we read in Acts 7:58 that Paul was there and they laid their coats at his feet—those who were engaging in the stoning operation. Paul at that time was a young man, so he was probably born about the time that Christ was born at the beginning of the first century. It is generally believed also that Paul was a member of the Jewish ruling body called the Sanhedrin. We have this in Acts 6:12, Acts 7:58, and Acts 8:1. As such he led the persecution against the church in behalf of the Jewish leaders. We have this in Acts 8:1 and Acts 8:3.

Now in order to be a member of the Sanhedrin, a man had to be at least thirty years old. So we may say that Paul was somewhere around 30 years of age when he was saved shortly after the event of the stoning of Stephen. He came from a town as you know called Tarsus which is right here in Asia Minor at this point here in the Roman province of Cilicia. It was right there where Paul of Tarsus was born and where he was reared. Now this is seven hundred miles between here and here—seven hundred miles from Jerusalem which is down in the south. This is the Roman province of Cilicia, and Tarsus was the capital of that province. We have this in Acts 22:3 concerning Paul’s place of birth and the nature of the city.

**Tarsus**

Tarsus actually in the ancient would be ranked with Athens and Alexandria as far as culture and learning went. It was a university town. Paul said himself that it was strictly a big time city, and that of course included big time corruption (Acts 21:39). Paul as you know was a Roman citizen. His father was a Pharisee, we find in Acts 23:6. His father was also a Roman citizen. So consequently when Paul was born he was automatically a citizen and a free man. We have this in Acts 22 in verses 25 and 28.

**Paul’s Family**

Now Paul’s father probably was a very wealthy Jew. We gather this by the intimation that the Apostle Paul suffered a total economic loss. We read about this in Philippians 3:7-9. The point seems to be this: that once Paul became a Christian, he experienced that which people of the Jewish race generally experience at the hands of the other members of the family when they turn and receive Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior. And apparently when Paul met the Lord on the Damascus Road and received Him as Savior and trusted in him, his family and his father disowned him and thus cut him off from the inheritance that would have been his. And Paul describes this as a very great loss. So we may conclude that the father probably was a wealthy man.

Also, Paul reflects the fact that he had the experience in his growing days of living in a family that had money. This for example reflected in his education. He no doubt entered into the studies of Greek philosophy which were offered there right in his home town of Tarsus which was a university town. We also know that he studied with the most famous of the ancient Hebrew teachers, a man named Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Then we’re also told in the Word of God that the Lord Jesus Christ taught Paul (after he became a believer) Christian doctrine in the Arabian Desert for a period of about three years. In addition, Paul, as was the custom of the day and which was a pretty good custom even for today was taught a trade. For this reason, while he was a highly educated man, he also was taught the trade of tent making which stood him, as you know, in very good stead, as a source of financing for his missionary enterprises.

So Paul was, as you see, very well prepared to write the greatest book of the New Testament. He had the background of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman culture. And to do the particular job of lasting importance that he was going to be called upon to do, he needed preparation ahead of time. That's true of you and me. If we ever hope to do anything in the Lord's work of substance, it means years of preparation. It means years of expanding the base of your experience and of your insights. And many times this is why we say people who are inexperienced in spiritual things should be silent and should be pursuing the course of experience and of deepening of their knowledge. It takes a preparation to really do something of lasting value in the Lord's work.

**Rome**

Now Paul was interested in the Christians which were in the city of Rome. How did these questions get there in the first place? Well the Roman Catholic Church says that the Apostle Peter went to Rome and he founded the Church at Rome, and thus he became the first Pope. However we find here in this very book of Romans that Paul greets twenty-seven men by name who are in Rome at the time that he was writing, but he does not greet Peter at all. Wouldn’t it be odd if Peter was in Rome, if this was his residence as the first pope and the founder of the Church at Rome, that Paul should not send him greeting along with the rest?

**Luke**

In addition you know that Luke, who wrote the book of Acts which gives us the history of the early church, was a very careful historian. Luke was the kind of man who gathered information from eyewitnesses. He took their personal statements. Also he gathered up other things that had already been written and then he sat down and, under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he made a very carefully accurate documented record of early church history. Wouldn’t it be strange indeed if Peter was the founder of the Church at Rome, that that fact should be omitted by such a careful historian as Luke? There is in fact no reason whatsoever to think that Peter founded the church in Rome, let alone that he ever was in Rome at all ever.

However, there were Christians in the city of Rome, and they sprang up probably as a result of information brought back from that first Pentecost experience when there were Pilgrims in Jerusalem for the holy days and for the festival season, and who saw what happened on the day of Pentecost. We have this in Acts 2:10 that some of these people from Rome. They went back home and undoubtedly they took the message with them. Furthermore there were Christians constantly travelling from all parts of the Roman Empire to Rome which was the hub of the known world, and along with them came as believers the information of the gospel. Two of these that we know of were a husband and wife team named Priscilla and Aquila. Paul greets Priscilla and Aquila in the very last chapter in Romans 16:3-5, and then he zeros in in verse 5, “likewise greet the particular church that is in their house,” and then he adds a couple of other meetings.

**Singleness of Elders**

Now I want you to note that we again have demonstrated that in a New Testament church a metropolitan city such as Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and so on, did not just have one church where Christians met. That would have been physically impossible. There were hundreds of believers in these places and the only place they met was in houses. And here Paul is sending greeting to all the different congregations who are meeting over the city of Rome in different homes and he particularly extends a greeting to people that he has a contact with in the form of Priscilla and Aquila and the church which is meeting in their homes. And every one of these congregations had one pastor-teacher in charge directing that particular work and responsible for exercising the teaching authority and the instruction of the flock. There is no such thing from the Word of God that requires us to think in terms of plurality of elders in one local church. That is a distortion. Plurality of deacons—yes. Singleness of elder constantly indicated on every side in the world of God. Now the book of Romans the classic book on the Christian faith makes that point in itself very very clear.

**Paul’s Reason for Writing the Book of Romans**

Now for the reason that Paul wrote this letter. Paul wrote Romans from the city of Corinth. He was on his third missionary tour when he wrote this book. By this time Paul had written five other books which are in the Bible. By the time he wrote the book of Romans, he had already written 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Paul hears of the congregations meeting in Rome and he is eager to visit these believers. This would be a very natural interest on his part. After all, as you know, he was called to be the key man in reaching the Gentile world. He was the apostle specifically to the Gentile world, and consequently it would be of great interest to him to meet the Christians who were residing and meeting in the hub of the known world—the city of Rome. It was the logical place for establishing a center of power and of influence for Christianity. So Paul is writing to these people whom he has never met. He has met some of them. He knows a few of them that are there, but he has not met the Christians as a whole in Rome. He doesn't know who started all these different congregations that are meeting all over the city. They just sprang up as a result of the Gospel information filtering in from Jerusalem to Rome. And the result is that the Christian faith has taken root and is beginning to prosper.

Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, has something to say to Gentile Christians. He has a great deal of Bible doctrine that is relative to their unique position as members of the Body of Christ which someone has to explain to them and which he has been uniquely qualified by his three year excursion into the desert under the Lord's instruction. It is to Paul to whom the full gospel of grace in its full blossom was revealed. It is to Paul, of all the apostles, to whom the information concerning the church as the Body of Christ was related--the relationship between Jew and Gentile in one brand new situation called the church as over against what they were once in as Judaism and as Gentile unbelievers.

**Romans Sets Forth the Christian Faith in a Logical Order**

So the result of his interest in these believers, the result of his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles, the result of the message and information which he had to give the people is the magnificent book which we have in the New Testament called The Book of Romans. This is the only book that we have in the New Testament that sets forth the Christian faith in a logical order. It is the kind of a book that some seminary student would sit down and write on a theological subject that had been assigned to him, and he would sit down and he would make an outline and he would proceed to think his way through as to how he was going to handle this subject, and then he would begin to write and he would end up with a treatise or a thesis or a small dissertation on the subject. That's exactly what Paul did.

**How the Letter Got to Rome**

Now how did the letter get to Rome? The bearer, apparently was a woman named Phoebe, a Christian lady from the city of Cenchrea. We read about this in Roman 16:1-2. It is interesting where Romans comes in the New Testament. As you know, the New Testament begins with four gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are biographical history of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the next book in the order of the New Testament is the Book of Acts. This is the history of the early Christian church. Now we might think that the next books that are going to fall in natural order because of the way they came from the pen of the apostles would be 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and then 1 & 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. But that is not so. God the Holy Spirit, you see, not only was inspiring the books, but he was also superintending the ultimate order in which they would appear in the New Testament. That is no accident. That's why the books of the New Testament are in perfect order. That's why you cannot change the order of the New Testament books without disrupting the revelation and the message in a smooth progression. And very naturally after you've presented the biographical history of Jesus Christ, you've presented the history of the early church, what’s the next thing you should have?

You should have a concise presentation of the Christian faith and the logical layout as a whole, relative to what is Christianity all about, and everything that is related to a person being saved, a person who is a sinner a person, who has no hope, who's absolutely helpless, and God says, “Come on up here and spend eternity with me in heaven.” Now that's a shocking thing to even consider. Sinners with old sin natures and full expressions in the face of a holy God, and God says, “Come on up hear and spend eternity with me.” Now that takes some explaining, and that's what the book of Romans does.

Then after you have that, then follows all of the explanation of the details of various factors relative to the church. You have these in the other epistles. So Romans had to come first in the order of New Testament letters. After the Gospels and after Acts. The whole issue of salvation by grace through the death of Christ is explained in this book. Then the epistles deal with other specific elements. Romans begins the New Testament record of doctrine, in other words. It begins with salvation and the Gospel and it ties this back to the fact this was promised in the Old Testament in such chapters as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, and now shows how it has been fulfilled.

**The Key Verse in Romans**

It has one main key verse. That is found in Romans 1:17, and in it we read the crucial statement which is a quote of Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17 says, “For in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

**Martin Luther and the Reformation**

As we have indicated to you, next Thursday is reformation day—that day which was the beginning of spiritual enlightenment for all of the Western world when Martin Luther nailed his 95 propositions of truth concerning the Word of God to be discussed. This is the verse that precipitated Luther upon the quest for truth. This was the man who used to try to bring peace to his soul in a variety of ways: in what he could do to his body in personal punishment; in what he could do through asceticism; in what he could do through his ritualism through his ceremonies; and, what he could do with every good human work that he could think of, and yet peace eluded him. And it was one day while he was thinking about these things that this this verse in Romans leapt into his mind that “the just shall live by faith.”

The story is actually told that he had experienced the great ambition which he had which was to visit Rome, the center of Christendom. Here he thought that if there was any place he could find peace for his soul this would be it. And the story is told that as he was going up the steps of the great church in Rome, repeating his “Hail Marys” and his “Our Fathers,” going up the stone steps on his knees this very easily to his mind the just shall live by faith and Luther in effect said to himself, “What am I doing here going up these steps on my knees through my ritual when God says I can live, and thus I can have peace, because I know what's waiting for me out there, and it's all mine by faith. When the Apostle Paul wrote verse 17 of the first chapter, he was preparing the way for the enlightenment in spiritual things that you and I enjoy today as the result of the Protestant Reformation.

**“The Just Shall Live By Faith”**

This text, you can see, divides itself into three crucial combinations. One is “the just” and the Book of Romans goes in detail to explain what that part of the phrase means. And then the second is “shall live.” The book of Galatians was written to deal with that. And “by faith” is taken up in the book of Hebrews.

**The Significance of Christianity**

So the book that we are going to look at, this magnificent book written by the Apostle Paul in order to declare for us the significance of Christianity is anchored upon this text. These words sum up first of all the main idea that Paul wants to convey. But the book also has a theme and the main theme is found in Romans 1:16, summed up in the words, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”

**Overview**

So let's have an overview of this whole book. We're going to take a look at Romans 1:16-17. Here Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God and the salvation for every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, for in it is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

**Summary**

Now he sums up what this book is all about in these two verses. There are several expressions which he will use concerning this Gospel that he is going to discuss as his main theme and these expressions are, for example, in Romans 1:1, he uses the expression “separated unto the gospel of God.” This means that God gave this Gospel. In Romans 1:16, he speaks about not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He calls it the gospel of Christ because it is about Jesus Christ. In Romans 2:16, he uses the phrase “shall judge men according to my gospel.” He calls it “my gospel” because it is the gospel which the Apostle Paul himself was preaching.

**How Can a Sinner Stand Before God?**

Now as we look at this key text here in Romans 1:17, if you counted up the words you would see that this key phrase has six words in English. If you count it in the Greek Bible it has six words. If you count it in the Hebrew Bible from which it is quoted it is found in three words. When it speaks about the just, it is referring to righteousness. Now that's a problem for every human being. When a sinner is going to face God, he is going to have the problem because he as a sinner lacks personal righteousness. For this reason, Job 9:2 says, “But how should a man be just before God?” It was a very significant question that Job was asking: “How can a sinner stand before God?”

Look over your own life. Look over the sin—the expression of sin, let alone the quality and character of sin. How are you going to stand before God and have all that removed from your record? How are you going to have all this completely wiped off so that you stand before Him as not being guilty of any of these things? It’s like somebody who has a criminal record, and a file is kept upon his criminal activities. Therefore when somebody is in trouble, one of the things that the police will do is check through the files to see if you have a record. If you have a record, it is significant. There are certain jobs that you could never enter if you have a criminal record. There are areas of the military service, for example, that you cannot enter if you have a criminal record. And there are times when people make very specific and very extensive efforts in order to have their records white clean because suddenly a person wants something and his record is standing there against him.

A policeman starts you for speeding or for jumping a red line. Sometimes you'll notice he doesn't immediately leave his car because he's on his radio. He's on his radio and saying, “Now Charlie has just done it again. His license number is … Have you got anything on him down there?” And they look over the record. And sometimes somebody has fifteen tickets that he hasn't paid. Then the policeman greets you in a different way than he would have if you didn't have a record, and then it becomes important to you to wipe your record clean in one way or another.   
  
Now that's what we as sinners face with God. How in the world are we going to face him? That’s what’s thrilling about Romans. It tells you how we who are just as guilty as can be stand before God as if we never had done a single wrong thing—absolutely fantastic. That's summed up in the words, “the just.” The phrase “shall live” sums up the fact that everybody wants life. The thing that disturbs people is dying. The other day I suggested that one of the things that Satan likes us to worry about is how you're going to die. Did you ever stop and think of how you might die? You might die violently. One lady said, “I got to thinking about. It was a little disturbing.”

The matter gets even worse when you say, “Well, physical death, sooner or later, let’s face it. You’re not going to evade that.” But what about on the other side? I want to live. As much as I want to live now, I want to live on the other side. The great book of Romans takes up the issue of how to have a life—how to have to the fullness now, but also how to have life for all eternity. So Job 14:14 again says, “If a man die, shall he live again?” That's the question. “God, if a man dies, is he going to live again. Not only will I live out there but will I ever live again in my body? I want to know that. What's ahead for me?”

**Righteousness and Life Go Together**

Then you will notice that we can put these phrases together: “the just shall live,” because they do go together. Righteousness and life go together. In other words, if you’re righteous, you will live. God is holy, so God lives forever. God is righteous, so he lives forever. Man is unrighteous, so man dies for his sins (Romans 6:23, Ezekiel 18:4, James 1:15). Since no human being is righteous, this means that everybody dies. Well how can we live? Only one way. These two are tied together. If you're going to live, you have to become righteous.

**The Logic of the Book of Romans**

How will we do that? That's the next phrase. In order to achieve these two things, you see the logic of the book of Romans. This is just like little gems, little stars that flicker all over this book—these little logical connections. These two are achieved by this—faith, and that’s what changed the life of Martin Luther. Martin Luther wanted life, but he knew he was a sinner and therefore headed for death. Martin Luther knew that he had to have righteousness in order to have life, and he didn't know how to bring these two together. Then suddenly the book of Romans made it clear to him that faith is the way you bring the two together. That's the way you make righteousness and life, and then God says you can live in His Heaven with Him forever. “The just shall live by faith.” Righteousness is required. Romans tells us how God has supplied it to sinners.

The source of life: Romans tells us how God supplies that to those who deserve death. Righteousness and life go together, and Romans tells us how the grace of God has joined these together through faith in the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ which through Grace gives life to us.

**Legalists**

Now the legalists didn't like this. They suggested that Paul was separating righteousness and life, and therefore Paul was saying, they said, that you can live as you please. But what Paul was saying is that first you must have righteousness, then you will have life, and you secure that combination through faith. The book of Romans explains how salvation and how every spiritual blessing comes, and it’s only through faith, never through works.

**The Condemnation Section**

Now there are four main divisions to this treatise. First of all there is a section which we may entitle “condemnation.” It begins in Romans 1:18. Now I’m skipping the first seventeen verses because that’s introduction and we’ll come back to that in a moment. I'm talking about the treatise part. The first seventeen verses are really a letter. Chapter sixteen of the book is also part of the letter, and between these two segments is sandwiched in the main body of the treatise which Paul has written. So looking at the dissertation itself the first part is condemnation, Romans 1:18 through 3:20. This section answers this question: Is the world of humanity lost?

**Views of Mankind**

People have three views about mankind. Some people say that man is well, therefore he has no problem. He has no concern about his relationship to God. Some other people say that man is sick. He's not well, but he is sick, which means therefore that he needs somebody to heal him, and he can do that pretty well himself. A third view is that man is dead spiritually. He is just out of it; in which case, he's under the wrath of God and he needs done to help him. So what this section on condemnation reveals is that man is under the wrath of God.

**The Salvation Section**

Now let’s pass that over for a moment and go to the next main section which is salvation. This is in chapters 3:21 through 8:39. Now this segment on salvation answers the question, “How does God save a sinner?” Well, how does God say the sinner? How would you answer that question? Well, some people give the answer of legalism. They say that if you want to be saved, keep the law. Keep the Ten Commandments and you'll go to heaven. Asceticism says that the way to be saved is to punish your body. Cut yourself up with razor blades. Make yourself bleed. On Good Friday have somebody nail you to a cross. This will not get you into heaven. It will get you into the grave maybe a little sooner, but it will not get you to heaven. Mysticism says, “Find a key to superior knowledge and to secret insights.” That's what Edgar Cayce said. Evolution says you don’t have to worry about it; there will be a gradual improvement. You're always getting better. Religion has the answer that you should perform certain rituals. Go through certain ceremonies and you will be saved. Rationalism says, “Well, just do the best you can, and eternity will take care of itself.” Well what this section reveals here is that salvation reveals the righteousness of God.

**The Vindication Section**

The third main section of this letter we may entitle “Vindication” from Romans 9:1 through 11:36. This answers the question, “Why is Israel rejected?” Now some people read chapters 9, 10, and 11 in the book of Romans and they sometimes get the impression that you could just drop these three out of there and you'd never miss them, because at first reading they almost seem like kind of an odd subject for Paul to bring in. It almost seems like he's writing along and he gets to thinking about the Jews and then his mind begins to wander and he wanders off talking about them, and that they really don't fit, but not so. This is a logical progression of the presentation of Christianity as a whole. And this question was important because you see God has made certain promises to the Jews as I think you know.

For example, through the Davidic covenant. These have not been fulfilled. If there is anything at the time that Paul is writing that is true, it is true that the Jews are not under the blessing of their Messiah. They are not in their land as the dominant nation of the world. It is obvious that something is wrong here. God has not kept his word to the Jews. Now if that is true, that then raises a question as to whether the God who couldn’t keep his Word to the Jews can keep his Word to us that we could be saved, that we can connect righteousness and life simply by faith in the death of Christ in our behalf upon the cross. How do we know that God is going to come through for us if he couldn't come through for the Jews? Therefore it was necessary for Paul to put chapters 9, 10, and 11 into this book. And this is the section that explains to us what has happened to the Jew—what his status is today. Chapter 9 tells about the Jews’ past. Chapter 10 tells about the Jews’ present situation. Chapter 11 tells about the Jews’ situation in the future—a very concise tight little logical progression again, and it reveals the wisdom of God.

**The Exhortation Section**

The last section of this book is exhortation—12:1 through 15:33. This section answers the question, “How shall a Christian live the supernatural lifestyle expected of him?” How is a Christian going to live a godly life? How is a Christian going to walk in a way that is compatible with his position in Christ? Several answers which we may get to this: One is to keep the commandments. People say, “How do you live a holy life?” Well, you keep the commandments again. Somebody says, “Well, it doesn't matter how you live. It's only important that you get people saved. If you get people saved then at least they'll go to heaven.” But this is not the position of the Word of God. It does matter how you live. It is not enough just to be saved.

**How the Christian Can Live the Supernatural Lifestyle**

Another answer is to live according to Bible doctrine by means of the Holy Spirit if you want to express the supernatural lifestyle. And this is exactly the case. Well, this section reveals the will of God. In chapter 12 we have related to us the transformation of one's personal life. In chapter 13 under this section we have subjection to the authority of the nation and of the rulers dealt with. In chapter 14 we have consideration for the weaker brother exhorted upon us. And in chapter 15 we have a discussion of the daily conduct of Paul as he himself faces life.

So the epistle to Romans is a formal logical treatise about Christianity in these four main sections. In addition to these four main sections, you have an introduction and then you have the end. The introduction is Romans 1:1-17. The conclusion is Romans 16:1-27.

**The Introduction to Romans**

Now very briefly let's go back and take a look at these four main sections. First of all let's begin with the introduction in Romans 1:1-17. You'll find that in this chapter in the first seven verses Paul greets the Roman Christians—people that he had never seen to a place he had never visited. This introduction you will spot immediately is rather long and formal. He usually doesn't write such a long greeting, such a long introduction to a letter. The reason for this is because he has never met these people so he tends to be more formal. The second thing that you will see from verses 8 through 15 is that he expresses his personal feelings about the Roman Christians. Then in verses 16 and 17 he declares the topic of his paper here—he makes the transition to his formal study, which then begins with section number one which is about condemnation. In the section under condemnation he begins with the wrath of God and he ends with the statement that every mouth is closed and everybody stands guilty before God.

**The Whole World is Condemned by God**

He makes four points in this section. In his first point, he says that the heathen world is condemned before God (Romans 1:18-32). He gives a terrible picture of sin here in these verses, and it's no exaggeration. These are people with no morals. This is why the missionaries are needed. These people are guilty of sin so they cannot live with God. Secondly he says the moral man is under condemnation (Romans 2:1-16). He's the one who has morality so he thinks that somehow he is better than the heathen, but the moral man is still a sinner so he cannot live with God. The third one is the Jew. He declares the Jew is also condemned because the Jew who has the Old Testament heritage doesn't keep all of the law (Romans 2:17-3:8). The Jews failed to keep some point of the law and thus they’re guilty of breaking it all, so they can't live with God. And fourth, he ends up declaring the whole world condemned (Romans 3:9-20). Jews and Gentiles all shown to be morally guilty before God—the whole world under God's condemnation so that none of them can have eternal life.

**Salvation is Justification by Grace Through Faith, Resulting in Peace With God**

Then he goes to the next section—salvation. Here he takes up three basic points. The first one is justification. This is God's method of declaring a person righteous (Romans 3:21-31). The whole world has been found guilty before God. Everybody is lost. Everybody is silenced. Now God steps in with His “by grace through faith in Jesus Christ” method. He gives an Old Testament illustration of this in Romans 4:1-12. He refers to Father Abraham. How was Father Abraham saved? Well the answer is that he was saved by faith, and thus reveals again to the extent that the content of Scripture was revealed, he trusted God. Then he speaks of the results of justification in Romans 5:1-11. The results are peace with God, access to grace blessings, and joy because now we have a hope. The point here is that we have righteousness in Christ.

**Sanctification**

Then in the section on sanctification the question comes up that if God saves people apart from their works then they don't have to clean their lives up before they try to be saved. And that's exactly right. Some people say, “Well then I won’t worry about how I live. I can live in sin to the hilt.” But Paul shows that justification leads a person to a godly life, to sanctification. You believe the gospel first and then as a regenerated believer you seek to be positive to the Word of God. The wrong way to sanctification is through human works through keeping the law. Salvation doesn't come by works, and neither does spirituality. There is no use for you to make a list of taboos. That doesn’t gain spirituality. The point of this section is that we are made holy through Christ.

**Preservation**

Then there is preservation. He begins with no condemnation in this section, and he ends up with no separation. Here is a clear resounding declaration that you have salvation secure forever. There are nine aspects of your preservation. You are preserved in the Son of God (Romans 8:1-4). You are preserved in the spirit of God (Romans 8:5-13). You are preserved in the family of God (Romans 8:14-23). You are preserved in the promises of God (Romans 8:24-25). You are preserved in prayer of God (Romans 8:26-27). You are preserved in the purpose of God (Romans 8:29-30). You are preserved in the power of God (Romans 8:31-34). You are preserved in the love of God (Romans 8:35-39). All of this is true. All of this preservation, Paul says, is yours because are in Christ. The point of this section is that we are kept securely in our salvation.

**Vindication**

The third section, vindication, deals with the election of the Jews in chapter 9. It deals with the rejection of the Jews here in chapter 10. The Jews say, “Well, I’m helpless. If I’m not elect, what can I do?” Paul puts it very clearly here that we are responsible if God must reject us. And then he deals with the reception of the Jews in Chapter 11. The Jews have a future as a nation. He compares this to the olive tree as a place of blessing. He says, “You Jews have been broken out of the olive tree of blessing, and cast aside, and Gentiles are grafted in.” But he says, “Gentiles, don't be too arrogant about this because God is going to graft the Jews back in the olive tree of blessing.” That's a beautiful illustration. The Jews are under a spiritual blindness now because of their rejection of Jesus Christ.

**Exhortation**

Then the next section is exhortation. As we've already indicated, it has transformation. This picks up the story which was interrupted at the end of chapter 8. Chapters 9, 10, and 11 have interrupted what he ended up talking about at the end of chapter 8, and chapter 12 picks that up again. We had a personal spiritual maturity structure that develops divine viewpoint. The results of this are freedom from mental attitude sins and Christian kindness in our actions. Chapter 13 teaches subjection to governmental authority. We reflect the attitude of Jesus Christ towards the divine laws of establishment for nations. Consideration—we have an attitude of consideration for the weak Christian. We don't cause other Christians to stumble by using our liberty in a way that will hurt them. We just try to help the weak Christian to make it.

**Exemplification**

Then finally is exemplification—examples of Paul’s personal lifestyle and his service, and the flow of mental attitude love. Then the book has its conclusions. The conclusions are this: All of chapter 16:1-27 give us the conclusion of the book. First there's a commendation in the first two verses. Then there's a salutation in verses 3-16. Then there's an exhortation in verses 17-20. Then there are some greetings in 21-23. Then there’s a benediction in 25-27. The book ends by referring to a great mystery which he doesn't explain. This is the mystery of the church which he explains later in the book of Ephesians. It finishes by committing us all to the one wise God who is so ably exemplified by this book which Paul has written. “To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Now that's a quick overall preview of the book of Romans. I would strongly suggest that you take this book and that you read it through. It won’t take you very long to read it through. And get the whole book with one magnificent sweep, because this is the way it was handled after Phoebe got to Rome. The Christians sat down. Somebody, probably the pastor of the various churches as they passed the letter around, a pastor would stand up and he read it. And they sat there and they listened to the thing from one end to the other, and they got the whole picture. Now the details of all that was involved they could not grasp. That took the exposition. That took the looking at the trees, and that’s what we’re going to do beginning next week.

Dr. John E. Danish