***The Doctrine of Election
RO03-02***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 1:6-7. Paul's opening sentence in this letter, you will remember, covers the first seven verses of Romans 1. In this sentence, Paul is doing something very systematically that he must do in writing to a church that he has no connection with. He's writing to a group of Christians in Rome that he has never met, and he is seeking in this first sentence to make a bridge from the fact that he is an apostle with apostolic authority, and therefore has authority over the churches which are meeting in the city of Rome; yet, for that authority to be received, even though they have never met him. Certainly, they have heard of him, and some of them have met him, but most of them have had no direct contact with him.

**A Slave of Jesus Christ**

He identifies himself, therefore, in these opening seven verses as a slave of Jesus Christ. This is particularly significant because the Roman Empire was an empire of slaves. He also declares his authority as an apostle. This is a gift which was given to a certain limited number of men. It was a temporary spiritual gift. It no longer exists today. But when it did exist, it was the supreme commanding position in the local church ministries. An apostle had authority in any local church that he walked into. His word was final. He was the fully authoritarian contact line of communication with God until the canon of New Testament Scriptures were completed.

**Paul's Mission**

Paul says that his mission is to make the gospel of salvation, which was promised in the Old Testament, known to the gentile world. He says that his gospel centers on Jesus Christ, whom he says was both fully God and fully man. In this first sentence, he also indicates that God's grace is provided to enable him to bring Bible doctrine to all nations in the name of Jesus Christ. In this way, of course, he justifies the fact that he is writing to the people in the city of Rome.

Paul closes this long sentence with verse 6-7, which we will look at in this session. He does this by finally identifying the recipients of the letter, and finally by extending to them a greeting.

**Gentiles**

So, first of all, we look at verse 6 which gives us the fact that he is writing to people who are gentiles: "Among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ." "Among whom" looks like this in the Greek Bible: it begins with this little preposition "en," and it has with it the relative pronoun "hos." This indicates the people that he is referring to. This "in whom" refers back to the word "nations," or as you know, the Greek word for nations can also be translated (and perhaps better so) as "gentiles." You have this back in verse 5, where he says, "He has come to bring obedience to the faith (that is, to the doctrinal heritage of the Word of God) among all gentiles for His name." He is referring to these gentile nations when he says, "Among whom," and it is in the plural, indicating that all the Christians in Rome are being addressed.

**Full-Time Service**

It says, "Among whom are," and the word "are" is the Greek word "eimi." It is present tense, which means that it is their continuing status as saved, born-again gentiles, and it is active, which means that they are living and serving the Lord as born-again gentiles. This is a rather significant factor here – that we have a present (something that is continuing); and, it is active (something that they are engaged in) in this little verb: "Among whom (among these gentiles), you are." What they are, is in the Lord's service. When you are born again into the family of God, you enter a full-time relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ and to God the Father, a full-time relationship of service.

I care not what you do in life all day long. You are in full-time Christian service. In one way or another, you are earning a livelihood. That is part of that full-time Christian service. You have a variety of spiritual gifts, and you invest those spiritual gifts. You exercise those spiritual gifts in various ways, and that's part of your full-time service, and a very climactic part of it. You have a certain amount of material possessions. You invest those material possessions as per the guidance of God the Holy Spirit. That is all part of the fact that you are in full-time Christian service.

Every now and then, some preacher likes to bestir people up and say, "How many of you young people will raise your hands to dedicate your lives full-time to the Lord's service?" That is a travesty. If you are ever sitting in a service like that, and some preacher does it, just moan out loud. Just say, "Oh, good night, shirt," or something, if you have the nerve. Nah, maybe you should keep your good manners, but at least feel like you should say that. Just grown inwardly if you cannot groan outwardly. That is monstrous: "How many of you young people will now walk forward to have a full-time Christian service.

Some churches have what they call an annual commitment service. An annual commitment service is what they call it. And everybody comes to church, and they get a big crowd. The preacher gets up there, and he really touches the heart strings, and then he calls for the commitment to get young people to commit themselves to full-time Christian service. The truth of the matter is that in a service like that, there's only one person that ought to be committed, and you know who that is, because he is leading people astray from the Word of God. There's no justification for this.

You and I cannot just decide to join the ranks of the disciples. You're already there. My number two son made a trip north the other day, and he had a layover in St. Louis. He was sitting in the airport, waiting for the time that he had to kill. And all of a sudden, a great big, tall, good looking Marine comes walking toward him. And there Harlan Mayes. And Harlan says, "What are you doing here?" And Steve says, "What are you doing here?" So, they just enjoyed fellowshipping with one another, and talking things over. But now suppose that Harlan had said, "Well, I'll tell you, Steve, I've been thinking about the military service, and I'm going to join the Marine Corps. That's what I'm doing here." At that point you might say, "Poor Harlan is off his rocker. He's already in the Marine Corps. How can he join what he's already in?

That's exactly what you're being asked to do when you're asked to dedicate your life to full-time Christian service, and become a disciple of Jesus Christ. You can be a pumpkin-poor disciple – that's true. But you are in full-time Christian service. You can be loafing on the job a great deal in your ambassadorship for Jesus Christ, but you are in full-time Christian service and there is no way around that. All the facets of a Christian's life are part of his service to God. There are no part-time servants – just sometimes some very poor servants.

**Called**

So, Paul makes a statement of fact: "Among whom you are." He says, "Constantly and regularly, you are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ:" "Among whom are you also." The word "you also" is referring again to the Christians in Rome who are part of Paul's area of ministry. "You also are part of the part of the world that I am ministering to:" "Among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ." The word "called" is the Greek word "kletos." "Kletos" is an adjective. You might expect a verb here. You might expect that the idea here would be: "Among whom are you also the having been called of Jesus Christ." But it is an adjective, and it just stands here all by itself. It's a word completely detached, but it refers back to these words "you also;" that is, to the Christians in Rome: "Among whom" (you who are in full-time Christian service by the fact that you have been born again) who are also called as I have been called, because Paul has referred previously to his own calling, both in the Christian life, and right off the bat in verse 1 to his authority as an apostle.

**Divine Election**

The word "called" refers to divine election. That is the selection of God, both for eternal life, and for a particular ministry: "You also are the called of Jesus Christ." And "of Jesus Christ" does not mean that Jesus Christ is the one who does the calling, but it means "those who belong to Jesus Christ." We, as called individuals, belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God the Father who call sinners to salvation. Romans 8:30 tells us that, as do Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:9; and, 2 Timothy 1:9.

**The Doctrine of Election**

So, we may translate this as: "The called ones belonging to Jesus Christ. This brings up the doctrine of election. Let's review it briefly in about six points, to be sure we have this clear. The word "kletos" refers to the concept of the election. These people are in full-time Christian service in Rome because God did something in the past on their behalf that has brought them into this situation.

1. **An Act of God**

Point number one is that election means a sovereign divine purpose formed independently of human merit, descent, or cooperation. God's election is apart from anything that has to do with man's choice; man's worthiness; or, man's cooperation. It is entirely an act of God. The word simply means "to choose." Election can be of a group, such as Israel. You have this in Isaiah 45:4. Or it can be a group like the church. You have this in Ephesians 1:4. Or election can be of a single individual (1 Peter 1:2). Election proceeds from the will of God (John 15:16). Why are you elected to eternal life? Because God chose you. It is the will of God that decides. Election is for salvation. John 15:19 tells us that. Election is also to a specific service (Acts 9:15).

We have many examples of divine election in the Word of God. In Genesis 12:2-3, you have an unconditional covenant declared to Abraham. It has seven "I wills." Those seven "I wills" represent the election of God.

The widow of Zarephath and Naaman are described in Luke 4:25-27. This is an example of divine election.

The virgin Mary is spoken of in Luke 1:28. That's divine election.

The 12 apostles were appointed by divine election (Luke 6:13).

Paul, in Acts 9:15, refers to his divine election.

Pharaoh was a product of divine election (Romans 9:14-24).

Cyrus, the king of the Medo-Persian Empire, was by divine election appointed to his role in the plan of God (Isaiah 45:1-4).

Election means a sovereign divine purpose formed independently of man.

1. **God has Chosen Some, but not All**

God has by elections chosen some to salvation, but not all. The word "election" itself implies choosing some, but not others. It is not merely that God plans to give salvation to those who believe. That isn't what it means – that God just plans to give salvation to those who believe. What it means is that God determines who will believe. While the Bible says that whosoever will may come, only those whom He wills to come will come. We cannot get around the fact that this is plainly what the Bible says.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 describe for us this election to salvation. However, I must caution you not to push this too far. The Bible never says that God elects anybody to be lost. The Bible recognizes that man is free to choose for or against salvation, and his own self-chosen rebellion brings upon him the consequences of eternal death. It is not that God makes that decision. We have to go only as far as what the Bible declares, and the Bible declares that some are chosen to eternal life. The reason you have believed today is because God chose you to eternal life. You are the elect. The only way we know your electors because you have received Christ as Savior.

The reason Jack Benny was buried in great magnificence and ceremony by his rabbi, but did not enter heaven, since he rejected Christ as Savior, is because Jack Benny was non-elect. The only way we know that is that he has come to the point of death having rejected the Messiah of Israel.

1. **Election was Accomplished in Eternity Past**

Divine election was accomplished in eternity past. In eternity past, the Godhead held a conference. In this conference, all was determined relative to human history. We call this theologically the doctrine of eternal decrees. This is described for us in Ephesians 1:4 and Act 15:18. In this conference were three identical persons: Father; Son; and, Holy Spirit – all with the same identical attributes of deity. But they each performed a different role at the conclusion of that conference. The Father was the author of the plan of salvation and of election. The Son subordinated Himself to the Father's will in order to enter the human race to die for sins. The Holy Spirit was given the role of empowering the Son in His humanity.

So, election does not take place in time. That's the point (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). God didn't merely purpose to send the gospel in eternity past. Men are not elected merely when they exercise positive volition in time toward the gospel. The world is filled with many unsaved elect people today. Many unsaved elect people are in the world today, and before they die, they will receive Christ as Savior. Personal faith in Jesus Christ does not determine your election. Rather, your election determines that you will have personal faith in Jesus Christ.

For some of you, this may be a hard saying, but this is what the Bible teaches, and we cannot go beyond what the Word of God explains to us, though I will grant you that, before you're through, there will be several questions you'll have in your mind that you wonder about. If you want a more detailed explanation of this doctrine, I would suggest that you get the first few takes on the book of Jude. There are several tapes (three or four in the series) that go into this in extensive detail in which we try to answer a lot of the questions that people bring up: "Yeah, but what about this and this?" And I think you'll find that perhaps that will answer questions that we won't touch on in this session.

1. **Election is not just Foreknowledge**

Election does not risk merely on foreknowledge. God did not elect people on the basis of His omniscience – knowing who would believe the gospel. That's the famous mistake. The idea is that election is the fact that God could look down the corridors of time, and He would see that so-and-so would believe; so-and-so would believe; and, so-and-so would not believe. But to say a thing like that is to declare that God is not omniscient. God had to look down the corridors of time, and then God said, "Oh, so so-and-so is going to believe the gospel. I might never have thought that." Or: "There's so-and-so. Now he surely would have believed, but he didn't." You have God discovering something. That is not so. The reason God knows who is going to believe is because His election has determined it. Nothing could be foreknown as certain which God has not first foreordained, nor even the other way around.

Romans 8:28-30 places God's purpose before foreknowledge, and then the rest of the chain to glorification. In that passage, the first thing that is stated is that God had a purpose. Then it says that foreknowledge comes after God's purpose determines something. That's how God knew before.

The divine decision on the death of Christ follows the same order (Acts 2:23). First there was purpose, then there was foreknowledge.

Romans 9:10-13 tells us that no personal act determines the destinies of Jacob and Esau. Before they were born, God had elected one to one role, and another to another role. They could not have had any part in it whatsoever. This was simply the determining purpose of the will of God.

1. **Election is Immutable**

Divine election is immutable. That means it is unchanging. No human will can frustrate the eternal decrees of God. Of course, the way this is pushed is to say, "Well, if I believe that, then I wouldn't ever tell the gospel to anybody. If God's will is immutable, and some individual is called to divine election to go to heaven, he's going to go to heaven. You're not going to stop this. I don't have to give the gospel." But what you are doing there is denying another doctrine, and that is that we are to go into all the world and give the gospel to every creature. That is God's order for bringing the elect into His family through witnessing to the gospel. So, that's no argument at all. It is simply saying that you won't do some other part of Scripture because you may not like this part of Scripture, or not fully understand how God works in election.

All expressions of human will have been accounted for within God's decrees, I can assure you. So, you're not going to come up with anything that's going to surprise God, or that's going to frustrate His plan. God's plans will be realized. 2 Timothy 2:18-19 and Romans 8:30 tell us that all come through the chain of salvation. None are left out.

1. **Election vs. Man's Freewill**

The relationship between divine election and man's free will is not revealed in Scripture. Thus we have many questions. God is sovereign by the fact that He is God. God's infinite wisdom governs His perfect righteousness and justice in divine election. Since He is God, He will do what is fair. He will do what is right. What governs that decision? We don't know. Whosoever may come to salvation is equally revealed in Scripture, along with the doctrine of divine election. You may choose your destiny, but we know from the Word of God that if you reject Christ, then the most fearful thing that you face is to die. When you die, you are going to enter a nightmare. The Word of God tells us that you must receive Christ or you cannot go to heaven.

You might want to be accommodating. You might want to be tactful. You might want to be a very cultural, or whatever you want to call it, with the general public. And you may not want to put it on the line and say, "If you do not receive Christ as Savior, you will die.

On a national television program many years ago, I happened to be watching Jack Paar. He had a famed evangelist on the program, and I was startled by the question that Paar put to the evangelist. Paar said, "Now, I hear all of this talk about salvation and eternal life. How does it apply to me? What does that mean? What does it mean?" What Jack Paar needed to be told was: "Christ has come to die for your sins. If you don't receive Him, you will spend eternity in the lake of fire, in conscious performance, and there'll be no return. And your experience will be that of the man in the Bible who gained the whole world and lost his own soul." That would have been quite startling to Mr. Paar. It would have clarified the issue for millions of people who are watching. Instead, the answer was, "Well, I have found that Jesus Christ really gives me a full and abundant life. He just meets my every need. I find that there are no answers to life except the life which I find in Christ. And it is the most wonderful life to know that He can be the Lord of my life, and these things we meet, we meet with His capacity behind us." Now, who's going to take issue with that? Will that get you into heaven? Never. Not for a moment.

So, we do not know the relationship between man's freedom and election. But man's freedom to choose is what God is going to hold you accountable for. And unless you have the right information, you won't even know what your options are, nor will you know what the results will be of a wrong choice. That's what you're doing with your soul when, in your freewill, you do not exercise the choice of Christ.

However, we cannot identify the elect from the mass of humanity. When we look out at people, we must say to all of them, "Whosoever will may come." We don't know who are the elect and who are the non-elect until they choose Christ.

So, that's what's behind this verse 6? "Among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ. You are permanently in full-time Christian service. Because of God's divine election, you have entered the family of God. You are gentiles. You are part of the nation's," Paul says, "to whom I have come to minister.

**The Greeting**

Then he comes to the greeting, and he indicates first the location of his readers: "To all that be in Rome." These are all of the Christians who are in imperial Rome. They are in a certain location. They are in a certain place.

Of course, you know that this is not just one single church. You know that the apostle Paul is not writing to the center of the known world, which has hundreds (and probably thousands) of believers scattered all over the city of Rome. You know that he is not writing to some church that gathers on Sunday. We have enough isagogical training in this church (background of Scripture training) such that you know that that's not how they did it. The way they met until the third century was in individual houses, in the homes of people. And they were small individual congregations that would pack in from a certain surrounding locality into a church service. They did not have a city transit system so they could hop in and go downtown to the big church. They had to go where they could walk in the time that they had to do it in. Most of them, perhaps, were slaves, and they had to get time off from their masters in order to attend the evening service. Each home was under the shepherding care of one pastor-teacher.

So, Paul says that he is writing to the Christians: "To the saints in Rome." He is not writing to the church in Rome, but he could have said the word "church," because all of these little individual local assemblies could have been viewed as the local church as a whole, which is existing in the city of Rome. Paul is writing to Christians all over the city. None of these churches have been founded by him. As a matter of fact, we have no record that these churches were founded by any other apostle, including Peter. Yet, Paul's apostolic authority does extend to them.

**The Roman Catholic Church**

These Christians are meeting as believers. Paul says, "I have a right to instruct you, and I have some important things to tell you, largely in preparation for the fact that I'm coming to Rome for some face-to-face meetings with you." When these separate churches in the city of Rome were drawn together under a unified ecclesiastical authority called the bishop, the Roman Catholic Church began. This is why the Word of God takes the position that each local church is to be autonomous (independent) – its own operation, with one controlling body: a congregation under whom there has been appointed a pastor-teacher who then has a cabinet or a board to assist him. That is God's order. But when these churches began to get themselves together under ecclesiastical authority, the Roman Catholic Church system began, and the result was a denomination.

**Denominations**

You may come together as a denomination, and I don't care how flexible you leave your denomination. If it is a denomination, there evolves a structure (a line of authority), and someplace along the line, there is somebody higher up that is in command of your church. There is somebody who, if not directly, is passing down influence to your work.

For example, you'll use the denominations literature. The people who write the literature can sway the whole denomination as to the slant they give the literature. Some denominations are waking up to that today, and they're struggling within themselves now to free themselves of influence from upper structures. They have discovered that they are not as independent as they thought they were.

I once spoke to three men. They were officials of a major denomination. As I spoke to them, I said, "It is our view here, at Berean Memorial Church, that God the Holy Spirit leads this body directly through its congregation, and through its leadership and the teaching of the Word of God." The spokesman of the group says, "Well, we believe that God leads our churches through our headquarters in downtown Dallas." Now, usually you don't hear it but that cleanly, but that was just as clean as you could have it. You could have no doubt about it: "We believe that God leads our churches through our headquarters office in downtown Dallas."

What was he saying? He was saying, "We've got churches united together," and every one of these churches that he was talking about are very proud of the fact that they're autonomous." You could go to one of them and say, "Do you have controls from up above that determine what you think and do in your church?" They would say, "We certainly don't." And they would be indignant that you should even suggest that. But they did. The literature determined what they were thinking. The pressures from officials above them guided them into actions that they would not ordinarily have taken. Their pastors found themselves on a pension program that was in the denomination.

I knew a pastor for many years. He was an older man. He'd been in this denomination for years. He was on the pension plan. He had come to a parting of the ways. I said, "Why do you stay in the denomination?" He said, "Well, I've got my pension. I have to have a few more years." Sure enough, just as soon as he filled out his years for his pension, he zapped out of the denomination. Don't tell me that that was an autonomous, independent church. Even the pastor wasn't autonomous and independent. If you're a preacher can't tell anybody to drop dead, you don't have a free and open pulpit. Do you know that? That is especially true if he can't say that the ecclesiastical authorities. When he can say that, you know that you're going to hear the Word of God. You know that you're going to hear application that's oriented to the Word of God. You may not agree. You may not like it. You may not accept it, but you know that you've got an open line of communication. And that is essential if you are going to know what God thinks.

**Beloved of God**

The apostle Paul is speaking to all these people in Rome as individual believers gathered in these various independent assemblies. He addresses them, first of all, as: "Beloved of God." The word "beloved" is the Greek word "agapetos." It is a technical title for the Lord Jesus Christ. You have this in Ephesians 1:6. The Lord is called: "The Beloved One." To God the Father, the Son is His Beloved One." Consequently, we who are in Christ are said to be "in the beloved."

So, God the Father loves us with the same intensity, and in the same way, that He loves His Son. That's what Paul means by this title, "Beloved of God." We are those who under God's special love because we are His children.

We have many people in this church who work with children in various ways: in our school; in our clubs; in our camps; and, in one way or another. They do that because they have a personal affection and love for these kids. Otherwise they wouldn't do the things that they do. They wouldn't put themselves out the way they do. But you may be sure that every one of them who has children of his own has a different kind of special, super, over-and-above love for his own kids than he has for all the others that he works with. That's what "agapetos" means: "In the beloved." Why? Because they're in my family. They're my children. And God loves you in a way that He does not love the unbeliever, because you are in His family.

**Saints**

Again, he uses the word "called," which is our same word again: "kletos." They are elected to be something, stressing the destiny of believers. And what is that? To be saints. The word "saints" is "hagios," which comes from "hagiazo." It's related to that word which means "to set apart" or "to sanctify." "Hagios" means "to set apart."

Now, how many saints do we have here today? How can we tell a saint? Well, we can tell it by the clothes you're wearing? No, that won't do it. Those of you who have come in rags tonight (and several have) are saints as much as the rich fat-cats we have. I don't know that we do. I'm just saying that. You can't tell by the clothes. You can tell by anything external. How are you going to tell who the saints are? Well, just look around. The folks who are smiling are the saints. The ones who never lack the smile – those are the saints. The guys who scowl – just steer clear of them. Those are the sinners.

Well, I'm happy to tell you, folks, that every Christian is a saint, because sainthood is determined by the fact of your position in Christ. Every believer has been set apart by divine election. At the point of time that he received Christ as Savior, he became part of the body of Christ. He was placed in Christ. This union, through believing the gospel, has made him a saint.

**Saintly**

The word "saint" does not apply to being saintly. Have you ever heard people react when they've done something, and maybe they're being rebuked for it, and they say, "Well, I don't pretend to be a saint." Now, what does a remark like that mean? "I don't pretend to be a saint." They mean that they equate a saint with somebody who acts nice, and who is a good person. But that is not what it means.

**Sinners vs. Saints**

For all of you who are here who have been born-again, the old name that the Bible applied to was "sinner." The new name is "saint." The difference between a sinner and a saint is the Savior Jesus Christ. A person goes immediately from the classification of sinner to the classification of saint. Many saints continue to act as if they're still sinners. But this in no way changes their position in Christ, and it no way changes their destiny.

**Sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church**

Now, of course, one of the groups that makes a real big thing over this sainthood business is the Roman Catholic Church. They have a system of sainthood which is both unscriptural and blasphemous. Here's how it works. A certain congregation in the Roman Catholic system will be asked to declare someone who has lived and died, and who has served the church, to be a saint. The soul of this candidate is viewed at this time as being in purgatory, suffering for his sins. So, the church appoints a committee. This committee brings charges against the candidate's memory. The head of the committee, has the last name of "advocatus diaboli," which means "the devil's advocate." And the devil's advocate leads his committee to find out everything bad that they can about this person that has been proposed for sainthood. They search all the records; they get all the testimonies; and, they spend sometimes years doing this.

At the same time, there is another group that is bringing together a complete defense for this candidate for sainthood. They look for all the witnesses they can get, and all the records they can of the candidate's saintliness, and they bring it together.

Now finally, to become a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, you have to have one supreme evidence. There must be evidence that a miracle or a healing took place. I think this is very fascinating. Everybody who is declared a saint in the Roman Catholic Church has, to the church's satisfaction, had an authenticated miracle or healing taken place at the person's grave, or as a result of being in the presence of a relic from this person: a bone from his body; a handkerchief that he used; or, something that's a relic associated with the person.

Now you can see what a field day Satan, the big healer, has. Satan, who is the big healer today in the charismatic movement, has a wowing, wonderful time here. As the Roman Catholic Church gets near to canonizing a person to declaring him a saint, Satan steps right in and gives them exactly what they're looking for.

**Beatification**

Well, finally, a trial is held. The bad things are brought out against the candidate. The other team refutes the evidence. If the person is found to be innocent of the wrong, then some ecclesiastical authority beatifies the candidate. That means that the person is now assumed to be out of purgatory, and in heaven.

**Canonization**

Then, after a few more years, while they're running a test case yet, the candidate goes through another ceremony called canonization, and he is declared to be a saint. Then all the extra works of merit that he did to get to heaven he no longer needs. What do they do with them? They are put into a pool that is at the disposal of the pope. These are called "works of supererogation." And you may go to the Roman Catholic Church and say, "I'd like to buy a handful of merits from the supererogation pool," and for a certain sum, you may purchase these. These are the extra merits of the saint that they didn't need to get to heaven, as well as those of Jesus Christ. That's where the old indulgence system of the Middle Ages, that so infuriated Luther, arose from.

Many people have, on this basis, been declared to be saints in the Roman Catholic Church over others who were Catholics. No American has ever made it. I don't know what that reflects upon us. I'm sorry to say today that no American has ever made sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church. Maybe that's a compliment. However, this is soon to be changed. In "The Review of the News" of December 25th of this year, we have this article entitled, "Mother Seton: First American Saint."

Vatican City, December 12th: "Pope Paul VI announces that he will proclaim six new saints during 1975 holy year, including Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American to be so designated. Mother Seton, who lived from 1774 to 1821, was first a New York socialite and mother of five children, three of whom died from tuberculosis, and one who was lost at sea. After the death of her husband, she converted to Catholicism in 1804, and moved to Maryland, where she founded the first Catholic preschool. In 1809, she formed a religious community, the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, and cared for the poor and the unfortunate. Mother Seton was first suggested for sainthood an 1882 by James Cardinal Gibbons. But it was not until 1957, after decades of extensive scrutiny of her life and writings, that the Vatican's Sacred Congregation of Rites declared that Mother Seton had lived a life of heroic virtue, the first condition for sainthood in the Catholic Church.

"In 1963, Pope John XXIII proclaimed her blessed after two verifiable miracles: a cancer cure; and, a leukemia cure had been attributed to her intervention. Two additional miracles are usually required for sainthood, but Pope Paul accepted a single cure – that of a Lutheran construction worker who recovered from meningitis of the brain in 1963. The canonization ceremony is set for September 14th, 1975."

There are the very steps that we described to you. She has been beatified. Now, the next step will be canonization in September of next year. Then she will become the first American who has reached sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church. That is blasphemy; that is religious; and, that is as offensive to God as it can be.

How refreshing it is to have the Word of God, and to realize that each of us sitting here tonight is a saint, not because of what we have done; said; or, written, but because of what Christ has done. That's what makes a person a saint – not what we have done. It is based upon the cross (Hebrews 13:12, Hebrews 10:10-14).

**Peace**

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, to be saints." Then he closes with that regular greeting: "Grace to you (unmerited favor) and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Peace is an attitude of mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Peace is not a feeling. It's an attitude of mind. It is ceasing from the warfare (Isaiah 48:22). Peace from God is in two forms. We have the peace *with* God, which has to do with our salvation. Then we have the peace *of* God, which has to do with our walk with the Lord. Peace with God comes to us in the way of salvation, by the grace of God when the unbeliever responds by faith to the grace of God. Romans 5:1 tells us that the result is peace. The peace *of* God is our Christian life (Philippians 4:7). That's experiential peace as we progress and experiential sanctification. It's our inner happiness (Isaiah 26:3-4). This is peace, which again can only come to us through grace.

"Grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ." God the Father is the author of the plan of salvation that Paul is preaching. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who makes that plan possible. God the Holy Spirit is not mentioned here, but He puts this plan into operation, because his role, the Bible tells us, is to glorify the Son, and to set Him forth as the faithful one who has performed what the Father has called Him to do.

The name "the Lord Jesus Christ:" The word "Lord" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Jehovah." It is the translation really directly of the Greek word "kurios," but "kurios" is a translation of the Hebrew word "Jehovah." The word "Jesus" is the translation of the Greek "Iesous," which is the translation of the Hebrew word "Joshua," which means "Savior." Christ is the translation of the Greek word "Kristos," which is a translation in turn of the Hebrew word "Messiah:" "the anointed one." The title that we have here, "the Lord Jesus Christ" is Jehovah Savior Messiah, stressing that He is the Supreme God; stressing that He is Savior; and, stressing that He is the promised one to Israel. No other name than the Lord Jesus Christ can be associated with the Father.

Wouldn't it have been monstrous for the apostle Paul to say, "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and from me, the apostle Paul." Or, "grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the virgin Mary." You can see how monstrous that would be. Nobody else can be associated with this name. And when God the Holy Spirit does it, He doesn't even include Himself. He includes the Father, and he honors and brings glory to the Son.

This causes the long sentence, which is arched from Paul, the man with whom they had no contact, through the authority that he holds, to the people to whom he is now going to write the most magnificent book in the New Testament Canon of Scripture – the most authentic, complete, systematic exposition of the gospel message. That we shall pursue further next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)