

VISION FOR THE WORD OF GOD
ROMANS

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Pauline Letters written for different purposes

I and II Corinthians, local church problems

Galatians, encouragement to remain faithful to Gospel rather than surrender to legalism or works righteousness

Philippians, I and II Thessalonians, remain faithful under persecution and tribulation

Romans, what we believe

Development of Christian doctrine

Contemporary Christians have a codified set of beliefs or doctrine (Nicene or Apostles Creed)

Early Christians had a message or sermon of salvation about Jesus (death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming, which they believed was imminent). Rest of the faith had to be worked out in time and through conflict, often in the midst of persecution and racial and ethnic prejudice.

A Different Kind of Letter for Paul

Primarily theological discussion, clarification of what we believe beyond---Jesus saves

The church at Rome was not established or founded by Paul

Rome was a dream destination; letter probably written from Corinth. Purpose of the letter was to lay the groundwork for his visit

Church at Rome

Consisted of about 12 house churches

Primarily Gentile with Jewish minority

Existed in the capital of paganism and political power: Corinth (Las Vegas); Athens (Boston/Cambridge); Ephesus (New York City); Galatia (Atlanta); Rome (Washington, DC)

Themes

Meaning of righteousness---right relationship with God through Jesus Christ

What righteousness does not mean

Cosmetics and dress

Rules and regulations

Reward or prize we earn: Sending up my timber everyday

Self-righteousness: If I live right, heaven belongs to me

Neither poverty nor prosperity

Righteous living is the fruit and evidence of salvation through the power, anointing and gifting of Holy Spirit

Right relationship with God is based upon God's full and total acceptance of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Romans 8: 31-39)

Election is based upon a decision to receive Jesus Christ not upon pre-selection

Holy Spirit as clarifier and interpreter of praying as we should and what we should

Right relationship with God must include right relationships with others (Romans 12)

Ongoing Jewish/Gentile Tensions

Akin to historic and ongoing tensions between blacks and whites

Reconciliation is never easy because of history and continued social and political conflict

Reconciliation must be intentional across several generations, or they will never be healed

Significant Personalities (Romans 16)

Deacon Phoebe (vss. 1-2)

Priscilla and Aquila (vss. 3-5)

Rufus and his mother (vs. 13; Mark 15: 21)