

Lesson #6A

BACKGROUND

Acts 2 gives us the background of these local churches in Rome. In 31 AD, Jews from Rome heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost. Some believed in Jesus and took the message back with them. At first they met in Jewish synagogues. When they were kicked out, they met in private homes. Their numbers grew as Jews from other places moved to Rome and worshipped with them. In time, several churches develop. (Romans 16:5, 14, 15) All the teachers are Jewish believers. As Gentiles come, they believe and learn from them. Because there are no New Testament books for the first 20 years, all study is from the Old Testament. The emphasis is still on keeping God's laws.

Over the years, militant Jews also move to Rome in order to create riots and chaos in the streets. They are trying to overthrow the Roman government. So in 49 AD, Claudius Caesar expels all Jews from Rome. With only Gentile believers left in the local churches, they become the leaders and teachers. Five years later, Nero become Caesar in 54 AD and allows the Jews to return. As Jewish believers return to the churches, there are problems. Some **Gentile** believers have become anti-Semitic and think God is finished with the Jews - He has **permanently** replaced them with the Church. Only Gentile believers should be in charge of local churches. Others think anything Jewish is outdated and no longer has value. **Jewish** believers resent this. They begin to teach that Jews are better than Gentiles. Circumcision marks them as belonging to God. Gentile believers have to follow Jewish laws to be completely right with God.

The local churches still believe in Jesus, but the good news of how to be right with God has gotten distorted. Paul hears about it in 56 AD, while in Corinth. He writes a letter, explaining he wants to visit them after his trip to Jerusalem. He wants to use Rome as a new base of ministry, to take the gospel to Spain. He also uses this letter to remind the churches about the basics of salvation - being right with God. He is mainly writing Gentile believers. But he also addresses Gentile unbelievers and Jewish believers to clarify their understanding of being right with God. A woman named Phoebe, a leader in a nearby church, is traveling to Rome and takes the letter.

THEME SALVATION - How to be right with God**OUTLINE**

Thru faith in Jesus, there is...

- I. Personal Salvation for all who believe 1 - 8
 - They are saved from the penalty of sin 1:1 - 5:11
 - They are saved from the power of sin 5:12 - 8:39
- II. National Salvation for the Jews 9 - 11
- III. Practical Salvation for believers to live 12 - 16

DEFINITIONS

A righteousness from God Salvation; a way to be right with God

Law The meaning depends on context. It can mean...

- > All 613 of God's laws to Old Testament Jews
- > Just the 10 Commandments
- > All of the Old Testament
- > What people instinctively know about God's requirements

(law written on the heart).

God's wrath/anger God's judgment; His response to injustice, disobedience or evil

Justified Fine / payment paid in full

Reconciled No longer separated from God

Righteous Right, declared "not guilty"

Death Separation

Sin Sin nature

We died to sin We have been separated from the power of the sin nature

QUOTATION

Socrates said to Plato (400 BC) *It may be God can forgive sin, but I do not see how.* Romans 1-8 is God's answer.



EXPLANATIONS

Chapter 1 The pattern of what God does and how peoples and society respond

God has given instinctive knowledge to all peoples thru creation. See Psa. 19:1-4. They know there is a Supreme Being who made it, who is eternal, with divine nature and power. But instead of responding to that knowledge, society chooses to replace Him with idols or things. When they get more truth about Him, they choose to reject or distort that truth. After taking a final look at Him, they refuse to give Him any further consideration. God then has to respond - He has to bring judgment on that nation or society. His judgment is to take His hands off of that society and remove all restraints to let it do whatever it wants. He gives it total freedom. Unrestrained freedom means unrestrained violence, immorality, intolerance and hatred. Rom. 1:28-32 God is revealing His **judgment** on the wickedness of Roman *society*, by giving it unrestrained freedom. But He is also revealing His **salvation** for *individuals* in that society.

Roman and pagan societies instinctively know what is right thru creation.

Chapter 2

Gentiles in the local churches know what is right from conscience. Jews know what is right thru God's laws. But in the first century, Jews are known for all the wrong they did 2:21-24

In 19 AD Jewish leaders collected money from Roman widows for the temple in Jerusalem and then **stole** it.

In 49 AD Jews were expelled from Rome for **rioting** and causing chaos in the streets.

Jews often went into Roman pagan temples to **rob** them of jewels and gold.

Jewish rabbis flaunted their relationships of **adultery**, wrote about them and were **proud** of them.

Chapter 3 See verses 21-26 in the Living Bible to understand Paul's theological terms.

The 10 Commandments are like a mirror. Their purpose is to *show* us our lives are not clean - we do not meet God's standards. But the commandments cannot *make* us clean - that is not their purpose. The good news, the Gospel, is that salvation (making us clean), apart from the law, has been declared. It comes thru faith in Jesus to all who believe. 3:21-22.

Explanation of Paul's theological words.

A criminal is caught in the act. In justice, the judge must declare the criminal guilty and pronounce the sentence - a fine of 300 dollars. If he wants to show mercy, the only way he can do it fairly, is to step down as judge and write a check for 300 dollars from his own personal account. He has required the fine, but then paid it, so the criminal does not have to. The judge then puts the check on the table in front of the criminal.

The criminal now has to make a choice. If he accepts the payment, he does not have to make it himself. He is free from the penalty. If he refuses and wants to do it his way, then the judge has no alternative. He must withdraw his mercy and demand justice. The criminal must make the payment himself.

This is a picture of Jesus and us. Jesus is perfect. Only those who are perfect can live in His presence. We are not perfect so in justice, He must pronounce us guilty and demand the penalty - separation from Him forever. It is the penalty of our disobedience. But then in mercy, Jesus stepped down as judge, left heaven and came to this earth. He made the payment for us. While on the cross, all the sin of the human race, for all time, was put on Jesus. He was separated from God the Father in our place. Jesus paid our fine. Now we have to choose - will we accept His payment or turn it down?

If we turn it down, we will have to pay it ourselves. We will be separated from the Father. If we accept Jesus' payment, God the Father declares 3 things: *Your fine is paid in full; you are **justified**.*

*You are no longer separated from Me; you are **reconciled**.*

*You are not guilty; you are **righteous**; you are right with God.*

Chapter 5

If I accept the check, the judge declares I am free from the penalty. It has nothing to do with my feelings. But the more I start believing it, the more I will enjoy the results of his statement.

When we accept the payment of Jesus, the Father declares we are free from the penalty. It does not matter how we feel. But the more we start believing it, the more we will enjoy and experience the results. We have peace with God. We have joy and access to grace. The Holy Spirit will fill us with a sense of God's love so we will not be disillusioned in time of suffering. We will discover suffering brings trust and development of character.



EXPLANATIONS *continued*

Paul summarizes these salvation concepts thru contrast.

Sin and guilt came thru Adam and brought separation from God.

Rightness and acceptance by God comes thru Jesus and brings eternal life.

Chapter 6 *We died to sin*

We have been separated from the power of the sin nature. This involves 3 time periods.

We died **potentially** when Jesus died in the first century. He made it possible.

We died **actually** when we accepted Jesus' payment for us as individuals.

We are dying **practically** from that time to the present.

Chapters 6-8

Chapter 6 says there are two power sources in our life: the sin nature and our new nature.

Chapter 7 says there is a struggle between these two power sources. We can choose the connection.

Chapter 8 describes our life when we are controlled by the Holy Spirit and our new nature.

APPLICATION

Nationally

The United States started with a well-developed knowledge of God based on Judeo-Christian principles. Even up to the 1950's, people still accepted them. But then little by little, our society began to replace God with things. Then it began to distort the truth about God. And more recently, after taking a final look at God, the majority in our society have decided to not even include Him in their thinking.

Obviously God has to respond - He has to bring judgment. His judgment is not to zap us or destroy our nation. Based on Romans 1, God's response - His judgment on our nation has been to take His hands off society - to remove His restraints to let society do whatever it wants. The result is open mockery of all things Christian - decisions by federal and local courts against Judeo - Christian principles - leaders who openly speak against godly values. When God in His judgment, gives a nation total freedom to do anything it wants, these are the results. Unrestrained freedom means unrestrained violence, immorality, intolerance and hatred.

Personally

To be saved from the **penalty** of sin: *Rightness with God is not achieved, but received.* (Jerome Commentary, p. 302)

To be saved from the **power** of sin: "It all depends on which nature I feed".

We need to fill or nourish our mind and soul with things that honor God...

...With the beauties of creation, of art, music or literature; with good movies, healthy sports, relationships and ministry.

...With continual knowledge of God and His Word; with obedience in what He shows us to do and dealing with disobedience that He points out.

The wonder and good news of our salvation is:

We are free from the penalty of sin - we can spend eternity with God.

We are free from the power of sin - we do not have to be under its control.

We are free from condemnation and nothing can separate us from God's love.

We have so much to be thankful for!

