

THE MESSAGE OF ROMANS

Introduction – Sometimes we interpret what the Bible teaches through a series of proof texts. We need to place these verses in the context of the whole book and the larger message of the Bible.

A. The theme of the Roman letter – Romans 1:16-17

The kind of faith that Paul is presenting can be found in the book of Habakkuk. The prophet calls for the people of God to continue to trust in the ultimate justice/righteousness of God even when good people are oppressed, experience deprivation, and suffer injustice.

B. The message of the Old Testament is about the mighty acts of God for his people's salvation. The story begins with creation, followed by rebellion/sin, the promise to the patriarchs, deliverance from Egyptian slavery, guidance through the wilderness journey, the giving of the Law, and the gift of the Promised Land by conquest. Romans uses all these Old Testament themes to describe our salvation in Christ.

1. Romans 1 tells us that God has revealed his nature in the physical creation.
2. Chapter two says that with or without the Bible people have rebelled against the knowledge of God.
3. The gift of the Law did not save the Jews, but served as condemnation of their sinful behavior (Rom. 3).

Romans 3:21-26

4. Abraham is an example of the radical faith Habakkuk called for, because he believed even when God's promise seemed impossible (Rom. 4).
5. Just as sin came into the world through one man, Adam, so eternal life comes through one man, Christ (Rom. 5).
6. We are slaves to sin and can only be delivered by our participation in the life of Jesus by obedient faith (Rom. 6).
7. The Bible is righteous but we are not. We cannot save ourselves, but are dependent on the mercies of God (Rom. 7).
8. We are lead by the Spirit, like Israel was in the wilderness journey (Rom. 8).
9. Our promised hope is found in our resurrection and the redemption of the whole creation (Rom. 8).

10. The final mighty act of God in creating the covenant community of God in the Old Testament was the conquest of Canaan (Rom. 8).

Romans 8:37-39

- C. The rejection of the gospel by the majority of Jews and the existence of the Temple in a nationalistic Israel presented a serious issue when Paul wrote the letter in the middle of the first century.

Romans 10:1-4

1. Paul agonized over Israel's rejection of the gospel which is the perfect ending to their story (Rom. 9).
 2. The history of the Old Testament shows that only a remnant ever received the promises of God (Rom. 10-11).
- D. Paul's practical application of the gospel to the life of the church in Rome (Rom. 12-16).
 1. Christians are urged to obey Roman law and create a harmonious community characterized by love.
 2. We must not let matters of opinion become divisive or destructive within the diverse fellowship of the church.
 3. Paul planned to come to Rome after he took a special contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem.
 4. Paul concluded the letter with greetings and warnings in chapter 16.

Conclusion – The message of Romans rings true for us today: Romans 12:1-2; 15:4-7; 13.

(There will be no discussion groups today since we are having a fellowship meal.)