

I. The Importance of the Book of Romans

We started our introduction to the Book of Romans, and we are going to continue with it. We did not get through it all. There is so much that you need to understand about the Book of Romans before you even attempt to get into the Book of Romans that we just need to focus on that for a couple of weeks and really get our understanding set.

I told you last week that from a Christian standpoint, the Book of Romans, without a doubt, is the most important book in the Bible. As you saw from last week, I hope that really every other book in the Bible for you and me as a Christian, for what we do or what we do not do, is interpreted in the light of the Book of Romans. It is the key for what we have to do. We have talked about that.

I told you how the Book of Romans is really the benchmark. It is the measure not only for understanding the Bible, but certainly for ministry. Last week, I told you that the Book of Romans is absolutely essential for you if you are ever going to really be totally effective. I am not saying you cannot do some things for God. I am not saying that you will not do some things for God. But if you are going to understand who God is, and you are going to understand your job as a minister, and really get your understanding and your feet down firmly on the Bible, the Book of Romans is an absolute necessity. It is the measure by which all things are judged for the church.

Remember last week, we began to lay out some background, and I talked first of all about some phrases and some key words, and then we moved into the five concepts that really break the book down. We got through a couple of those, and I told you how the first one, just to kind of recap it, the first one we talked about how important understanding the placement of the Book of Romans is in your Bible. Romans is unlike any other book you are ever going to read in the Bible. When you try to approach Romans like you do all the other books of the Bible, it is going to be a problem for you because it is simply not written the same way.

So I showed you last week how you have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then the Book of Acts. Those books are primarily historical books. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John bring you through the first coming of Christ at the end of each of those books. The Lord Jesus Christ is crucified and then He resurrects at the end of each of those books. And then in the Book of Acts, you see basically what we call the Book of Acts, but the full name for the Book of Acts is the Acts of the Apostles. And that is very instructive in itself because it shows you what the Apostles are doing after the resurrection of Christ. The Book of Acts is another key book in your Bible that at some point we are going to have to get down, but it bridges from the first four historical books to the Book of Romans. That is really what it does.

And in the Book of Acts, we have talked about this many, many times on Thursday night, we find a transition going on from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Once we get into the

Book of Romans, the church then is fully transitioned, and we now have the book that really has all the doctrinal things that we need to have as a church.

We talked about the mission of Paul and Paul as the man of God that God called to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. I showed you how every facet of New Testament Bible Christianity is defined and placed in its proper context within the Book of Romans. And you remember I mentioned and we talked about:

- The righteousness of God
- The faith of God
- The truth of God
- The salvation of God
- The forgiveness of God
- The gospel of God
- The power of God
- The love of God
- The wrath of God

Those are the basic concepts by which the New Testament church is built on. And Romans really deals with that. Romans shows you basically, if somebody would say to me, "What do you think is the one thing Romans does above everything else? If you could just boil it down to the bottom line, what is the one thing that Romans does?" And the one thing that Romans does is shows you how God thinks about the New Testament church. And that is an incredible concept because your job and my job is to find out and know the mind of God.

Romans shows you what God hates. Romans shows you what God loves. Not only that, but the Book of Romans shows you who God hates and who God loves. And it is one of those things where once you really understand the Book of Romans, it is really God's thought process. And the older you get in the Lord, the more you ought to think through that process.

My wife's favorite saying to me, she will say, "You know, Robert, I have been married to you for over 30 years, and I know how you think, and I know what you are going to say." And she is usually right. And somebody will say to her, "Well, why don't you have Bob do this?" And she will say, "Oh, no, he will never do that." And she is right. She has been with me long enough that she knows in most cases how I react or what I think about whatever I think about and how I react to it.

You know what? That is the beauty of being married in a good relationship for a long number of years. When the Bible talks about the two becoming one, that is part of that process. Through the time spent together and all the issues of life you go through, you pretty much know how the other one thinks and how the other one is going to react to something. I know when I do something that I should not have done, how she is going to react to it. Now, it does not stop me from doing it, but I know that I better cover my tracks someplace because that is just the process.

And the tragedy is that most married couples sometimes do not have that. They never get that. They are married for 20, 30, 40 years, but they never get that kind of relationship. And yet that is

the kind of relationship we should have with God. You ought to know how God thinks about every circumstance in life. You ought to know when you hear something on TV, when you hear something on the radio. And I will tell you, there are some incredible things going on in the media right now, just in general. And it is absolutely hilarious if you have any kind of knowledge about the Bible. These presidential elections coming up are just a hoot. I mean, it is absolutely incredible what is going on out there. And of course, you have every facet of talk radio.

From time to time, some of you come in and talk to me about you are driving over to my house or you are driving home from work and you hear some religious topic discussed in the Bible on the radio. And it is a great advantage that when you hear something, you know if it is truly how God feels and truly what God thinks about that whole scenario. The longer you walk with God, the more you should know how He thinks, and not only how He thinks, but how He acts. And you ought to take those things and apply them into your own life. And it is just the way it should work.

And of course, that is what Romans does. Romans shows you when it comes to the church and what the church is supposed to believe. And as the church breaks itself down, it goes into every aspect, even into your own personal life. And we will see that here in a little bit. It tells you what you should think about it because it shows you what God thinks about it. And you hear me say it all the time, and I will continue to say it because it is something that needs to be drilled into every one of us. And that is the mark of every Christian is someone who looks at the Bible and looks at life and realizes that the Bible is God's opinion on everything in life. And then you make that opinion your opinion.

Well, when it comes to the church, when it comes to the basic foundational things that you and I as the body of Christ are to know, we are to practice, and we are to apply to our lives, that is the Book of Romans. You want to know what God thinks about the church? And my goodness. All you have to do is turn the TV on in the morning and listen to about five or six guys out there, and you know that they have not got a clue of what is going on.

Last night, I had my first class in the Book of Judges with Jamie's group, which is my favorite group, by the way. And we were talking about really understanding the Book of Judges from a purely practical standpoint. And I told them that the Book of Judges was really one of the weirdest books in the Bible. There is so much stuff going on in Judges that absolutely does not make any sense. I mean, it is the most off-the-wall stuff you have ever seen in your life. And I told them, many people have a problem with Judges because they look at that and they say, "Wow, if that is the way God does things, man." I even had a person tell me one time, he looked and read a story in there and he said, "You know what, if that is the way God does things, I do not want anything to do with God."

Now I looked at him and I said, "I agree with you." And he said, "Well, what do you mean you agree with me? You are a preacher." And I said, "Well, I agree with what you just said. If that is the way God does things, I do not want anything to do with Him either." Now the issue is God did not do that. The Book of Judges is interpreted in the light of the last chapter and the last verse where it simply says that there was no king in Israel, and every man was doing what was right in

his own eyes. You take that Old Testament story that is true about God's nation, which is true, and then you make the parallels right over to the church where you and I are at today, and we have the same issue.

You know what, there is no king in this world today. There is no final authority in Christianity. There is absolutely nothing that you can bet your soul on as far as Christianity is today because they have lost the Word of God. And Christians do whatever they want to do. Christians do whatever they want to do. And they have no idea, no concept of the fact that the Book of Romans was written to show you specifically how we should operate as the body of Christ. And it is a great book in that aspect.

II. The Breakdown of the Book of Romans

Now the second thing, and we started this last week but we never got through it fully, was the breakdown of the book itself. Now in your Bible, there is a natural breakdown. Bible scholars do not believe this. Pastors do not believe this. And most Christians do not believe it either because they do not get it when they get what the guys teach them. But the bottom line is that God just did not write a book without giving you the order of the book and everything and the structure within that book. And when God wrote the Bible, He is the author of it from beginning to end. And you are going to have to understand and realize that in the Bible itself there is a natural breakdown. That natural breakdown contains the whole Bible. And then each book of the Bible has a natural breakdown. And then the chapters have a natural breakdown.

I call it the skeleton system of the Bible. Your body would not be much good without its skeleton. And inside all the muscle and the bones and the fat and the capillaries and the blood vessels and all of the things in your body, there is a framework called a skeleton. It is the thing that gives your body the mobility, the thing that gives it the stability. And of course, the Bible is the same way. The skeleton structure of the Bible is what gives it its being. And that is what happens when you get into the Bible and you do not see these things and you do not have these things.

So we talked about that there are five sections that the Book of Romans is broken down around that you need to get.

1. The historical section: Romans 1-5
2. The doctrinal section: Romans 6-8
3. The prophetic section: Romans 9-11
4. The practical section: Romans 12-15
5. The conclusion: Romans 16

Now, when we study the Book of Romans, that is how we are going to approach it. I will talk about and keep before you these five sections all the way through our study because that is the key. In other words, when we study the Book of Romans, we are going to study five books separately. So, we are going to take the first section and the historical section, and we are going to thoroughly understand it. Then we are going to move into the doctrinal section, and we are going to thoroughly understand that. Then we are going to move into the prophetic section, and

we are going to thoroughly understand that. Then we are going to come back to the practical section, and we are thoroughly going to understand that, and then we will get into the conclusion, and we will tie the whole thing together.

Romans is the key because it is the first book after the historical books that bring you up into the New Testament in the early history. You find the first five books bring you through the life of Christ, the crucifixion, the death, burial, and resurrection, and then you get into the Book of Acts. And then Romans is the book that sets the New Testament Christian in a New Testament church on the bedrock of New Testament groundwork or framework, which is the doctrines of the Bible.

And within these five divisions, you are going to find basically six changes that take place. This is very important that you understand it. We are going to go through these. And basically, I am over-viewing it now, but we are going to take these apart as we go through. Within these five divisions or these five books within the Book of Romans, you are going to have six changes that God has set in motion with the New Testament church.

6. We are moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament. To define that even a little bit better, we are moving from the kingdom of heaven into the kingdom of God. And if you have been around any length of time, you should understand that concept. But basically, we are going from the Old Testament to the New Testament.
7. The second thing that is taking place is that he is laying out now that there is a different thought process that the Jew has that the Gentile has. And when he writes the Book of Romans, what he wants to do is he wants to show you as the church that you and I are going to have to deal with the different people groups. You and I are going to have to deal with Gentiles. You and I are going to have to deal with Jews. So he takes time in the Book of Romans to show you how they think because you do not approach them and deal with them the same way. And so he takes that aspect and he shows you the thought process between the Jew and the Gentiles.
8. There is confusion in the early church. When you get into the New Testament, some of the books of the Bible are written to help people deal with some of the issues that have come up because the churches now change the whole concept of things. In the book of 1 Corinthians, the church at Corinth has some real issues and struggles because they do not understand the complete changeover. In the book of Galatians, they are having a struggle, and you have some people now that the church has come into effect, and there are some people showing up saying, "Well, no, no, the church is here, but if you are a New Testament Christian, that does not mean the Old Testament is done away with. It simply means that now you take some of the Old Testament, the law, and you take some of the New Testament, the grace, and you make a blend between the two." And that is simply the problem that Galatians were having. And that is why when they wrote the book of Galatians, Paul is dealing with that, and he tells them, "You have been fooled. There are some people that are trying to take from you what God has given you."
9. We find that there is an issue of understanding and the fact that the Gospel has went from the Jew to the Gentile. And you find that Peter has a problem with that. Most of the Jews in Jerusalem have a problem with that, and they iron it out in the Book of Acts. But you are

going to find that a lot of things changed and a lot of things happened that, and a lot of things quit happening that used to happen in the Old Testament. And one of the things Romans does, the Book of Romans does, is it puts you and I on solid ground. It puts you and I on a bedrock foundation that we should not be confused about what we should believe. That is what Romans does. It ends the controversy and the confusion that was going on around this particular time. And they were having a problem between the difference of law and grace and how it affects you.

10. The New Testament doctrine with the church is built after Christ's death. It is firmly planted here. And then the fifth thing is he talks about how you and I are to minister to people in the New Testament, saved and lost. He goes through every aspect of what you and I should be and then how you and I should minister in that concept.
11. The last thing that he deals with, the sixth thing, is the fact that one of the greatest concepts is the fact that God, even though He has put away the Old Testament nation of Israel and He has turned His attention to the Gentiles, God is not finished with the Jew.

So these are six things that are really changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament that Paul in these five divisions in his books deals with. And as I said, when we come through it, we will come through it in an exhaustive way. We are going to deal with every aspect about it. There is so much here, and we will try to get it together as we put it all together.

III. Chapter-by-Chapter Breakdown of Romans

Now the third thing that we want to look at here is getting the right breakdown of the chapters. The books break down into five sections. The chapters break down. Each one of them deals with a different issue, and these are vitally important. And I am going to go through these today just so you have them because you need to put them somewhere in the beginning of the Book of Romans so you can see how Romans brings itself down.

- Romans 1: The Gentile Mindset
- Romans 2: The Jewish Mindset
- Romans 3: The Inability of Law and Conscience
- Romans 4-5: God's Righteousness as the Solution
- Romans 6-8: The Christian's Relationship to the World
- Romans 9-11: Prophetic Chapters on Israel and Gentiles
- Romans 12-15: Practical Chapters on Ministry and Relationships