

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2017 10:57 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 1:1-17

According to John MacArthur, the "gist" of Paul's message in Romans is given "right up front"--in the first seven verses of his epistle! Paul obviously just couldn't wait to announce the "good news" of salvation--for all people-- which was "promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures!" This would obviously include, for example, the promise to Abraham (in Genesis 12:3) that "through his descendants all the people of the world would be blessed!" And the prophecy of Isaiah about how "a child would be born...a Son would be given... and his name would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace..." (Isaiah 9:6-7) And about the "beautiful feet" of him that would bring the "good news of salvation..."! And lots more!

The "gist" of Paul's message is that all this had actually now come about! It's the good news of the Gospel! And it concerns God's Son--"Jesus Christ our Lord...who was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead...through whom we have received grace..." And Gentiles too are now "called to be saint"!

Paul no doubt wanted to get into all the doctrinal detail "right off the bat"--but he needed first to establish his credentials and authority to be the spokesman for such a revolutionary, world-changing message. He claims to be a "bond-servant of Christ Jesus..." but, more importantly, "called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God"! According to Acts 1:22, an apostle, among other things, had to be a "witness to the resurrection of Christ"! And Paul qualified, since he had miraculously encountered the resurrected Jesus on the Damascus Road--as he testified to in other writings! But, most importantly, he was "called by God" to be an apostle!

Paul's passion for reaching out to the Christians in Rome is clearly in view in the second part of last nite's study--in verses 8 through 15. Call it his "quest"! He was so overwhelmed by "how their faith was being proclaimed throughout the world"! He expresses his desire to see them personally, and he wrote that he "unceasingly mentions" them in his prayers! But, mostly, he wants to explain--according to Moo--how God's "new work in Christ" can integrate both Jews and Gentiles in "one new people"! And he'll get to that one too!

And there's one final piece of our study and that's found in verses 16 and 17--which Moo calls the "hinge" between the introduction (as discussed above) and the "body" of the letter which follows! Vs. 16-17 also happen to be our memory verses for this study. Paul writes "unabashedly"--almost as an understatement for him: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek! For in it the righteousness of God (translate that as "that comes from God"!) is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith!" (And all that will also be made clearer as we get more into the study!)

And so, in our last nite's study in Romans, we saw the "gist" of the message (vs. 1-7); the "quest" of Paul in wanting to reach and teach the Roman Christians (vs. 8-15); and the "hinge" which connects it all to the rest of the story of Romans!

And among the "take-away" questions for us: are we clear about the "gist" of the Gospel? And are we ready to share it with others? And do we have some of the same concern and passion for others as Paul demonstrates for us, in his letter to the Roman Christians? As Isaiah put it: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news...who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reign!"

On to Romans 1:18-32 for next week's lesson! And remember, good news is only good if there's also "bad news" in the big picture! And that's one of the things we'll be talking about when we meet again!

Have a great week, men!

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