

## =THE EPISTLES=

### Lesson 1

#### Paul's Epistle to the Romans

AIM: to teach my pupils the general teaching of the Book of Romans, as we begin a new series of lessons on the Epistles.

POINT OF CONTACT: Since the Book of Romans is about the Gospel (Romans 1:1), ask the class what is the best news they ever heard, or ask the class some good bits of news they received. Let them share with each other some bits of good news that they have known in their lives. Then emphasize the importance that the best news in the world is the news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, and His willingness to save sinners!

#### I. GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE BOOK OF ROMANS THAT EVERY PERSON SHOULD KNOW:

1. The writer is the Apostle Paul. This is the same person whose life is recorded in the Book of Acts and who wrote much of the New Testament.
2. It was written probably from Corinth.
3. It was written because Paul was soon to visit Rome. He wanted to announce his coming and also alert the Roman people as to what he was going to preach to them and what he believed. He wrote concerning the great doctrines of the Bible. He also wrote to let them know that the Gospel is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. This, of course, was because Rome was a Gentile city, though there were some Jews who lived there.
4. The key verse to Romans is Romans 1:16. This verse should be committed to memory and could well be used as a memory verse for the lesson.
5. This Epistle was the sixth in the chronological order of Paul's Epistles.
6. Romans is divided into two great divisions: chapters 1-11 and chapters 12-16.
7. The pivotal verse of Romans is Romans 12:1. This is the connecting verse between these two great divisions. The first division tells of the great doctrines of the Christian faith; the second division tells us how we ought to live because of these doctrines. In other words, the second division gives the practical outworking of these doctrines.

#### II. THE FIRST GREAT DIVISION: ROMANS 1-12.

1. The depravity of man, Romans 1:1 - Romans 3:20. Paul is giving the Roman people the Gospel. This must start with man's condition before God. Chapter 1 deals with the degradation of man and the progression of man going deeper and deeper into sin. This reveals the condition of man. Especially would this be true in verses 21-32. Notice the progression in these verses: First they knew of the true God but did not glorify Him; then, because of this, they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. When a man refuses to follow God, then he himself becomes wise, as you find in verse 22 (that is, at least, wise in his own eyes), and he becomes as a fool. This is the process of education without God. Once a man refuses God, he tries to think up his own god and becomes wise in his own mind because he has rejected the God of the Bible. The next step is in verse 23. After a man becomes wise, he changes the glory of God and makes his own god, which means idolatry is the result of wisdom of man, not ignorance of man. When a man leaves God out of his wisdom, then his own wisdom is all that is left. Then he makes his own god, as found in verse 23. Idolatry always brings lewdness, sensuality, etc., as verse 24 shows. Man goes into sensual living because he has left the true God. Then, as verse 25 shows us, the next step is where man begins to serve the creature more than the Creator. This is humanism; this is why we are not surprised that theologians come out with "God is dead," etc. Because man has left the true God and the only sense of morality, he then goes into all kinds of vile sin, as found in verses 26-32.

The above would be good for adults. For children, chapter 3 would be good to show the depravity of man. Especially is this true in Romans 3:9-20. You could draw a man on the chalkboard; as you come to each one of these particular parts of his body which is sinful, you could draw that part and show that man is all sinful.

The main teaching, whether for children or for adults, is that man is depraved. That means he cannot save himself. He is lost and is sinful.

2. Justification, Romans 3:21 - Romans 5:11. Since Paul has established man's condition before God as depraved and man's inability to save himself, he turns to the great doctrine of how a man can be saved and justified in the sight of God. He explains in Romans 3:28 that this is not by the Law and, in Romans 4:5, that this is not by works. Justification is a righteous declaration by a holy God declaring the sinner as righteous as Jesus Christ and Jesus as sinful as the sinner. This is done the moment a person puts his faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Sanctification, Romans 5:12 - Romans 7:25. Sanctification comes from the word which means "to set apart" or "to be set apart." When a person is justified, then he needs to grow in grace. Sanctification has three main aspects. Someone has outlined it like this: "I have been sanctified; I am being sanctified; I shall be sanctified." "I have been sanctified" means that, as far as my soul is concerned, it has been saved and completely set apart unto God; and in the sight of God, I am righteous. "I am being sanctified" means that, as far as my life is concerned, I am growing in grace and becoming more set apart every day. "I shall be sanctified" means that my body someday shall be like His and I shall be completely holy, even as Jesus is holy.

The key verses are Romans 7:22-25. This tells us about the constant war going on between the Spirit and the flesh. This would especially be interesting for children. Explain to them that the battle is constantly raging and we are constantly to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The Holy Spirit, Romans 8. This is another of the great doctrines Paul sets forth. Go through the chapter. Find out how many times the word "Spirit" is mentioned. Then explain to the pupils what the Holy Spirit does. For example, in verse 14, He leads; in verse 16, He assures; in verse 11, He resurrects. This would be an interesting study in itself, especially when teaching adults.
5. Israel, Romans 9-11. Do not take time to teach this in detail. Mention it in passing.

### III. THE SECOND GREAT DIVISION: ROMANS 12-16.

1. Romans 12-16 deal with the practical side of the Christian life. Because we were depraved, have been justified, are being sanctified, and have the Holy Spirit with us now, therefore we should present our bodies a living sacrifice. Notice several words in Romans 12:1. The word "beseech" means "beg." The word "present" means "yield." The word "sacrifice" means that God does not want a dead sacrifice but a living sacrifice. He wants our bodies. In verse 2 the word "conformed" means "fashioned," just like the fashioning of a dress upon a model. The word "transformed" means "transfigured." It is the same word which is used in the Transfiguration of Christ. The word "prove" means "to know for sure." In other words, because of all the aforementioned doctrines, we should present our bodies a living sacrifice. In Romans 12 we find what this means, as we relate ourselves properly in service for God and in our relationship with fellow man.
2. Romans 13 deals basically with our relationship with our government and higher powers. Because we are Christians, we should be better citizens. This is an interesting chapter and could well be taught to young people concerning obeying the law, etc., which is so needed in our generation.
3. Romans 14 and 15 deal with the doubtful things and what a Christian should do and not do. It deals with the Christian's relationship with habits, etc.
4. Romans 16 includes Paul's greeting to some people and the mentioning of people who are a help, a blessing, and a friend to him and to the work.

CONCLUSION: This is a very interesting book in that it tells us not only what we should believe, but also what "what we should believe" should do for us. So many people are concerned about the living of the Christian life, and so many are concerned about the knowing of the Christian life. Both are important. We should live right because we know right and believe right. It is important to know the great doctrines of grace; it is equally as important to have these doctrines change us and make us what we ought to be!