**The Book of Romans**

Part One: God’s righteousness is revealed in His just wrath against mankind’s sin. (1:18–3:20)

***“When Knowing God’s Will is Not Enough” -- Romans 2:17-29***

Many people say that if they just knew God’s will, they would do it. The problem is, they say, that it’s all so unclear, and subject to different interpretations. We have only a book that is thousands of years old. If only God would make Himself fully known and beyond a doubt. If He would speak audibly, perform miracles, and make His presence visible, then it would be easy, and of course they would obey and follow Him.

The trouble with that line of reasoning is that such a time did exist, and God’s presence was physical, His voice audible, His power undisputable. We don’t have to wonder what men would do in those circumstances, for Israel was there representing all mankind. After the great demonstration of His power over Egypt in the ten plagues, including the death of the firstborn, God parted the Red Sea, destroyed the enemy army, spoke audibly, and resided physically in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The result? Idolatry, unbelief, and disobedience.

So for good measure, God gave The Law through Moses, written by His own finger on stone tablets. Let’s think how that worked out for them, and ask ourselves if we would have done things differently.

***Ethnic Israel boasted in the Law. . .*** vv. 17-20

The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were indeed privileged to receive God’s revelation. Paul says this clearly in Romans 3:1, 2 and 9:4, 5. Paul’s charge is that their self-righteousness was boasting in the Law and depending upon it as a pathway and / or proof of their salvation. He will explain this fully in chapters 9-11, but for now, he is explaining how the Law of Moses, by its mere existence and complexity, was grounds for the Jews’ boasting. As God’s “chosen people,” just having His Law was a source of pride.

***But (as a nation) they broke that Law. . .*** vv. 21-24

 Paul is not suggesting that all Israelites are adulterers and thieves. He is saying that as a nation, their history was one of rebellion against God and His laws. His words find backing in 2 Chronicles 36:11-21, and were so well known that the Jews had become a byword among the Gentiles (as God had predicted should they disobey (2 Chronicles 7:11-22; Deuteronomy 28; 31:14-22; Judges 2). History had shown that there was no foundation at all for their law-based self-righteousness, the political expression of which peaked during the ministry of our Lord.

***Leaving room for others from all nations to be Law-Keepers from their hearts*.** vv. 25-29

 What we are reading is the story of how the New Covenant replaced the Old, which had been broken, and could never bring life. Paul envisions a people from all nations (Jews included) who do, in some way “keep the law.” He clearly is NOT saying that they perfectly obeyed the precepts of Moses, since they had not even received the sign of the covenant (circumcision). No, rather he introduces an idea which he will later explain more fully (Romans 3:22; 8:4; 13:8-10), that Jesus’ perfect obedience is placed to the account of those who believe Him.

**Applying God’s Truth to Life**

✔ **What is your boast for salvation?**

Many trust church attendance, Christian heritage, baptism, The Lord’s Supper, good works? Is your faith in Christ alone? Gal. 6:12-16

✔ **What is your identity?**

Our DNA is not the determining factor, but rather our BFA (*Birth From Above*). Are you one of God’s children? John 3:5-8; Phil. 3:1-3

✔ **Are you depending upon your gifts or God’s grace?**

All that separates anyone from God is pride. To say we are not sinners is to cut ourselves off from the fountain of grace. 1 John 1:5-10