



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Chapter 1

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- Author: St. Paul (Rom 1:1)
- Place of writing: Corinth
- Time of writing: 57-58 AD during his third journey
- Background: on the day of Pentecost, visitors to Jerusalem took the gospel with them back home
- following Stephen's death, among those dispersed were some that went to Rome and preached the gospel there



Introduction

- Of the Christians from Rome, the first we read about are possibly Aquila and Priscilla, who along with all Jews, were expelled from Rome by Claudius and were found by St. Paul at Corinth during his second journey
- After travelling with St. Paul to Ephesus and working with the church there, we find them back in Rome hosting a church in their house (16:3-5)



Introduction

- From the greetings given by St. Paul in chapter 16, it appears that there were several churches in Rome meeting in various homes (16:5,14,15)
- The names of individuals suggest that the Christians were primarily Gentiles, with a smaller number of Jews
- The reputation of the Christians in Rome was widespread; both their faith and obedience were well known



Introduction

- For this reason St. Paul had long wanted to see them, with the goal of sharing in their mutual edification and to be assisted on his way to Spain
- Purpose of Writing: St. Paul expresses in this epistle that he had for some time planned to preach the gospel at Rome and from there go on to Spain



Introduction

- Though he still had these intentions, the spreading heresies of the "Judaizing teachers" which had disrupted churches in Antioch, Corinth and Galatia was likely to make its way to Rome
- To prevent this, and to ensure a pleasant visit to Rome, St. Paul writes to them to explain the truth about the nature of the Gospel of God



Introduction

- He demonstrates how the gospel of Christ fulfills what is lacking in both heathenism and Judaism, thereby effectively replacing them as religious systems
- Such an epistle would arm the church at Rome against those who would pervert the gospel or suggest that it was inadequate by itself
- Theme: explaining why and how the gospel of Christ is God's power to save those who believe



Introduction

- The outline of Chapter 1:
 - ❖ Who is the author (1-5)
 - ❖ Who are the recipients (6-15)
 - ❖ The gospel, the substance of preaching (16-17)
 - ❖ The gentiles' need for salvation (18-32)
 - ❑ Wicked men dishonoring God (18-23)
 - ❑ Holy God "giving up" on wicked men (24-32)



The Author (1:1-5)

- The name Paul means the little one
- He boasts that he is the servant of Christ
- Also he is called by God to be an Apostle
- Separated: consecrated, appointed for
- Gospel: the good news of salvation
- It is the gospel of God because it is His will to save the world
- God promised us with this salvation in the OT



The Author (1:1-5)

- The promise was about the Eternal Son of God, who became son of man (David) according to the flesh
- His sonship to the Father was declared by His resurrection
- There is nothing more powerful than the resurrection to prove His sonship to the Father
- He is the all holy, so death could not hold Him since it is only the wages of sin



The Author (1:1-5)

- Through the salvation that Christ has fulfilled, St. Paul has received grace and apostleship to preach the gospel of salvation to all the nations (every person is invited to receive the salvation)
- Grace worked first in St. Paul to transform him
- We need to receive the faith with the spirit of obedience since it is divine revelation
- The ministry and gifts that we receive are for the glory of the name of Christ



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- The Romans (Jews and Gentiles) are also called by His grace to receive the gift of salvation
- They are the beloved of God, called to be saints since faith in Christ means life of holiness and sanctification
- Grace is the free gift of God, and peace is the fruit of this gift
- These gifts are given to us from the Father through His son in the Holy Spirit



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- St. Paul, as he usually starts with the positive, did so by praising them for their faith which was heard of in the whole world
- Also He is giving thanks to God, because any goodness in us is from God
- We are only accepted before the Father in Jesus Christ
- Using the word “my God” describes a personal relationship with God



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- The true worship is in the spirit i.e. led by the Holy Spirit
- This worship is also in preaching the gospel
- As a father and priest, he understands his first responsibility to pray for his people without ceasing
- God, who receives his prayers is the witness
- He desires to visit them but is submitting his desire to God's will



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- The desire to visit them is to establish them by imparting a spiritual gift to them
- The gift of the Spirit will protect them from the false teaching of the judaizers and the vain pride of the gentiles
- In ministry, both the servant and people are encouraged together by their mutual faith
- He is hinting that his faith is different than theirs, so he wants to correct their faith



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- He was praying to be able to visit them but he was hindered: let us be patient and wait for the fullness of time
- Fruit: by correcting their faith
- Debtor: because of God's gift to him, his love for everybody, and the transformation in his life
- Greeks (wise) and to barbarians (unwise)



The Recipients (1:6-15)

- As much as is in me: with all my power, gifts, zeal, endurance...etc.
- I am ready: even to endure persecution
- To preach the gospel: to correct your faith
- Who are in Rome: I know how difficult it is to preach the crucified Lord to the Romans who glorify power



The Gospel (1:16-17)

- While the gentiles may find it difficult to believe in the crucified Lord, St. Paul does not feel ashamed of the gospel of Christ
- Because it is not a book of morals but it is the power of God aiming toward salvation of everyone who believes
- Chronologically, the Jews first came first
- In the gospel we will know how to be righteous in God



The Gospel (1:16-17)

- The first step is in faith
- Faith qualifies for the sacraments of the church through which is our justifications
- This faith grows through our work
- Growth is the sign of life
- The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4)
- This faith is in God's mercies, love, salvation, power

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- There is a big need for justification because of the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men
- This unrighteousness triggered the wrath of God
- Truth means all the light that is left in man since his fall, not as though they being led by this were able to come into favor with God, but that their own reason might condemn them of wickedness both against God and man

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- They are inexcusable because that which may be known of God is manifest in them
- Romans 1:20 shows what may be known of God by all
- You do not see God, and yet you acknowledge Him as God by His works
- They did not honor him with that honor and service which was appropriate for His everlasting power and Godhead

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- When men turn willfully from truth, they will run to the extremes of error
- The pagan world became so corrupt, and the people were involved in deeper darkness
- The Greeks and Roman heathen boasted of their wisdom and held the rest of the world in contempt, but at the same time their idolatry showed their utter folly
- For the true God they substituted another

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- Having chosen folly, God gave them up to the consequences of their folly, and there followed an awful moral degradation
- Their religion was no check upon their lusts
- They engaged in the lowest and most disgusting lusts
- Language cannot describe the pollution of the Gentile world, when St. Paul wrote, as revealed by the pagan writers of that period

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- By giving up the worship of the great unseen God to worship an idol; a creature, rather than the Creator
- At first, idols were probably designed as only representations, but they finally became objects of worship
- God gave them up: abandoned them to their own course, and thus it was shown to what depths men will fall without God

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- To vile affections: shameless, sensual indulgence, such as cannot now be named
- The sodomy referred to here was common in the first century among the Romans, and is often spoken of without a sense of shame by their writers
- It was prohibited neither by religion nor law, and was acknowledged without shame

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- Receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due: alluding to the many physical and moral ways in which, under the righteous government of God, vice was made self-avenging
- Whoever turns from the truth will be allowed to have his way, will fall deeper and deeper into error, and will reap all the evil consequences of loving darkness rather than light

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- Debased mind: rejected of God
- The characteristics of those given over to a debased mind are now described
- Maliciousness: a temper which delights in hurting another, even without any advantage to itself
- Whisperers: such as secretly defame others
- Backbiters: such as speak against others behind their back

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- Haters of God: rebels against Him, deniers of His providence, or accusers of His justice in their adversities
- Inventors of evil things: of new pleasures, new ways of gain, new arts of hurting, particularly in war
- Unloving: the custom of exposing their own new - born children to perish by cold, hunger, or wild beasts

The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)



- By the judgment of God he means that which the philosophers called the law of nature
- This is the highest degree of wickedness
- A man may be hurried by his passions to do the thing he hates; but he that has pleasure in those that do evil, loves wickedness for wickedness' sake
- And hereby he encourages them in sin, and heaps the guilt of others upon his own head



Conclusion

- How did St. Paul describe himself & his call?
- What is the relation between the Old Testament & the New Testament?
- Our Lord Jesus Christ is: a) The Son of Man b) The Son Of God. c) The mediator between God & man. How did St. Paul explain these facts?
- Explain the strong spiritual bond that connects St. Paul to his addressees?



Conclusion

- Did St. Paul visit Rome before writing this epistle? How do you prove your answer?
- How important is the Gospel of Christ according to St. Paul?
- Is there any excuse for any one not to know the true God? Explain.
- Count some of the sins of the Roman Idolaters and the kind of punishments are they getting from God.
- What & why did God give the Idolaters up to?