

New Zealand Correspondence School of the Bible

Level One / Lesson Eleven Romans 1-2

Instructions: Read Romans chapters one and two through at least once. After reading this passage, read it again following along with the points made in this lesson. Any questions asked in this section are for your personal study only. The only part of this lesson to be returned to the NZCSB office is the Quiz.

Chapter One

1:1 - "apostle" - there are about 22 men in the New Testament who are specifically called "apostles;" the position of apostle was a special office in the early church with the main functions of leadership and teaching. It was the apostles who were entrusted with the miraculous sign gifts (II Corinthians 12:12 - *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."*) and did the bulk of the preaching in the early church; the new truth they taught was confirmed by God through the miracles God empowered them to do.

- "called to be an apostle" - Paul was specifically "called" by Christ to be an apostle as related in Acts 9:1-8, which says: *"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus."*

- compare Romans 11:13; to what group was Paul sent to be an apostle?

- "separated unto the gospel of God" - the word "gospel" means "good news." The good news referred to is that a person can be saved from their sins by repenting of their sins and trusting in Jesus Christ. When a person believes the gospel in this manner, they are practically "separating" themselves from the world to the "gospel of God."

1:3 - in the spiritual sense, Jesus was the eternal Son of God, the Creator of the universe; "according to the flesh" Jesus was a physical descendent of the Old Testament King David through his mother Mary.

1:4 - one of the proofs that Jesus was indeed "the Son of God" was the fact that he was resurrected from the dead. Read the verse carefully and note how Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God ... by the resurrection from the dead."

1:6 - "called" is used in two different ways in the New Testament - generally and specifically. ALL Christians are called by God to leave the old way of life, to follow Christ, to become more like Him, etc. Thus you often find Christians referred to as "the called" (see Rom. 8:28,30). Some Christians the Lord takes a further step and "calls" them into a particular area of ministry - ie. Paul was "called to be an apostle" in verse 1.

1:7 - this letter (ie. the book of Romans) is addressed to all of the believers in the city of Rome. Note that ALL true Christians are "saints."

1:9 - from a practical standpoint we should continually be remembering our friends and relatives in our prayers to God. The Old Testament prophet Samuel says in I Samuel 12:23, *"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you...."*

1:10-11 - Paul talks about imparting "some spiritual gift" to these Christians in Rome. This is not the same thing as the "spiritual gifts" Paul talks about in I Cor. 12:1. The spiritual gifts mentioned in that passage are imparted by the Holy Spirit himself and are specifically listed out for the reader. Verses 10-11 make up one sentence and in the context of the two verses this "spiritual gift" would help establish the believers as well as comforting them. "Spiritual gift" here seems to be a broad term referring to any increase in spiritual knowledge that will build up and comfort the Christian brethren.

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1:13 - note that Paul had apparently never been to Rome.

1:14 - "Barbarians" - another term for the unsaved heathen

1:14-16 - note Paul's three "I am's"

1:16 - the Christian should never be ashamed of his faith or the gospel of Jesus Christ that got him saved in the first place - who have you told about Jesus Christ and salvation this week? Warning others about hell and showing people from the Bible the only true way to God is quite offensive as the Bible points out that all men and women are in the wrong - they are sinners in need of the saving power of Jesus Christ. Those who think that they can somehow "share" their faith in Christ without ever offending anyone are more than likely preaching a watered-down version of the gospel; the New Testament quite plainly states that the gospel is an offence that will bring persecution to those who share it with others.

- a good cross reference for this verse is II Timothy 1:8 where Paul tells Timothy, "*Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God...*"

- a "Greek" can obviously refer to someone from Greece, but in Romans especially it is often used by Paul to refer to all Gentiles (non-Jews). Salvation first came to the Jews in the early chapters of the book of Acts and was later (Acts chapter ten) extended to the Gentiles.

1:17 - "as it is written" - a partial quotation from Habakkuk 2:4

1:18 - one of the evidences that there is a God is that ungodliness and unrighteousness in mankind is eventually judged with God's wrath being revealed from heaven. Natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and droughts as well as wars are just some of the ways that God reveals his wrath upon nations and peoples that disobey his commands.

1:19 - this verse along with verse 20 begin to answer that age old question, "What about the heathen in Africa who have never heard about Jesus?" It also answers the question of what happens to all of those Muslims, Hindus, etc. who have never heard about Jesus Christ. This verse plainly states that God has manifested something about himself IN mankind. Romans 2:14-15 further comments on this verse as it talks about how every man has a conscience upon which God "writes" his law.

1:20 - creation and nature "clearly" reveal that God exists. The infinite expanse of a clear, starry night or the intricate design of a leaf or of the human body are a clear testimony to the creative power of God. For a man to state that such intricate details happened by mere chance (ie. evolution) is to go against the knowledge that God has put within him. When the hypothetical "heathen in Africa" looks up into the sky he knows that some power greater than himself created everything - he is faced with a choice: to worship that supreme Being or to bow down to idols that are the works of his own hands or gods that are the product of his own imagination. If he rejects the light that he has and the "invisible things" of God that can be "clearly seen" from nature, he is "without excuse" and will go to hell. If he acts upon the light that God has given him and worships the "Creator" instead of the works and idols of his own hands, then God (who is a God of fairness) will judge him accordingly; as we will see from chapter two, such a person will not end up in hell despite the fact that they do not know the specific details of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Further comment on this verse can be found in Psalm 19:1-4 which says, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world....*"

- a common mistake made by many at this point is to think that such information could somehow be used by people in New Zealand today. We would be hard pressed to find someone in our nation who has never actually heard of the name of Jesus Christ. Though not every Kiwi has heard a clear presentation from the Bible of how to be saved, most are well aware that there is a God and that sin is wrong - yet most choose to continue on in their ways rather than finding out what the truth is.

- another common mistake is the idea that the unsaved "heathen" will have a better chance of getting to heaven if we just leave them alone and never send them missionaries or preach to them the gospel. This simplistic view sounds good but fails to remember that the vast majority of people do not listen to their consciences, nor do they submit to the true God that is revealed to them in nature. Thus we find in the Bible many commands to take the gospel of Christ to all men.

1:21-23 - as we just stated, few men actually listen to what God says to them via their consciences or through God's creation.

1:21 - “darkened” - light rejected becomes darkness. When God tells a person what to do and that person refuses to act accordingly, God will withdraw the light he has given with the result of spiritual darkness. II Corinthians 4:3-4 comments upon this point when it says, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

1:23 - reference to man-made idols

1:24-32 - the last half of Romans chapter one illustrates for us the progression of mankind away from God. As people reject the spiritual light that God gives them, they get farther and farther away from God and into more and more sin. Note that three times (vs. 24,26,28) God “gives up” or “gives over” these types of people to more and more sin. These verses unfortunately are an excellent commentary on our nation and world today.

1:25 - “the creature” is man; people today are worshiping and serving themselves much more than the “Creator.”

1:26 - direct reference to what we today call lesbianism

1:27 - homosexuality; note that these men receive something “in themselves” for their “error.” Though society is becoming increasingly tolerant of those with so-called “alternative lifestyles” who are seeking acceptance for their behaviour as natural, God refers to these matters as “vile affections” (vs. 26) and in the OT as an “abomination.” Lev. 18:22-25 says, “*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.*”

1:28 - “reprobate” = to be totally given over to sin or error

1:29 - note that these people are “filled” with these sins

- “fornication” = general term for sexual sins
- “maliciousness” = a cruelty and hatred toward others in the extreme
- “malignity” = violent hatred, an evil disposition with the desire to injure and harm others

1:31 - “implacable” - intolerant

Chapter Two

2:1 - “inexcusable” ties this verse back to 1:20, “they are without excuse”

- it is not judging other people that is condemned in this passage, but rather judging other people for things that you yourself are guilty of! Many people misquote Matthew 7:1 when they are rebuked for doing something wrong which says, “*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*” If Matthew 7:1 is taken in the context of the verses that follow it, one can readily see that it is proper and necessary to judge as long as it is not done in hypocrisy. I Corinthians 2:15 states, “*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.*” The idea here is that sin needs to be called sin and rebuked as sin as long as the one doing the “judging” is not guilty of the very things he is pointing out. These verses are not talking about judging people’s motives or intentions; rather the believer needs to obey the word of God himself and where sin occurs it needs to be “judged” - ie. lovingly pointed out from scripture that the action or non-action in question is wrong according to the Bible. Scripture sometimes calls this “rebuke” or “reproof.”

2:2 - God never makes errors in judgment because he does not judge according to the way a matter appears, but rather judges exactly according to the motives of all the people involved (see John 7:24). Notice from John 12:48 that the “truth” God judges according to is the words that he has spoken in the Bible.

2:4 - God is extremely patient and always “goes the extra mile” when it comes to getting men to repent of their sins - an illustration of this is the wickedness that goes on in our world today that God has not yet brought the hammer down upon. Even when God brings trials and disasters into a person’s life, that is a demonstration of his “goodness” in that hopefully these types of problems will lead a person to repent of their sins and avoid the eternal punishment of hell. Notice that what God wants from men is for them to “repent” (admit and turn from) their sins.

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2:5 - “impenitent” - not willing to repent

- “the day....judgment” - reference to the final judgment of God of all mankind at his Great White Throne. For those who have hardened their hearts and refused to repent of their sins, they truly have treasured up God’s wrath and will have God’s judgment revealed to them - neither this judgment of God nor hell that is to follow will be pleasant.

2:6 - there are different degrees of punishment in the lake of fire; those who have never put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will in fairness be given a just sentence from the Judge. Luke 12:47-48 records part of a parable Jesus gave on responsibility and accountability which says, “*And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*” The obvious solution is for a person to get saved as no part of hell will be a pleasant experience.

2:7-16 - these verses pick up the discussion started in chapter one as to what happens to the person who has never heard about Jesus Christ and the one way to heaven. The Bible is abundantly clear that no man can get to heaven by his own good works and fifty verses could easily be listed that support this fact (Rom. 4:5 for example). These verses however are talking about those people who do not have “the law” (vs. 12,14). They do not have any access to God’s word and in the context have never heard about the gospel of Christ (see Rom. 1:16). God is never unfair and will not put even one person unjustly in hell. Genesis 18:25 says in part, “*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”

As discussed back in 1:19, God has given every man a conscience, putting within them the knowledge of good and evil. The way in which a man acts based upon the light and knowledge God has given him will determine his destiny. As verse 15 says, the thoughts of such a man will either accuse or excuse himself.

2:16 - God will bring out all of your secrets! Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, “*For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*” Luke 12:2 goes on to say, “*For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*” I Corinthians 4:5 goes on to further state that the Lord “*will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts....*”

The only way for any man to have his secret (or non-secret) sins done away with is through “the blood of Jesus Christ...[that] cleanseth us from all sin.” The Christian will have his works examined by Christ, but his sins are 100% forgiven and will never be remembered against him again.

2:17 - the Jews thought they were okay just because they had the law; some people today think they are okay before God just because they go to church, give money to charities, have been baptised, etc. - they are “resting” in the wrong things!

2:18-24 - note the hypocrisy practiced by these Jews addressed by Paul

2:22 - “sacrilege” - idol worship or desecrating sacred things

2:25-29 - in the context “circumcision” is a reference to the Jews and “uncircumcision” is a reference to the Gentiles. Paul is showing in these verses that there is more to being a Jew than just having Jewish parents - the important thing before God is not what has happened in your flesh, but what has happened in your heart.

QUIZ
Romans 1-2

Student No. _____
Name: _____
Address: _____

Instructions: This quiz consists of twenty multiple choice questions and a bonus question. From the scripture and comments covered in this lesson choose the best answer to the question and circle it. There will always be only one *best* answer. When you have completed this quiz, return it along with your self-addressed, stamped, return envelope to the NZCSB office. You **may** use your Bible as well as the material in this lesson to answer these questions. Each question is worth five points.

1. What was the “spiritual gift” Paul mentioned in 1:11?

A. The gift of tongues	C. All of the gifts of the Holy Spirit
B. Miracles	D. Knowledge that builds up or comforts

2. What does “implacable” mean?

A. Violent	B. Extremely small	C. Intolerant	D. All of these
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3. Paul said that “I am _____.”

A. Ready to preach the gospel	C. A debtor
B. Not ashamed of the gospel of Christ	D. All of these

4. Some of the Jews Paul was writing to were preaching against sin that they themselves were guilty of. What sin was this?

A. Sacrilege	B. Adultery	C. Stealing	D. All of these
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5. Romans 2:2 says that God judges according to “the truth.” What is this truth that God judges according to?

A. The works of men	C. His spoken words in scripture
B. Creation	D. The gifts of the Holy Spirit

6. What were the Jews hypocritically relying upon or “resting” in?

A. The Law	B. God	C. Their own works	D. All of these
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7. What characteristic or trait of the believers in Rome did Paul commend them for and thank God for?

A. Their prayers	B. Their love	C. Their mercy	D. Their faith
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8. When a person rejects the light or knowledge that God has given them, what does God then give them?

A. Darkness	B. The Holy Spirit	C. More light	D. The Law
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9. Those who reject God and are progressively led into more sin do what to God’s truth?

A. Change it into a lie	B. Gradually accept it	C. Believe it in their hearts	D. None of these
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10. To what city was Paul going when he was miraculously saved and called by God to be an apostle?

A. Damascus	B. Rome	C. Jerusalem	D. Athens
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11. What is a Barbarian?
- A. People from the Barbar region of Asia Minor C. Another name for OT Jews
B. The unsaved heathen D. All of these
12. What was Paul separated unto?
- A. The gospel of God B. The priesthood C. Prayer D. The Pharisees
13. Those who reject God are given up or given over to what?
- A. Vile affections B. A reprobate mind C. Uncleanness D. All of these
14. How many times had Paul probably been to Rome before writing this letter to the Romans?
- A. One B. Two C. Three D. None
15. What sin is being addressed in Romans 1:27?
- A. Theft B. Murder C. Anger D. Homosexuality
16. What does “impenitent” mean?
- A. Sorrowful B. Repentant C. Not willing to repent D. Both A & B
17. Those who knew God, but refused to glorify him as God, professed to be wise, but became what?
- A. Wiser B. Christians C. Fools D. None of these
18. What are we specifically told in this passage that Paul was not ashamed of?
- A. Being a Pharisee B. The gospel of Christ C. Being a Jew D. All of these
19. Whose son or descendent was Jesus “according to the flesh” according to Romans chapter one?
- A. Abraham B. David C. Mary D. Adam
20. What does God’s goodness lead a person to do if they do not despise that goodness?
- A. To repent B. To help their fellow man C. To worship idols D. To bitterness of spirit

Bonus Question: (worth up to five points)

In this lesson we addressed what will happen to the Africans, Muslims, etc. who have never heard about Jesus Christ and the salvation that comes only through him. What two “witnesses” has God given to the unsaved who have never heard about Jesus Christ?