

I. The Historical Background

A. Paul is writing to the Church in Rome which he had never personally visited. Because Paul had not visited them, he speaks to them differently than he does in other letters to other churches. For example He speaks to the Galatians with the directness of a spiritual father (**Gal 4:19, 1:6**). However, to the Romans, he takes his time and treads lightly before bringing correction to the issue which I believe most prompted him to write. Because he takes his time, what we find in this sixteen chapter epistle is the longest letter of antiquity.

B. Before Paul writes to the Romans the “Decree of Claudius” around A.D. 49 had expelled all Jews from Rome. What is left in that setting would be the first completely Gentile church in history. About six years later this decree was reversed and Jews began to come back to the city of Rome offending gentile entitlement and breeding racial tension. This is the occasion surrounding the writing of the letter and it is what I believe to be the issue to which Paul was prompted to bring correction and clarity. It is why I believe Paul hits so hard on the issue of dwelling together in community with honor throughout chapters 12-15 (**12:1-13:7**- “A culture of honor and love”, **13:8-10**- “A debt to love one another”, **13:11-14**- “A corporate diligence”, **14**- “using your liberty in a way that honors others”, **15:1-13** “corporate worship”).

1. However Paul knew that before He could address the Second Commandment- love your neighbor- issue he must first address the First Commandment- Love God- issue in chapters 1-8. While doing that, however, he begins priming them for the call to a culture of honor by saying things like **Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

C. In order to stir love for God in their hearts, Paul communicates the power of the Gospel as the remedy to the human condition of sin, guilt and shame (**Rom 1:16-3:19**). / He declares the power of the gospel as the free gift of righteousness, purchased at an extravagant price, because of love. / He teaches through the great doctrine of Justification by faith that frees us from the infinitely weighty burden of trying to obtain it by works. / He communicates the power of the gospel to bring us out of hostility and enmity into peace with God, peace with ourselves and peace with others (**Romans 3:20- 5:21**) / He teaches that we have dominion over sin because the standard by which we pleased with us is grace not law, we can be confident in grace (**Rom 6**). / And He teaches that though the flesh is at war with sin (**Rom 7**), the unlimited resource of the Spirit is the way forward in bold sonship that stands through suffering to make us confident in love and bring us into the full weight of revelation of God's affection for us (**Rom 8**)

II. Romans 9-11

A. I see these chapters as the very peak of the whole epistle. Paul lays out Israel's history and destiny, the plan of God's heart for her. We see already in the first verses of chapter 9 that the inheritance of God is to the Jew first SO THAT it can come to the Greek also. We see this in the Abrahamic covenant: **And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; (Gen 26:4)**. This is so that Israel is called to bless and share and the Church called to serve and honor.

B. The New Covenant itself is actually Israel's covenant (**Jer. 31:31-33, Heb. 10:15-16**).

C. **Romans 11:25-26 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion** (We pray for revival and assume that it's going to happen through us. Israel is God's remedy to rid the church of self-centeredness. That we would take our eyes off of self and put them on the "*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the WHOLE FAMILY in heaven and earth is named eph 3:14.*" Part of the reason that we don't pray is because we don't have a vision bigger than what we can do with our own hands. God wants us deeply connected with the story that He is writing)
, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

**"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
For this is My covenant with them,
When I take away their sins."**

D. The end-time church will give herself to prayer for Israel with the consummation of the age and the return of Jesus in sight. **Isaiah 62:6-7 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,
⁷And give Him no rest till He establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.**