



For Lesson Notes:

I. We have natural filters through which we study the Bible

**A. How we've been taught**

*"Romans is commonly considered the greatest exposition of Christian doctrine anywhere in scripture .... the epistle does not address any specific local problems but contains general teaching applicable to all Christians" (Spirit Filled Life Bible)*

**B. Our Generational Context.**

John 13:10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet"

**II. Roman World in the first century**



It was a very religious world:

**A. They worshipped many gods**

- All their gods were represented by idols.
- Jews and Christians considered "pagans".
- The power of imagery

### B. Cities were dedicated to gods

- Ephesus - dedicated to Diana of Ephesus; aka Artemis (Greek): Acts 19:27-29
- Pergamos (Asia Minor) – Rev 2:12-17



The "seat of Satan" – temple of Zeuss was taken from Pergamum to Berlin by the Nazis



- Roma – goddess of Rome sat on seven hills.



Woman on a beast with 7 heads (Rev 17)



- Emperor

Also called "Lord" – "kurios"

Revelation 1:10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" NKJV



### Romans 10:9-10

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. NKJV



- Submission to leaders

Romans 13:1-3

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. NKJV



**C. Meat sold in the market was dedicated to the gods**

**D. Morality very low – temple prostitutes (both male and female), homosexuality and same sex marriage was prevalent.**



**E. Conformity was expected**

- Had to be part of a guild to work
- Membership required participation in rituals

In the first century 666 = Nero



- Jerusalem Council's decision

Acts 15:28-29

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that you **abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.



- Paul exposes the situation in Rome

Romans 1:18-29

Idolatry – 18-23

Immorality – 24- 29



**F. Jews expelled from Rome**

- AD 19 – under Tiberias
- AD 41 Claudius withdraws their rights to assembly
- AD 41 – 54 Claudius expels Jews from the city



Acts 18:1-2

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. NKJV



### III. About the Writer

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God NKJV

#### A. Natural Background

First mentioned in Acts 7:58b – at the stoning of Stephen

He was known as Saul of Tarsus



1. Although Jewish he was a Roman citizen

Acts 22:25-28

5 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?" 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman." 27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" He said, "Yes." 28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." NKJV



#### 2. His Calling

Acts 9:15-16

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."



Jews did not want Gentiles in the kingdom

They wanted to kill Jesus because of it

Luke 4:23-30

23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land



26 but to none of them was Elijah sent **except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon**, (Lebanon) to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed **except Naaman the Syrian**." 28 So all those in the synagogue, **when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city;** and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way. NKJV



They rioted when Paul mentioned his calling to the Gentiles

Acts 22:21-24

21 Then He said to me, '**Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.**' 22 And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" 23 Then, as they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, NKJV



Many Messiahs in Israel – Shimon Bar Kochba (130s AD)



Rabbi Menachem Schneerson  
Died 12 June 1994 in New York



### 3. Did Paul change His identity?

He remained a Jew: Acts 22:3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia" NKJV (note the present tense).

He remained a Pharisee: Acts 23:6 he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; NKJV

His philosophy:

1 Corinthians 7:18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. NKJV



Philippians 3:4-6

If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. NKJV

Acts 21:24 – He partook of the Jewish practice of shaving their heads at the end of a purification period,



### IV. Demographics of The Church

A. **Gentiles** – Romans 1:13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. NKJV

Gentiles in Hebrew – "goyim" means nations, i.e. non-Jews



B. **Jews** – Romans 2:17 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, NKJV

In the church there were believing and pre-believing Jews



Acts 21:17-21

17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; NKJV

"Myriad" from Greek "murias" meaning one ten thousand



"zealous of the law" (Torah), i.e. religious Jews even Pharisees.

Acts 6:7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, **and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith**

Priests = saducees



### C.Main Focus

Romans 11:13-14

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as **I am an apostle to the Gentiles**, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. NKJV

Romans 15:15-16

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, **16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. NKJV



### D. The Meeting Place

Christianity was still considered a Jewish sect

Synagogue was a Roman idea; not a house of worship but rather a place of meeting

In Hebrew it is called "Beit Kehila", house of assembly

They met in a synagogue which would have been in a Jewish person's home.



### Demographics of The Synagogue

#### Jews

Acts 13:13-14

13 Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John (Mark), departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, **and went into the synagogue** on the Sabbath day and sat down.



**Gentiles** - Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, **and you who fear God**, listen:

#### Gentile converts to Judaism (proselytes)

Acts 13:42-44

42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and **devout proselytes** followed Paul and Barnabas,



### One City Many Congregations

Revelation 2:1 "To the angel of the **church** of Ephesus write, NKJV

Revelation 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**. NKJV

Revelation 2:8 "And to the angel of the **church** in Smyrna write, NKJV

Revelation 2:11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the **churches**. NKJV



The food problem

Romans 14:1-3

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

NKJV

Romans 14:15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

