

COMMENTARY on ROMANS

D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982),

The Particular Relevance of Romans to Contemporary Society

The timeless truth of God's eternal word are always relevant. The particular condition of modern society indicates a special need for a restatement of the truths outlined in Romans. For instance, contemporary society has divorced itself so completely from divine revelation that it has little or no concept of the reality of God's person. Modern man's love affair with himself has produced such incredible self-centeredness that we are now variously called the "me-first generation" or the narcissistic society." Modern man's inbred feeling that he has very reason to expect happiness to be his abiding experience has produced an inordinate desire for that which "comfortable, popular and profitable." Anything that gets in the way of these cherished desires must be banished at all costs. That which is "good and true and right" must of necessity be discarded if it interferes with the achieving of the ultimate goal of human happiness.¹

To this kind of society the ancient Epistle speaks in trenchant terms. Man is exposed as the shameful sinner his actions clearly demonstrate him to be. God is revealed as at once just, merciful, and gracious.²

Committed Christian is given clear instruction concerning his consecrated behavior in the home, in the church, the political arena, and the marketplace.³

BACKGROUND

The Author

Paul, as a Jewish scholar and Roman citizen who had been constantly exposed to Greek culture not only made him eminently suitable for the work of an apostle in the first century, but it fitted him uniquely to address the specific situation of the Roman Church. Composed as it was of Jews from the Dispersion and Romans from all walks of life, all of whom had been influenced to some degree by Greek thought, the church at Rome needed the authoritative understanding voice of a Paul. When he addressed the Jew about their particular outlook, they attended to his words very carefully, if for no other reason than that they knew Paul was himself a "true blue Jew. When he switched his attention to the particular status of the non-Jew, his readers listened sympathetically because they knew he knew their situation as did few other people. And when he addressed his hearers concerning their attitude to law and order, freedom and government, they recognized this was no "wild-eyed" radical or "dyed-in-the-wool" conservative speaking, but a Roman citizen with a true sense of privilege and a deep regard for his Roman status.⁴

THE DESTINATION OF THE EPISTLE

The Epistle was intended primarily for the believers in Rome, but was also circulated to other churches without the passage exclusively relevant to the Roman church.⁵

¹ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 12-13.

² D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 13.

³ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 13.

⁴ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 14-15.

⁵ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 15.

Paul had not visited Rome at the time he wrote the Epistle and so, of course, had played no direct role in the founding of the Christian community in the Imperial City.

How the Gospel first came to Rome and how the believers joined together for worship and service nobody knows for sure, but there are number of considerations: Some scholars think: On the day of Pentecost, when great crowds gathered in Jerusalem to hear the message of Peter and thousands believed and were converted to Christ, “visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes” (Acts 2:10) in the crowd. It is quite possible that these people returned to their homes with the message the Risen Lord and the evidence of His transforming power in their lives.⁶

In addition, because all roads led to Rome in those days, there was a constant stream of people from the provinces passing through the city, and no doubt their number contained not a few believers.⁷

There are clear indications that Paul wrote from Corinth toward the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20) and this took place somewhere between A.D. 57-59 when Nero ruled in Rome and the Pax Romana prevailed around the shores of the Mediterranean.⁸

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

Some scholars who believe that the church in Rome was primarily Jewish are of the opinion that Paul was intent on showing them how their understanding of the Gospel needed enlarging to incorporate the greatness of God’s plan of redemption for Gentile as well as Jew.

Others who are equally convinced that the church was primarily Gentile feel that he was trying to pour oil on potentially troubled waters by showing the place of both Jew and Gentile in God’s gospel of grace.⁹

Chapter 12: 1-8 A SENSE OF VALUE

로마는 세계에서 가장 유명한 도시중의 하나입니다. 로마의 기원은 주전 753 년으로 돌아 갑니다. Rome, 로마란 이름은 그 창시자이름 Romulus 에서 딴 것이라고 합니다. 그 도시는 이테리의 Tiber 강가의 늪지대의 일곱언덕위에 위치했다고 전합니다. 이 군주정부는 Romulus, Numa 등 일곱 왕자들밑에 존재했었고, 영사들의 집정하는 시기를 지난 후에 군주정부는 폐쇄되고, Actium Octavianus 와의 전쟁과 함께 Augustus 라는 명칭이 주어 지고 거기에다 Emperor 즉 황제라는 이름을 덧 붙이게 되었다는 것입니다. 로마의 최초의 황제 Augustus 통치 시대에 그리스도가 탄생하고 Tiberius 통치시대에 그리스도가 십자가 처형을 받으신 것입니다. 그후의 로마의 황제들은 인종 말종들이었다고 전합니다. 주후 37 년 Tiberius 때 부터 기독교에 호감을 표시하는 법령이 발표된 주후 313 년에 이르기까지 276 년간은 로마는 정치적으로 도덕적으로 통탄할 정도로 악정을 하였다고 역사가들은 전합니다.

⁶ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator’s Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 15.

⁷ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator’s Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 16.

⁸ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator’s Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 16.

⁹ D. Stuart Briscoe, *the Communicator’s Commentary, Romans* (Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1982), 17.

Romans 12: 13-21

The resources with which we have been supplied can be the means of blessing or cursing, the instruments of good or evil. The determining factor is whether we regard our resources as our personal possessions to be used as we desire, or as gracious gifts entrusted to us to be used for God's glory and man's benediction.¹⁰ To be aware of the needs of others, particularly the "saints," and to fail to share is the essence of evil. Not only does it demonstrate hardness of heart but it clearly shows deficiency of understanding of the true nature of possessions. What is true of possessions, in general, is particularly true in relation to the use of homes. To be "*given to hospitality*" means, literally, "to pursue strangers with love." The emphasis is on the glad sharing of the resources of home and family with those in particular need of shelter and succor [help]. The need for this was particularly apparent in the days of early church. Those who traveled with message of Christ were totally dependent on the generous hospitality of others if they were to be able to carry on. The infant churches were dependent on homes being open to them as places of worship, and those who became ostracized from home and family because of their newfound faith in Christ were in danger of destitution unless the generous spirit of believers opened both heart and hearth [home]. While the circumstances have changed, the readiness to regard our homes as places of support and strengthening for those in need rather than as castles reserved exclusively for our own pleasure is one of the most obvious acts of stewardship and one of the greatest aids to evil being thwarted and good being done. Human beings are equipped with a great capacity for giving and receiving love. Even the hardest heart melts before the innocent smile of a child. But this capacity for love, sympathy, and empathy is often strangely locked up in the confines of selfishness. This may be because genuine, loving, empathetic involvement is debilitating and costly.¹¹

Should the highly talented individual become enraptured with his own ability to the extent that he disregards the abilities and sensitivity of others, great harm results. The only answer to the potential abuse and the resultant evil of the God-given resource of uniqueness is the humble submission of uniqueness to the equally humble oversight and direction of the community of believers. When that community is operating properly, the potential for evil –schism, division, estrangement, conflict, and destruction – is avoided and the blessing of cooperative and balanced living is ensured.¹²

¹⁰ Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans*, 226.

¹¹ Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans*, 226.

¹² Briscoe, *the Communicator's Commentary, Romans*, 227.