

Romans Verse-By-Verse

Romans 1:7

In our last installment we took a look at Rome in Paul's day. It was an incredible city – literally the center of the western world. Bishop Stephen Neill said of the city of Rome,

“She was the eternal city which had given them peace, the fount of law, the center of civilization, the Mecca of poets and orators and artists”. At the same time, Rome was “a home of every kind of Idolatrous worship.”

Paul: Three things about God's people in Rome:

- **They Are Loved**

In a vast world who are the Romans that God would love them? The writer of Job and the Psalmists capture this awe of God's love:

“What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention?” -- Job 7:17

“What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous?” -- Job 15:14

“What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” -- Psalms 8:4

“O LORD, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?” -- Psalms 144:3

New Testament writers: Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 3:1; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 5; Romans 8:28ff.

Ben Windle: God's love is Unconditional, Unearned, Doesn't Depend On Circumstances, Personal, Active, Encompasses A Balance Of Grace And Truth, Forgiving, and Unending.

- **They Are Called:**

Twice in this chapter Paul has used the word “called” to describe his friends at Rome. First, “Called to belong to Jesus Christ.” Now, “loved by God and called to be saints.”

“Called” -- emphasizing the genesis of our salvation -- a careful delineation between the One who calls and the one who receives or answers the call.

How we came to Christ tends to be colored by our view that we have somehow done something for ourselves. Paul has a radically different view of salvation. He sees salvation as emanating from God’s plans and purposes – not ours: 1 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 8:28-30,

We are saved because of the sovereign act of God. The point is-- salvation emanates from God’s sovereign choice. He decided to save us. He determined how to save us. He saved us according to His purposes – not ours.

Romans 1:5: “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.”

John McArthur: “People are to be saved for the glory of God, because it is an affront to His holy nature that someone should live in rebellion against Him. It is His glory that is the issue. And that is the reason for everything.”

- **They Are Saints:**

Throughout the Old Testament Israel was regularly designated as “the holy people” or “saints”. Paul is applying that designation to both Jewish and Gentile Christians at Rome. They are “saints”.

Hebrew word for saints shares its meaning with anything or anyone in the Old Testament that was “set apart” to God. (“hagios” or “holy one”)

Old Covenant: Many things that were set apart, including the “holy place”, the Holy of Holies, the tithes, the priests, and all of Israel. (See Exodus 19:6)

The New Testament reality: That system is gone. There is no holy place, no Holy of Holies, Jerusalem's Temple has been destroyed; the seven-fold tithe doesn't exist anymore. The formal Aaronic priesthood is gone. The exclusive nation of Israel has been set aside.

So what is left of all that holiness? Guess what? We are it. Peter tells us we are the new temple that is rising up to God's glory, stone by stone. We, the Church, have been set apart to God from the world. We are the "hagios", the saints.

Philippians 1:6 Paul writes, "... Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

We are holy because God set apart to himself through his Son. Our moral qualification is based solely on grace. Our sanctification is a work in progress. He who began a good work in us will continue it until the Day that Jesus appears and completes the process.

Verse seven gives us such a wonderful benediction. Paul says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The only people who could receive such a benediction would be those who are loved of God, those who are called by God, and those who are set apart by God.

God's actions have qualified us to receive His grace and experience His peace and that of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.