

2020-2021 Bible Study

#21

2/23/21

The Kerygma (The Teachings of the Apostles)

- The promises of God made in the Old Testament have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus, the Messiah
- **Jesus was anointed by God** at His baptism as **Messiah**
- Jesus began His ministry in Galilee after His baptism
- He conducted a beneficent ministry (doing good and performing mighty works by the power of God)
- The **Messiah was crucified** according to the purpose of God
- He **was raised from the dead** and appeared to His disciples
- Jesus was exalted by God and given the name “Lord”
- He gave the Holy Spirit to form the new community of God
- He **will come again for judgment** and the restoration of all things
- All who hear the message **should repent and be baptized**

Review of our Last Class

- Last week, we began with a look at **1st Corinthian 11** where Paul discussed the problems of men growing long hair and married women not wearing a veil in public
- Then, he discussed the importance of properly preparing for the Eucharistic celebration
- Next, we saw an overview of 1st Corinthians 12-16 with a detail view of the Greek use of four words for “love” with emphasis throughout the New Testament on the use *Agape* love

Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- This was followed by an overview of 2nd Corinthians which:
 - Was written from *Philippi*, just before Paul returned to *Corinth*, to refute the arguments of false teachers
 - We also discussed the fact that Paul wrote his letter to the *Romans* during his stay in *Corinth*

Acts 19

Acts 19

- **Acts 19:1-5** *“While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said, ‘No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’...baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*
 - We are now going to return to the **Book of Acts**, so that we can set the stage for Paul’s ***Letter to the Romans***
 - The people Paul encountered in *Ephesus* were obviously Gentile converts who had only been baptized with the “Baptism of John” (the Baptist)
 - Paul informed them that John’s Baptism had been to prepare them for the coming of Jesus, who would give them another baptism
 - Upon hearing this, they agreed to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

Acts 19 (Cont)

- We need to be aware of the contrast between the baptism of John (**Acts 1:3, 4**) and the baptism of Jesus
- This story tells us that there were two types of baptism going on at this time:
 - The baptism of John (which many had received as an act of repentance)
 - This new baptism in the name of Jesus (for the forgiveness of sin and ultimately entrance into the new way)
 - This language has sometimes caused confusion when some people could not figure out how to be baptized in “the name of Jesus”
 - Matthew told us that Jesus had said that one had to be baptized in Jesus’ name within the trinity
 - Since Jesus was the second person of the trinity, He was the revelation of the invisible God (**Colossians 1:15**)
 - He was also the image of the invisible God, where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are revealed within the Incarnation

Acts 19 (Cont)

- This meant that anyone baptized in the name of Jesus was baptized in the way Jesus had baptized during His ministry (versus the way John had baptized)
- This is why today we use the “Trinitarian formula” for baptism
- Father pointed out that there are certain Protestant sects who insist on baptizing in the name of Jesus because of how they read this passage in the **Book of Acts**
- Father said that one does not invent a religion by reading a book, (the Bible) as the book came from the religion
- Such practices come about from reading the Bible out of context

Acts 19 (Cont)

- **Acts 19:6-7** *“ And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve of them”*
 - Paul spoke boldly
 - The idea of people touching Paul with cloth which they later used to heal people is a part of the biblical basis for the Church’s teaching on relics
 - Old Testament story of dead man being raised after an encounter with the bones of Elisha (2nd Kings 13:20-21)*
 - People being healed by touching the garment of Jesus (Mark 5:25-34)
 - People being healed from the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15)
 - If one touched the thing which had been in touch with the holy person who was in touch with God, you were healed

Acts 19 (Cont)

- Luke relates the story of Jewish exorcists (special rabbis) dealing with demonic possession who decided to perform their exorcisms in the name of Jesus
- This however, did not work out well for them because they were not Christian

Acts 19 (Cont)

- **Acts 19:17-23** *“And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all; and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled...About that time there arose no little stir concerning the Way”*
 - The people confessed their evil magic practices and brought their books to Paul who burned them
 - Father suggested that there was a connection between exorcisms and the burning of the magic books
 - This amounted to the cleansing of the places where there was demonic worship
 - Next, we saw the story of the silversmith *Demetrius*, who made silver images of the goddess Artemis whose livelihood was threatened by Paul’s teaching
 - Here we are introduced to “the way” as an early designation for Christians

Acts 20

Acts 20

- In this chapter, we see that Paul had finally arrives at *Corinth* where he stayed for three months
- As mentioned, it was from here he wrote his **Letter to the Romans**
- Father said that this was a good place to write this letter as it was a port city with easy access to boat travel to Rome
- We will now turn to our study of Paul's *Letter to the Romans*

Romans

Romans

- As discussed earlier, the origins of the *Church of Rome* are difficult to discern
 - Some speculate that it was founded by Christian Jews returning from the feast of Pentecost discussed in **Acts 2:10**
 - *Eusebius*, (260- 339 AD) stated that Peter visited Rome in 42 AD, although he was back in Jerusalem for the Council in 49 or 50 AD
 - Paul also stated that Peter was in Antioch shortly after the council (49/50 AD)

Romans (Cont)

- **The Purpose of the Letter:**

- After writing *2nd Corinthians* in *Macedonia*, Paul arrived in *Corinth* where he wrote the *Letter to the Romans* around 58 AD
- It is the most systematic and doctrinally proficient of all of Paul's letters
- It was addressed to the "Christians in Rome," whom Paul planned to visit on his way to Spain

Romans (Cont)

- **The Structure:**

- 1. Prologue (1:1-15)
- 2. Justification (1-7)
 - A. Whether Jew or Gentile, all are in need of Christ (1-4)
 - B. Salvation for Jew and Gentile is by Baptism (5-8)
 - C. The problems of the Chosen People (9-11)
- 3. Christian Morals (12-15)
- 4. Epilogue 15-16)

Romans (Cont)

- The letter is long and complex because (along with the Church at *Colossae*), Paul was not the one who established this church
- Paul did not know the members of the church, and they did not know him or how he thought
- This is what makes the *Letter to the Romans* so valuable as he was attempting to catechize his audience
- It can be seen as the opposite to the *Letter to the Galatians* where Paul was well-known
- Paul was starting from scratch in his address to these people

Romans (Cont)

- The letter reads like Paul talking to a group of Christians whom he had never met and who had never heard from him before
- Father said that if we read *Romans* very carefully, we will understand most of what Paul was teaching and preaching
- It is basically one long “catechism” in which he goes into detail in order to explain his teachings
- Contrasting this letter with the *Letter to the Galatians*, we find Paul providing in a single line in his *Letter to the Galatians* concerning their belief of Abraham, (**Galatians 3:6**) with an entire chapter to explain the same situation in his *Letter to the Romans*
- Father suggested that after we read and study *Romans*, we should back and reread *Galatians*

Romans (Cont)

- First, Paul presented the **Prologue (Romans 1:1-15)**
- Then, introduced his discussion on **Justification** (which meant to be “made right with God”)
- It described a person who was out of relationship with God, being brought back into a relationship with God
- Here, Paul was asking if they were one of God’s children or not?
- Then, he pointed out that God made no distinction among people, as everyone (Jew or Gentile) needed Christ in order to be saved

Romans (Cont)

- Then, he said that salvation was necessary for both the Jews and Gentiles and it came about by baptism
- Finally, he described the problem of the “chosen people” (Jews)
- He said that he could understand how some of the Gentiles might not accept Jesus as the Messiah, but what about a Jew who refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah?
- As we will see, Paul dealt with this problem in **Romans 9-11** because there was a large number of Jews who did not accept Jesus as the Messiah

Romans (Cont)

- Finally, at the very end of the letter (just before the **Epilogue**), he discussed the moral issues that impacted on the entire community to include:
 - Getting along with each other
 - The need to avoiding fighting
 - The hope to love one another
- Unfortunately, due to time constraints, Father was not able to cover in detail the entire content of the *Letter to the Romans*

Romans 1

Romans 1

- **Romans 1:1-7** *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle,...Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”*
 - The following must have been important to Paul as he included them in this introduction
 - The Old Testament prophets
 - Jesus as a descendant from David in the flesh, and the son of God
 - These truths were to be accepted among the Jews and among all the nations
 - Father said that Paul gave a brief summary of the entire Epistle in this opening section

Romans 1 (Cont)

- The fact that the Church in Rome was almost equally divided between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians is reflected in the problems discussed throughout the letter
- If we remember what happened to the Church in *Jerusalem*, when Gentiles were first admitted, we can understand what the Jewish Christians in Rome were concerned about
- They were wondering if the Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep kosher
- Father pointed out that Rome was very far from *Jerusalem* and it might have taken a long time for the letter from the council to reach them
- So, Paul could not be sure what was going on in the Church of Rome at the time he was writing this letter

Romans 1 (Cont)

- Another problem among the Jewish Christians in Rome was the fact that for a period of time all Jews had been expelled by the emperor from Rome (49 - 53 AD by the Emperor Claudius)
- At one point, all of the Jewish Christians fled the city and moved to places throughout the Roman Empire like *Corinth* and *Athens*
- This meant that Paul may have learned something good and something bad about the Church in Rome as he went about the cities of the Roman Empire (Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, etc.)
- So, when he wrote his letter, many of the Jewish Christians had returned to Rome after the persecution

Romans 1 (Cont)

- Therefore, his letter attempted to inform them of his pending arrival and to help them solve some of the issues he had learned about
- The main problem he addressed was the fact that once again the Jewish Christians were trying to get the Gentile Christians to be circumcised and keep kosher

Romans 1 (Cont)

- Paul's important references about Jesus included:
 - The "Gospel of God"
 - "Descendant of David"
 - "Son of God"
 - "Resurrection from the dead"
- This implied that to be a Christian in the Church of Rome, you did not have to be a descendant of David or Abraham
- It meant that you were so designated as a son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit
- This designation came about through baptism and chrismation

Romans 1 (Cont)

- **Romans 1:8** *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world”*
 - This was Paul’s thanksgiving section
 - The “world” meant the “Roman Empire”
 - When people left Rome, they were all over the Empire and wherever he went, he heard good things about the Church in Rome
 - They were reported to have been doing well, and very faithful
 - This led him to begin to address some of the problems he has heard about

Romans 1 (Cont)

- **Romans 1:18-19** *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness...because God has shown it to them”*
 - Paul was saying that this should be easy for them to understand since God had shown it to them
 - He was telling them about “natural revelation” as a part of “Natural Law”
 - God is the creator and there are certain rules for all of mankind to live by
 - This meant that the Gentiles had no excuse for doing those things that were against God under the natural law
 - He then began to talk about “sin” to the Gentiles

Romans 1 (Cont)

- He talked about how they had exchanged the glory of God for the image of an animal
- They had been worshipping animals and things like that instead of the one true God (the creature rather than the creator)
- As a result, they ended up in all sorts of sins such as: homosexuality, fighting, murder etc.

Romans 1 (Cont)

- **Romans 1:28-32** *“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,...they not only do them but approve those who practice them”*
 - He pointed out that they were filled with all sorts of horrible evil
 - The Jewish Christians (and even the regular Jews) would have agreed that this was what was going on in the Gentile world
 - But, if you listen closely, he was saying that this was the story of the people of Israel as well
 - God had revealed to them not only His natural law, but also His “special revelation” from Mt. Sinai

Romans 1 (Cont)

- They had exchanged the image of the immortal God for the image of a golden calf which led to all sorts of sensuous licentiousness (**Exodus 32**)
- From that point on, the rest of the Old Testament went down hill
- At first, the Jews listening to this letter heard about the pagan Gentile world
- But then, he pointed out that this was also a part of the Jewish story
- Both groups came from bad backgrounds
- In fact, the Jewish Christians were more culpable because they have been not only given the natural revelation, but also the “special revelation”
- The Jew first, and then the Gentile