



## The Mystery of the Meaning of the Book of Romans • Part 1

Lesson 1

### Why This Study Now?

- 1) We have not done an expositional study of book for a while.
- 2) A study of the Book of Romans, and chapters 9-10 in particular, fits with the topical and theological themes we have been studying for the past year.
- 3) A study of Romans 9-11 will prepare our hearts for the upcoming 2011 World Outreach Celebration and the theme: **SENT...to All Peoples for the Fame of His Name.** *Romans 10:14-15*
- 4) A study of Romans 9-11 will by God's grace fill our hearts with a passion for reaching the diverse cultures and people groups right here in the Northland and around our church.
- 5) A study of Romans 9-11 is one of the most challenging parts of the NT. We shouldn't shy away from hard parts of the Bible—they are often rich in meaning, filled with mystery, and show how God's majesty applies to everyday life!

## The Mystery of the Meaning of the Book of Romans Part One: Evangelizing the Church at Rome

### ► The City of Rome

- 1) The **CAPITAL** of the fourth world empire.
- 2) A megacity with all the mega-**PROBLEMS** that come with urban living on a large-scale.
  - ☑ Mega-**DENSITY**
  - ☑ Mega-**DIVERSITY**
  - ☑ Mega-**POVERTY**
  - ☑ Mega-**DEPRAVITY**
- 3) A long history of **RACIAL TENSION** between Jews and Gentiles.
  - Began with captives being brought to Rome by Pompey after capturing Jerusalem in 63 B.C.
  - Became numerous under the generally favorable attitude of the early emperors.
  - Because of continued disturbances among the Jews in the city due to their obstinate adherence to their national customs and cultural traditions, they were expelled from the city by the edict of **Claudius**. (Acts 18:2, Aquila and Priscilla)
  - Began to return in great numbers under **Nero** and had a number of synagogues in the city, 13 are still known by name today. (*Aquila and Priscilla had returned via Corinth and Ephesus!* 16:3-5)
  - Because of the contempt for the polytheistic heathen religion of Rome by both the upper and lower classes, the importation of foreign pagan religions was readily accepted by the masses.
  - Because of the decay of polytheism, the monotheism of the Jews had receptive access.
  - But the Emperor Titus would eventually destroy Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70.

## ► The Church in Rome

### ***Planting of the Church***

- 1) It is impossible to determine when Christianity was **FIRST** introduced at Rome.
- 2) Most likely the church had its origins and, therefore, its vitality in being planted by the natural **MULTIPLICATION** process as taught in the Great Commission and caught by the church at Antioch. (*Acts 11:19-26*)
- 3) The church was already a **HEALTHY, organized local church** for "**many years**" at the time Paul wrote to them and before he had ever visited them. (*15:23*)
- 4) The church was **MATURE** enough in **ministry** to assist Paul in his plans to **multiply** the gospel through **missionary** work in Spain. (*15:13-14, 1:11-12; 15:24*)
- 5) Paul was personally aware of the **STRATEGIC** importance of **this city** and **its church** to world evangelization and making disciples of all nations.

### ***People of the Church***

- 1) **DIVERSE** and easily divided: Some Jews (*4:1; 11:13-14; 14:1-15:13; 16:7, 11*) and many Gentiles (*1:5, 13; 11:13; 15:7-12*)
- 2) **DEDICATED** team of living sacrifices in the service of the Lord with a worldwide reputation. (*1:8; 16:19; 12:1-2; 16:1-16*)
- 3) **DYNAMIC** local churches meeting in homes: *Prisca and Aquila* (*16:3-5*); *Asyncritus* (*16:14*); *Philolgyus* (*16:15*); *Aristobulus* \* (*16:10*); *Narcissus* \* (*16:11*)  
\* These men may not be the leaders of churches in their homes or even saved at all. They may merely be the owners of the converted slaves "of their household."
- 4) **DEVELOPING** according to the gospel into a growing force for world evangelization

### ***REMEMBER When In Rome, Do as the Romans Do!***

- In a culture and city very much like our own a church was planted, established, and needed to multiply. We need to do the same!
- The gospel is the power of God unto salvation...not just in the past, but in the present and on into the future...not just for individuals but also for entire churches...not just in our culture but in every culture and people group around the world!

