

THE PARENTHETIC EPISTLES – FAITH ROMANS

It is emphatically the portion of God's Word that is adapted to show all men God's present grace, preparatory to the higher unfolding of Ephesians. All revelation previous to Paul's severance to the ministries, which are expounded in Romans as given through the Lord and His Apostles, was limited to the Circumcision, concerned with the kingdom promised by the prophets of Israel. This falls far short of the grace revealed through Paul in this Epistle. They promised a probationary pardon on repentance, but here we have a complete vindication, justification or acquittal founded entirely on faith.

As shown by the literary framework, Romans is dominated by three great doctrines.

Justification. God's own righteousness which He shares with the sinner.

Conciliation. God's own peace that He imparts to the believer.

Sovereignty. God's own indomitable will, which forms the immovable basis of all blessing.

These are the bulk and burden of this epistle.

As justification is commonly degraded to a mere pardon, or forgiveness and conciliation is unknown, and God's sovereignty is denied, there is a great need to urge beloved saints to give the great truths of this epistle the place in their hearts and lives which they deserve.

Every doctrine in this Epistle is discussed twice, first from the viewpoint of the individual, and again from the larger national standpoint. The latter half of the third and fourth chapters shows clearly and exhaustively how anyone may be vindicated in the sight of God. The latter half of the ninth and the tenth chapters shows how this favour finds its way to the nations, while Israel fails to affect it through the law.

So, too, God's present attitude of peace to ward mankind and toward those who are justified is fully set forth in the fifth, sixth, seventh and part of the eighth chapters. The bearing of this on Israel and the nations is fully unfolded in the eleventh chapter.

That God is still interested in His chosen people, Israel, is shown in the end of the eighth chapter. His sovereign will with regard to Israel and the nations is shown in the succeeding chapter. It is exceedingly important to recognise the NATIONAL scope of the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters. Much confusion has resulted from applying parts of these chapters to individuals rather than to nations.

Israel nationally, has not attained to righteousness, yet many in the nation cannot be included in this sweeping assertion. The nation, as such, not the faithful remnant, has stumbled. It is Israel as God's national witness in the earth that is figured by the olive tree. Some of the branches (the unbelieving majority) are broken off. The nations as a whole (the wild olive tree) are grafted into the cultivated olive tree. Now that the nations, as such, are apostatising, they are about to be cut out off. The individual believers in the nations will not be cut out for their faith will keep them in.

SINNER, would you know how to be just before God? **Read Romans**

SAINT, would you be at perfect peace with God? **Ponder Romans**