April 7, 2002 Northwest Bible Church

**Romans -****Introduction**

**INTRO**

 "It is the chief book of the New Testament and the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian, but to be the subject of his meditation every day, the daily bread of his soul . . . . It can never be too much read or studied, and the more it is handled, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes." Luther

 "If we understand this epistle we have a passage opened to us to the understanding of the whole of Scripture." Calvin

 "There is one book in the New Testament which links up with almost everything that the Bible contains, . . . Romans." J. I. Packer

 "The cathedral of the Christian faith." "The Reformation was undoubtedly the work of the Epistle to the Romans, as well as of that to the Galatians; and the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the church will be connected as effect and cause with a deeper understanding of this book." Godet

**I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS POSITION IN THE NT.**

 Romans is the first epistle in the NT. WHY? Not the first letter Paul wrote, that was Galatians.

 A. First in size.

 B. First in importance.

**II. AUTHOR, DATE, AND RECIPIENTS**

 A. Paul is the author of Romans but he did not write it !!!??? See Rom.16:22. Tertius is called an *amanuensis*, which is a glorified term for personal secretary.

 B. Paul sent the letter between A.D. 55 and 58. He was at the tail end of his third missionary journey and most likely in Corinth at the time of its writing. See Acts 20:2-3 for the historical record.

 C. Paul is writing this letter to the saints in Rome (1:7). He was not the founder of this church. He had never personally been to Rome to visit them but he longed to see them (1:11).

So how did the church get started in Rome? Probably from the conversions at Pentecost in Acts 2:10.

**III. THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK**

 A. To introduce himself and communicate his love for them and his desire to visit them (1:9-12).

Paul hopes to go eventually to Spain and wants to first fellowship and minister to them in Rome, with the hope that they will assist him in his ministry in Spain (15:23-24). For the present he must return to Jerusalem for he is taking gifts for the relief of the poor brethren there.

Toward this end, he desires their prayers for God's blessings (15:30-32).

 B. To resolve conflicts between Christian Jews and Gentiles in Rome.

C. To establish them in the truth of the gospel. He begins this with this letter and hopes to continue it when he arrives. (1:11).

 **IV. THE USEFULNESS OF THIS BOOK.**

 AUGUSTINE:

 MARTIN LUTHER:

 JOHN WESLEY

**CONCLUSION**

Romans will be a challenging book.

We will NOT race through Romans "If any minister wants to strengthen his people, he can hardly do better than to give them a massive dose of Romans." Gordon Clark