

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

es-sen-tials (ĭ-sĕn'shĕlz) – *noun* – those things that are necessary and basic to life. In biochemistry essentials are substances that are required for normal functioning but cannot be synthesized by the body and therefore must be included in the diet. Essentials are those things that are fundamental to the spiritual health of the professing Christian.

The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the

Romans

A BIBLE STUDY

Setting the Agenda:

The purpose of *Romans: A Bible Study* is

1. to aid us in developing a clearer understanding of *Romans* (clear, accurate exegesis of the scriptural passages),
2. to help us experience the true nature and meaning of the writing of *Romans* (God's truth),
3. to explain to us how *Romans* speaks to us as individual Christian believers and as Christ's body, the Church (contemporary relevance and significance to life's issues), and
4. to illustrate to us how *Romans* shapes our lives and faith as twenty-first century Christians (to make the truth of God and the issues of life collide violently at the intersections of the consciousness¹).

The structure of the course will be interactive and participatory. Weekly assignments will include the students' answers to questions on prepared handouts. Students' answers will be based on the selected reading assignments for the week.

Students will need a good study Bible with references and notes. The instructor will be using the *NIV (New International Version)*, drawing occasionally from other versions such as the following:

- the *NASB (New American Standard Bible)*,
- the *NRSV (New Revised Standard Version)*,
- the *NKJV (New King James Version)*, or
- other contemporary versions that are acceptable for this course (pp. 8-9).

To honor the time of the students participating in this course, we will make every effort to limit our class time to between *sixty* and *seventy-five* minutes.

¹ Jim Andrews, Senior Pastor – Lake Bible Church – Lake Oswego, Oregon. 1991 - Present.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

Outline of the Major Divisions

SESSION ONE

- I. Introduction (1:1-15)
 - A. Salutation (1:1-7)
 - B. Paul and the Church at Rome (1:8-15)

- II. Theme: The Gospel as the Revelation of God's Righteousness (1:16, 17)

SESSION TWO

- III. The Need for Salvation: The Plight of Mankind (1:18-3:20)
 - A. In the Pagan World (1:18-32)
 - B. Principles of Judgment (2:1-16)

SESSION THREE

- C. Specific Guilt of the Jew (2:17-3:8)
- D. Summary (3:9-20)

SESSION FOUR

- IV. Justification: The Imputation of Righteousness (3:21-5:21)
 - A. The Description of Justification (3:21-26)
 - B. The Availability of Justification through Faith Alone (3:27-31)
 - C. The Illustration of Justification from the Old Testament (4:1-25)
 - 1. The Case of Abraham (4:1-5)
 - 2. The Case of David (4:6-8)

SESSION FIVE

- 3. The Promise to Abraham—Apart from Circumcision (4:9-12)
- 4. The Promise to Abraham—Apart from the Law (4:13-17)
- 5. Abraham's Faith - The Standard for Every Believer (4:18-25)

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

SESSION SIX

- D. The Benefits of Justification (5:1-11)
- E. The Universal Applicability of Justification (5:12-21)

SESSION SEVEN

- V. Sanctification: The Impartation of Righteousness (6:1-8:39)
 - A. The Believer's Union with Christ in Death and Resurrection Life (6:1-14)
 - 1. The Statement of the Fact (6:1-10)
 - 2. The Appeal Based on the Fact (6:11-14)

SESSION EIGHT

- B. Union with Christ Viewed as Enslavement to Righteousness (6:15-23)
- C. Union with Christ Viewed as Deliverance from Law (7:1-6)
- D. The Relationship between Law and Sin (7:7-25)

SESSION NINE

- E. The Blessings of Life in the Spirit (8:1-39)
 - 1. Liberation by the Spirit from the Law of Sin and Death (8:1-11)
 - 2. Additional Ministries of the Spirit (8:12-27)
 - 3. The Security and Permanence of the Life of the Redeemed (8:28-39)

SESSION TEN

- VI. The Problem of Israel: God's Righteousness Vindicated (9:1-11:36)
 - A. Paul's Sorrow over Israel's Condition (9:1-5)
 - B. God's Choice of Israel Based on Election, Not on Natural Generation or Works of Merit (9:6-13)
 - C. God's Freedom to Act in His Own Sovereign Right (9:14-29)

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

SESSION ELEVEN

D. Israel's Failure to Obtain Righteousness Due to Reliance on Works Rather than Faith (9:30-10:21)

SESSION TWELVE

E. Israel Not Entirely Rejected; There Is a Remnant of Believers (11:1-10)

F. Israel's Temporary Rejection and the Salvation of Gentiles (11:11-24)

G. Israel's Future Salvation (11:25-32)

H. Praise to God for His Wisdom and His Ways (11:33-36)

SESSION THIRTEEN

VII. Our Spiritual Service: The Practice of Righteousness (12:1-15:13)

A. The Appeal for Dedication of the Believer (12:1, 2)

B. Varied Ministries in the Church, the Body of Christ (12:3-8)

C. Principles Governing Christian Conduct (12:9-21)

D. The Duty of Submission to Civil Authority (13:1-7)

SESSION FOURTEEN

E. The Comprehensive Obligation of Love (13:8-10)

F. The Purifying Power of Hope (13:11-14)

SESSION FIFTEEN

G. Questions of Conscience in which Christians Differ (14:1-15:13)

1. Brethren Must Refrain from Judging One Another (14:1-12)

2. Brethren Must Avoid Offending One Another (14:13-23)

3. The Unity of the Strong and the Weak in Christ (15:1-13)

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

SESSION SIXTEEN

VIII. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

A. Paul's Past Labors, Present Program, and Future Plans (15:14-33)

B. Personal Greetings, Warning Concerning Schismatics, and Doxology (16:1-27)²

² Everett F Harrison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians – Vol. 10* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 12-13.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

Selected Bibliography

- Achtemeier, Paul J., gen. ed. *Harper Collins Dictionary*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1996.
- American Heritage Dictionary, The: Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.* New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.
- Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Barnes, Albert. *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament – Acts and Romans, edited by Robert Frew*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005.
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York, New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Cargal, Timothy B. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Word Biblical Commentary – Volume 38A: Romans 1-8*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Word Biblical Commentary – Volume 38B: Romans 9-16*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988.
- González, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1 – The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984.
- Harrison, Everett F. "Romans: Introduction, Text, and Exposition." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 10: Romans through Galatians*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, 1-171. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976.
- Knox, John and Gerald R. Cragg. "The Epistle to the Romans: Introduction, Exegesis, and Exposition." In *The Interpreter's Bible – Volume III: Acts and Romans*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, 333-668. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954.
- Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Books and Chapters of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church: Volume 1 – Apostolic Christianity – From the Birth of Christ to the Death of St. John - A.D. 1-100*. Peabody: Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006.

Sheldon, Henry C. *History of the Christian Church: Volume 1 – The Early Church*. New York, New York: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999.

Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

United Methodist Hymnal, The: Book of United Methodist Worship, edited by Carlton R. Young. Nashville, Tennessee: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.

Wesley, John. *The Works of John Wesley: Third Edition*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996.

Wright, N. T. "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes - Volume X - Acts through 1 Corinthians*, edited by Leander E. Keck, 393-770. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2002.

THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

Biblical Selections

Apologetics Study Bible, The – Understanding What You Believe: Holman Christian Standard Bible, edited by Ted Cabal. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007.

Common English Bible, The: With Apocrypha, edited by Joel B. Green. Nashville, Tennessee: Common English Bible. 2013.

ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version (ESV), edited by Lane T. Dennis. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008.

Fire Bible: Global Study Edition, New International Version, edited by Donald Stamps. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, 2010.

Holy Bible: King James Version. Lake Wylie, South Carolina: Christian Heritage Publishing Company, Inc., 1986.

Holy Bible: The New Open Bible - The New King James Version. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.

Maxwell Leadership Bible, The: New King James Version, edited by John Maxwell. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2002.

Message, The: The Bible in Contemporary Language, edited by Eugene Peterson. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress Publishing Group, 2002.

New Interpreter's Study Bible, The: New Revised Standard Version Bible, edited by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2003.

New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, The: Revised Standard Version, edited by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition: New American Standard Bible, edited by Charles Caldwell Ryrie. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1995.

Wesley Study Bible, The: New Revised Standard Version, edited by Joel B. Green and William H. Willimon. Nashville, Tennessee, Abingdon Press, 2009.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

Zondervan NIV Study Bible: The Holy Bible - New International Version, edited by the International Bible Society. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

SESSION ONE

Introduction to The Letter to the Romans – General Statements

“Romans is neither a systematic theology nor a summary of Paul’s lifework, but it is by common consent his masterpiece... What nobody doubts is that we are here dealing with a work of massive substance, presenting a formidable intellectual challenge while offering a breathtaking theological and spiritual vision.”³

“There is no more interesting body of documents in the New Testament than the letters of Paul. That is because, of all the forms of literature, a letter is most personal...It is precisely because he left us so many letters that we feel we know Paul so well. In them, he opened his mind and heart to the people he loved so much; and in them, to this day, we can see that great mind grappling with the problems of the early Church, and feel that great heart throbbing with love for men and women, even when they were misguided and mistaken.”⁴ Paul’s letters are written in sections and in an order ordered by the standards of letter writing in the first century, which include *the greeting, the prayer, the thanksgiving, the special contents, and the special salutations and special greetings*.

- 1) *The greeting*: Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1.
- 2) *The prayer*: in every case, Paul prays for the grace of God on the people to whom he writes: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2.
- 3) *The thanksgiving*: Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3.
- 4) *The special contents*: the main body of the letters.
- 5) *The special salutations and personal greetings*: Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 4:21-2; Colossians 4:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:26.⁵

³ N. T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes - Volume X - Acts through 1 Corinthians*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2002), 395.

⁴ William Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), xxiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xxv-xxvi.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT."
MATTHEW 7:13-14

"With a very few exceptions, Paul's letters were written to meet an immediate situation. They were not systematic arguments which he sat down to write in the peace and silence of his study. There was some threatening situation in Corinth, or Galatia, or Philippi, or Thessalonica, and he wrote a letter to meet it. He was not in the least thinking of us when he wrote, but solely of the people to whom he was writing."⁶

"It is precisely because Paul's letters were written to meet a threatening danger or a pressing need that they still throb with life. And it is because human need and the human situation do not change that God speaks to us through them today."⁷

"Romans is both [overtly] complicated and a very carefully constructed letter. It will therefore help us to find our way through it if we have in our minds an idea of its framework. It falls into four definite divisions.

- 1) Chapters 1-8 deal with the problem of righteousness.
- 2) Chapters 9-11 deal with the problem of the Jews, the chosen people.
- 3) Chapters 12-15 deal with the practical questions of life and living.
- 4) Chapter 16 is a letter of introduction for Phoebe, and a list of final personal greetings."⁸

"By common consent, Romans is the greatest of Paul's letters, and the Roman church became one of the major centers of Christendom, yet nothing is known about the circumstances surrounding the founding and early history of this church. The apostle does not deal with these things in the course of his letter... At any rate, it is probable that by the fifth decade of the first century the Christian faith had gained a foothold in the capital of the empire."⁹ "The titles of the Pauline Epistles are not part of the text, so the superscription 'The Letter of Paul to the Romans' cannot be attributed to the apostle but must be taken as reflecting the understanding of the church as a whole sometime during the second century. Yet, since the intended readers are located at Rome by the writer (Rom 1:7, 15), all doubt about the destination would seem to be removed."¹⁰

"Of the four types of writing found in the NT (Gospel, Acts, Epistle, Apocalypse) the epistle is by far the most common. The work itself is a transliteration of the Greek, *epistolē*, meaning communication, usually of a written nature. Romans bears this label

⁶ William Barclay, xxvi.

⁷ Ibid., xxvii.

⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

⁹ Everett F. Harrison, "Romans: Introduction, Text, and Exposition," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 10: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976), 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

in 16:22. Paul uses the word often in reference to his correspondence with churches (e.g. 1 Cor 5:9; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27). There is also a reference to his writings in 2 Peter 3:16.¹¹

“This epistle has been usually deemed the most difficult of interpretation of any part of the New Testament; and no small part of the controversies in the Christian church have grown out of discussions about its meaning.”¹²

“Perhaps, on the whole, there is no book of the New Testament that more demands a humble, docile, and prayerful disposition in its interpretation than this epistle. Its profound doctrines; its abstruse (perplexing and technical) inquiries; and the opposition of many of those doctrines to the views of the unrenewed and the unsubdued heart of man, make a spirit of docility and prayer peculiarly needful in its investigation. No man ever yet understood the reasonings and views of the apostle Paul but under the influence of elevated piety.”¹³

Romans' Place in Biblical Studies

“Since ancient authorities regularly include Romans without question, no problem exists in this area. Marcion had it in his list, as did the Canon of Muratori. Although its position in the various lists is not uniform, from the fourth century onward and even in the third (P⁴⁶ of the Chester Beatty Papyri collection), Romans stands at the head of the Pauline Epistles. Since it was not the first to be written, its position may be taken as testimony to a growing awareness in the church of its cardinal importance.”¹⁴

“From very early times, the Church felt that Romans was so great an expression of the mind of Paul that it must become the possession not of one congregation but of the whole Church. We must remember, as we study it, that Christians have always looked on Romans as embodying the very essence of Paul's gospel.”¹⁵

“The Epistle to the Romans has been usually regarded as the most difficult portion of the New Testament. It is from this cause, probably, as well as from the supposition that its somewhat abstruse discussions could not be made interesting to the

¹¹ Everett F. Harrison, 6.

¹² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament – Acts and Romans*, ed. Robert Frew (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2005), xi.

¹³ *Ibid.*, xii.

¹⁴ Everett F. Harrison, 8.

¹⁵ William Barclay, 12.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT. MATTHEW 7:13-14

young, that so few efforts have been made to introduce it into Sunday Schools and Bible Classes.”¹⁶

Probable Authorship of The Letter to the Romans

“From the postapostolic church to the present with almost no exception, the Epistle has been credited to Paul. If the claim of the apostle to have written the Galatian and Corinthian letters is accepted, there is no reasonable basis for denying that he wrote Romans, since it echoes much of what is in the earlier writings, yet not slavishly. A few examples must suffice: the doctrine of justification by faith (Rom 3:20-22; Gal 2:16); the church as the body of Christ appointed to represent and serve him through a variety of spiritual gifts (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12); the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-28; 2 Cor 8-9). Understandably, Paul makes fewer references to himself and to his readers in Romans than in 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians since he had not founded the Roman church and guided its struggles to maturity as he had the others.”¹⁷

“This Epistle has been, with great uniformity, attributed to the apostle Paul, and received as part of the sacred canon.”¹⁸

Origin, Audience, and Date of Composition

“Fixed dates for the span of Paul’s labors are few, but one of them is the summer of A.D. 51, when Gallio arrived in Corinth to serve as proconsul to Achaia. After this the apostle stayed in the city ‘some time’ (Acts 18:18). Possibly in the spring of 52 he went to Caesarea and Jerusalem, stopping at Antioch on the way back and probably spending the winter of 52 there. Presumably, his return to Ephesus was in the spring of 53, marking the beginning of a three-year ministry there (Acts 20:31).

“At the end of 56 he spent three months in Corinth (Acts 20:3), starting his final trip to Jerusalem in the spring of 57. When he wrote Romans the fund for the Jerusalem church seems to have been finally completed (Rom 15:26ff.). This may indicate a date in early 57 rather than late in 56 for the writing of the letter. (The fund was incomplete when Paul, on the way from Ephesus to Corinth, wrote 2 Cor 8-9.)¹⁹

¹⁶ Albert Barnes, iv.

¹⁷ Everett F. Harrison, 3-4.

¹⁸ Albert Barnes, vii.

¹⁹ Everett F. Harrison, 4.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT."
MATTHEW 7:13-14

“Corinth is the most likely place of composition, since Phoebe of nearby Cenchrea was apparently entrusted with the carrying of the letter (Rom 16:1,2). The mention of Gaius as Paul’s host (Rom 16:23) confirms this conclusion, Gaius having been of the most prominent of converts during the apostle’s mission at Corinth (1 Cor 1:14).”²⁰

Theology and Purpose of Romans

“When Paul’s Ephesian ministry had continued for more than two years, with tremendous impact on the city and province, he sensed that it would soon be time for him to move to another field of labor. It may be that for some time he had been looking westward toward Rome (see ‘many years’ in Rom 15:23). Now the conviction grew that he must act by beginning to plan for work in the west (Acts 19:21). He had already preached the gospel in the strategic centers of population in the East and his restless spirit yearned to reach out to places where Christ was not known. He would go through Rome to Spain to plant the gospel there (Rom 15:22-24).”²¹

“The question naturally arises, ‘Why did this plan dictate the writing of a letter such as Romans? Why not send a note by Phoebe simply to inform the church that he would be coming to them in a short time? Two things should be said about this.

“First, since Paul hoped to go beyond Rome even as far as Spain, he evidently expected to have the Roman church as a base of missionary operation comparable to Antioch in the East. If this was to be realized, he needed to share with the church a rather complete exposition of the gospel he had been preaching for over twenty years. By putting this exposition in writing and sending it ahead, he would give the Christian community in Rome an opportunity to digest the message and be ready to share in the extension of the gospel to the West.

“Another factor may have entered in. The very passage that sets forth his plan and purpose is followed by one requesting prayer for his safety and success as he went on to Judea prior to leaving for Rome. Particularly ominous is his expressed need to be delivered from unbelievers in Judea (Rom 15:31). The plot by Jews at Corinth against his life (Acts 20:3) may already have been made and become an omen of future events... What if he should not live to declare the gospel in the West? Then he must write a letter so systematic and comprehensive that the church would be able intelligently to continue his work, proclaiming the very gospel he was spelling out for them, taking it in his stead

²⁰ Everett F. Harrison, 4.

²¹ Ibid., 5.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

to the farthest reaches of the empire. For all he knew at the time, this letter might be in a sense his last will and testament..."²²

"Romans satisfies the craving of the human spirit for a comprehensive exposition of the great truths of salvation set out in logical fashion, supported and illumined by OT Scripture. The systematic element includes due attention to doctrine and life – in that order because right relations must be established with God before one can live so as to please him and mediate his blessings to others.

"The question as to what is most central to the Pauline theology has been long debated. Some have said that it is justification by faith. Others have insisted that the life 'in Christ' is the secret, for it lifts one out of the rigidity and barrenness of legal terminology, disclosing the positive and dynamic relationship the believer may have with God's Son. Fortunately, we do not have to choose between these two, because both are important in Paul's presentation. Without justification there can be no life in Christ (5:18), and such life in turn confirms the reality of the justification."²³

Upon further examination of Paul's purpose for writing Romans we encounter three separate but intertwined reasons for this writing. There is evidence of a *missionary purpose, an apologetic purpose, and a pastoral purpose.*²⁴

"To grapple with Romans is to engage in dialogue with one of the most creative theological minds of all time from the most creative period of Christian thought."²⁵

²² Everett F. Harrison, 5.

²³ Ibid., 7.

²⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary – Volume 38a: Romans 1-8*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), lv-lvi.

²⁵ Ibid., xiii.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

SESSION ONE

Introduction and Romans 1:1-17

Questions for Session One

1. With reference to #4 of the statement of purpose on p. 1, please give your thoughts on what it means “to make the truth of God and the issues of life collide violently at the intersections of the consciousness.”
2. After reading the introductory material on *Romans*, please explain why you think the study of this Pauline letter is one of the most difficult New Testament writings to undertake.
3. List the sections that were the standard for letter writing in the first century. List the four clearly defined divisions of this epistle and the chapters that are represented in each one.
4. The last paragraph under *General Statements* on p. 11 explains in detail how we are to approach the study of *Romans*. Please explain this as you understand it, and how you will prepare yourself for this study.

DR. BOB KIRBY, TIIMS, PCC | SR. PASTOR | MORRIS MEM. UMC | 4615 MACCORKLE AVE., SE | CHARLESTON, WV 25304
Website: centerchannelcoaching.com | Mobile: 302.588.7878 | e-Mail: drbobkirby@gmail.com

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020

THE PASTOR'S ESSENTIALS®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.

MATTHEW 7:13-14

5. Detail two of the main reasons why scholars and theologians think Paul took such great care in his writing of this letter to the Church at Rome.

6. Explain the two great truths of salvation in *Romans* as explained on p. 14. In your own words clarify the three purposes of *Romans*: (1) *missionary*, (2) *apologetic*, and (3) *pastoral*.

7. *Romans* 1:1 identifies Paul. He (1) *is a servant*, (2) *is called*, and (3) *is set apart*. Explain in detail each of these three as you reflect on your personal relationship with God in your Christian walk.

8. In vv. 2-5 of Paul's introductory piece, he identifies two things that we have received by virtue of our own personal salvation. One is a *gift* and the other is a *charge*. Explain each and detail what you have done with the *gift*, and how you are living into the *charge*.

THE PASTOR'S *ESSENTIALS*®

OUR LIVES IN THE BIBLE - THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT.
MATTHEW 7:13-14

9. Explain what Paul means in v. 13 when he informs the Church at Rome that he is looking forward to a harvest. How can we have a harvest in our communities?

10. To whom is Paul obligated (v. 14) because of God's call on his life, and in what order (v. 16) were people originally intended to receive the Gospel? Explain the difference between what we might consider righteousness and the righteousness (v. 17) to which Paul is pledged.

Copyright © - Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min. - 2020