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Saul of Tarsus (later Roman name Paul) - A Jewish Rabbi belonging to a group known as the Pharisees

Passionate and devout follower of the Torah of Moses and the traditions of Israel who saw Jesus and His followers as a threat

Then... had a radical encounter with the risen Jesus

- Commissioned him as an apostle - official representative of Jesus
 - To go to world of the Gentiles in the Roman empire telling people about the risen King Jesus
 - Forming followers into the new Jesus communities called "churches"
 - Occasionally wrote letters to the new Jesus communities to help them foster their faith, or answer questions and the Book of Romans was one of these

The Church of Rome (see [Acts 18:1-2](#))

- The church in Rome had existed for some time
- Made up of Jews and non-Jews followers of Jesus
- Emperor Claudius
 - Had expelled all of the Jews from Rome
 - 5 years later all Jews were allowed to Return



- When they did, they found a church that had become very non-Jewish in custom in practice

Purpose of Romans

Paul - I want you (this divided church) to be unified!

- For a practical purpose: hoping the Roman church would be a staging ground for his mission west all the way to Spain!



- The fullest explanation of the Gospel - The good news about Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection

Chapters 1-4 Reveals God's Righteousness

Paul introduces himself as an apostle (see [1:1-17](#) The Gospel)

- The Risen Jesus, son of God, is King of the Nations
- Jesus now calls all humanity to come under His loving rule
- The Gospel is:
 - God's power to save people who trust in Him
 - Revealing of **God's Righteousness (rich old testament word)**
 - Describes God's character

1. He always does what is **Just** and **Right**
2. He is **Faithful** to **His Promises**

The story of Jesus shows how God has done both of these things!

How?! (Retelling of Genesis Chapter 3-11)

Chapter [1:18-32](#) All Nations are Trapped

The human heart and mind are broken because of sin and we have turned towards idolatry giving ultimate allegiance to created things that are not God Paul says.

Resulting in distortion of humanity and destructive behavior. What's left is a humanity that is Guilty as charged before a Righteous God!

- The people of Israel might say:
 - Well it's a good thing then that God chose us out from among the nations
 - Saved us from Egyptian slavery
 - Gave us the law of the Torah: sabbath, eating couture, and circumcison
- Altogether this shows us how to live as a holy people!
- Israel is trapped too! (see [2:1-3:8](#))
 - Paul says not so fast! He recalls the storyline of the Torah and the rest of the Old Testament which shows that Israel was just as sinful, idolatrous, morally broken as the rest of humanity.
 - More Guilty than the Gentiles because they have the Torah; they should know better!
 - All humanity is hopeless trapped, but this is not the final word!

Chapter 3:9-26 But Good News

The Good news about Jesus is God's response.



Justification - "to declare righteous" "*Just as if i'd*" *never sinned*

- New status: right with God and forgiven
- New family: included in God's people
- New future: transformed life

In Christ

Chapter 4 Who is in God's Covenant Family?

Goes back to [Genesis 12, 15](#)

- Before any of the laws of the Torah was given to Israel, Abraham was justified before God.
 - How?
 - God said he would be a Father of a multi-ethnic family that would receive God's blessing "All Nations will be blessed through you and your offspring" even though old. He had radical faith and trust in God's promise and so God declared him righteous
 - Same kind of faith in the One who fulfilled the promise: Jesus

Summary of Chapters 1-4

Chapter 1: All Humanity is hopelessly trapped in sin and needs to be rescued

However,

Chapter 2: Rescue won't happen by trying to obey the laws of the Torah

Rather,

Chapter 3: God's righteous character has rescued the world through Jesus...

So that,

Chapter 4: ...To create the faith-based multiethnic family of Abraham as His new covenant people

Chapters 5-8 Creates a New Humanity

Chapter 5 - Justification by Faith Creates New Humanity

- Goes back to “Adam” - means “humanity”
 - Adam, like all after him, has chosen sin and selfishness
 - All face God’s judgment caused by sin’s influence resulting in death
- Jesus contrasted as “The New Adam”
 - Is a human who lived in faithful obedience to God shown through his act of sacrificial love.
 - Offers his life as a gift to others so that they can be justified before God
 - Jesus stands as the head of a new humanity that is being transformed by this gift

Chapter 6 - Leave This Humanity: Baptism

- Paul reminds Christians in Rome that choosing to follow Jesus means leaving their old adam like humanity and entering into their Jesus like humanity: Baptism
 - Old humanity = died with Jesus = Death
 - New humanity = raised with him from the dead = New Life
 - We are joined to Jesus so that what is true of Jesus is now true of us
 - Now liberated to Love God and Neighbor

Chapter 7 - What was the Point of the Law?

If creating this new humanity was always God’s purpose, what then was the point in giving Israel the Law/Torah?

Law (Torah)

- A. The Story of the Torah (5 books of Old Testament)
- B. The 613 commands given through Moses
 - Good and show God’s will for how Israel was to live

But if we replay the storyline of the Torah, Israel kept breaking them

X - Don’t lie

X - Don’t steal

X - love others

X - don’t covet

These rules made Israel more guilty; there was a serious heart issue

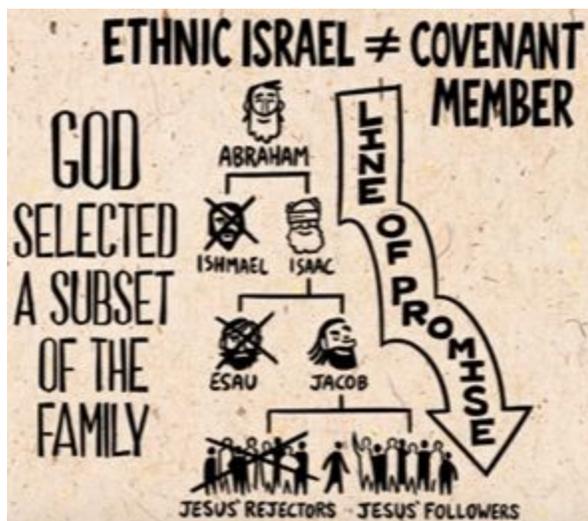
The Paradox is the point; God's goal was to make it clear that evil has hijacked the human heart and the Torah could do nothing about it.

Chapter 8 - The Solution: Jesus and the Spirit

The Laws focused on the sin of the heart as the rescue by Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit to renew creation and liberate all to love God and neighbor

Chapters 9-11 Fulfills God's Promise to Israel

Chapter 9 Israel in the Past



- Ethnic Israelite (a physical descendent of Abraham) never made someone automatically a faithful member of the covenant family.
- Now the line of promise is carried on by those who follow Jesus
 - Inside and out of Abraham's family people have rejected God's will
 - Reminder of Israel and the Golden Calf and Pharaoh's Rebellion
- God was able to orchestrate events so that People's Rejection of Him accomplished God's redemptive purposes

Chapter 10 Israel in the Present

- The reason many Israelites reject Jesus is because they are basing the Covenant relationship with God on their performance of the commands in the Torah.
- Sadly they don't recognize what God has done through Jesus to create a new covenant family on the basis of Faith.

Chapter 11 Israel in the Future

- Question: Is God done with Israel?
Answer: No!
- There are many Jewish people, including Paul, who do recognize Jesus as their Messiah, but there are also a lot who don't
- Yet this allows for God to use their rejection for his own purposes
 - Gospel spread quicker and farther into the Gentile world
 - Making the family of Abraham larger and more multi-ethnic
- Covenant Family described as a big Olive tree
 - Rejectors of Jesus have been broken off
 - But one day, Jesus WILL be acknowledged by His people (No details of how or when)
 - Gentiles are like wild branches that have been grafted into the family tree

Chapters 12-16 Unifies the Church

Chapters 12-13 Unifying Through Love and Forgiveness

Love will look like everyone using their gifts to **serve one another** in the church

- Serving, Leading, Teaching, Giving, and
 - Prophesying
 - the gift of prophecy can work out in many different ways. Ex: in dreams, special insight either in the Bible or in life situations, direction for future events, declaration of sin, and even "truth-telling." And it can come from many different vessels: Acts 2—men, women, elderly, and children.
 - Ex: foretelling events to individuals like say, Isaiah or Ezekiel, or displaying special powers like Moses or Elijah
 - [Revelations 22:18-19](#); [1 Kings 13](#) - Won't add to or conflict with scripture
 - [Jeremiah 28:9](#) Confirmation; 100% accurate
 - [Jeremiah 23:9-32](#) - Nature of a Prophet
 - Love fulfills the Torah: Love God and one another

Chapters 14-15 Healing Ethnic Division

Focuses on issues creating ethnic division: Jewish food laws and the sabbath

- Gentiles / Jewish
 - Paul says that these practices don't define who's in or out of God's family

- If people differ on cultural important but non-essential issues, they need to learn how to respect each others differences (show grace): Love will heal and unify Jesus' family

Chapter 16 Honoring Phoebe

Paul closes with commending a key leader in the church at Cenchrea: Phoebe

- She gets the honor of carrying the letter and perhaps even reading the letter to the Roman churches for the first time
 - **Diakonos** - servant in general sense, deacon
 - Apart from this debate always refers to "servants" in the generic sense, as opposed to a church office
- Phoebe's exceptional character, noted^[Rom. 16:2] by her status as a deacon and **prostatis**—one who should be esteemed highly "because of their work"^[1 Thes. 5:12] may be the reason Paul sent her to Rome where she delivered the letter to Rome. By referring to Phoebe as a *prostatis*, Paul solicits the attention and respect of the leaders in Rome's church, which also included other women, namely Prisca/(Priscilla)^[Rom. 16:3], Mary^[Rom. 16:6], Junia^[Rom. 16:7], and Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis ^[16:12]

Greets people that he hasn't seen in a long time