

# Understanding the New Testament

*Romans*

*Ephesians*

## A Prayer for Reformation Sunday 2018

- Dawn has arrived, and we awaken to a new day  
But things are not the way they should be  
A mother's wailing on Shabbat... that's not the  
way it should be  
A brit milah (circumcision) punctuated by  
gunfire... that's not the way it should be  
We are not the way we should be  
We are out of sorts  
We are broken and angry  
Our best intentions left shattered as hatred seems  
to have the upper hand.  
Where are the places of refuge?  
Where are the sacred places where our children  
will be safe?  
Where are the sanctuaries for our bodies and our  
minds?
- When houses of worship become houses of carnage  
We awaken to the knowledge that we are in the  
grips of a deep madness  
We are shaken  
And yet, may God "unshake" us all  
And yet, may God bring peace  
To this violent madness we've created.  
May you mend together the broken pieces of our  
lives  
May our warring speech give way to holy comfort  
Reform us. Reshape us.  
Bring us holy reformation
- ALL: Kyrie Eleison (Lord, have mercy)  
Christe Eleison (Christ, have mercy)

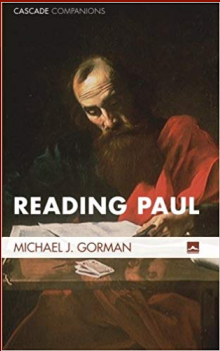
— Rev. Daniel Headrick, Associate Pastor, Northside Drive Baptist  
Church, Atlanta



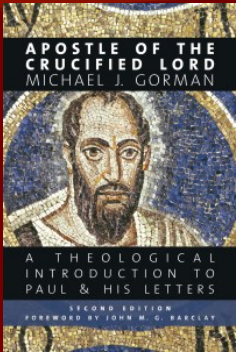
November 5, 12

***"Gratitude to  
First Baptist"  
days.***

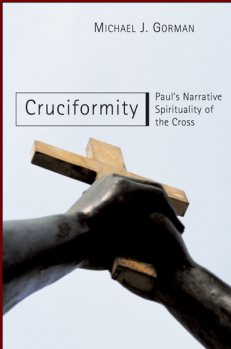
## Getting Acquainted with the Apostle Paul



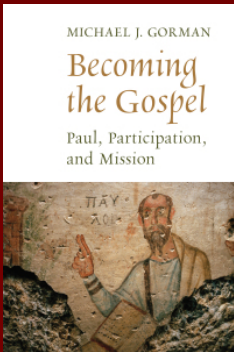
**Paul 101**



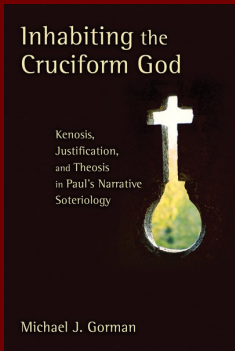
**Paul 201**



**Paul 301**



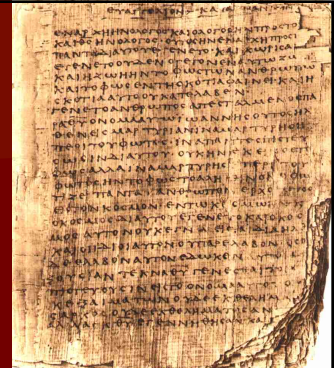
**Paul 401**



**Paul 501**

## Opening Song

- Chris Tomlin - Amazing Grace  
(My Chains Are Gone)



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-4NFvI5U9w>

## Paul's Letters

### Undisputed (7)—prob. AD 49-58

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Philippians
- 1 Thessalonians (earliest)
- Philemon

### Disputed (6)

- 2 Thessalonians
- Colossians
- Ephesians
- *The Pastoral Epistles*
  - 1 Timothy
  - 2 Timothy
  - Titus





## The Forum at Rome



## Ara Pacis, Rome (9 BC), dedicated to the goddess Pax





## Some Unique Features of Romans

- **Relationship:** Paul had not founded or visited the church
- **Context:** possible expulsion (49) and return (54) of (some) Jews
- **Results**
  - Length
  - Breadth and depth
  - Fabric: Paul's "greatest hits" + Scripture + early Christian tradition



## Outline of Romans

- 1:1-15 Opening: The Gospel in a Nutshell
- 1:16-17 Theme: The Gospel as the Power and Justice of God for the Salvation of All
- 1:18–4:25 God's Faithful, Merciful, and Just Response to Human Sin
- 5:1–8:39 The Character of Justification by Faith: Reconciliation, Liberation, and Life
- 9:1–11:36 God's Faithfulness and the Future of Israel
- 12:1–15:13 Faithful Living before the Faithful God: Cruciform Holiness and Hospitality
- 15:14-33 Paul's Mission and God's Plan
- 16:1-27 Closing



## Romans: The Bookends



- 1:5 = through whom [Christ] we [Paul and colleagues] have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name.
- 16:25-27 = <sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the **obedience of faith**— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

## Romans: The Theme



- <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**; it is the **power** of God for **salvation** to everyone who has **faith**, to the **Jew first** and also to the **Greek**. <sup>17</sup> For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed through **faith** for **faith**; as it is written, "The one who is righteous **will live by faith**."

OR (v. 17)

- <sup>17</sup> For in it [the gospel] the **saving justice of God** is revealed from **Christ's faithfulness** for the purpose of generating **faithfulness in us**; as it is written, "The one who is **made righteous by means of God's saving justice** will live."

## Romans 1: The Human Condition (1)



■ <sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness and wickedness** [or **impiety and injustice**] of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are **without excuse**; <sup>21</sup>for though they knew God, they **did not honor him as God or give thanks to him**, but they became **futile in their thinking**, and their senseless minds were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they **became fools**; <sup>23</sup>and they **exchanged** the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles. <sup>24</sup>Therefore **God gave them up** in the **lusts** of their hearts to **impurity**, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they **exchanged** the truth about God for a lie and **worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever! Amen.

– IN A WORD: **IDOLATRY**

## Romans 1: The Human Condition (2)



■ <sup>26</sup>For this reason **God gave them up** to degrading passions. Their women **exchanged** natural intercourse for unnatural, <sup>27</sup>and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup>And since they **did not see fit to acknowledge God**, **God gave them up** to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. <sup>29</sup>They were **filled with every kind of wickedness [injustice]**, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, <sup>31</sup>foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup>They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet **they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them**.

– IN A WORD: **IMMORALITY/INJUSTICE**



## Romans 3: The Human Condition (3)



- <sup>9</sup>... for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are **under the power of Sin**, <sup>10</sup>as it is written:
  - “There is **no one** who is righteous, **not even one**;
  - <sup>11</sup>there is **no one** who has understanding, there is **no one** who seeks God.
  - <sup>12</sup>**All** have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is **no one** who shows kindness, there is **not even one**.”
  - <sup>13</sup>“Their **throats** are opened graves; they use their **tongues** to deceive.” “The venom of vipers is under their lips.”
  - <sup>14</sup>“Their **mouths** are full of cursing and bitterness.”
  - <sup>15</sup>“Their **feet** are swift to shed blood;
  - <sup>16</sup>ruin and misery are in their paths,
  - <sup>17</sup>and **the way of peace** they have not known.”
  - <sup>18</sup>“There is no **fear of God** before their eyes.”



### A Question

- Where do you see Paul's analysis of the human condition on display today?

## Romans 3: God's Solution, Our Response



- <sup>21</sup>But now, apart from law, the righteousness [saving justice] of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, <sup>22</sup>the righteousness [saving justice] of God through faith in Jesus Christ [through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of [lack] the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified [made right] by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies [makes right] the one who has faith in Jesus [shares in the faith of Jesus].

## Romans 5: God's Solution, Our Benefits



- <sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.
- <sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.



## A Question

- What does Paul here say about God's "Amazing Grace"?

## Grace



- John Barclay: Grace (*charis* = gift) according to Paul is unconditioned but **not unconditional**.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer: **Cheap grace** is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession.... **Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.**



## Further Highlights from Romans (1)



■ <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might **walk in newness of life**....

<sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**. (6:3-4, 11)

■ <sup>1</sup>There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit**. (8:1-4)

## Further Highlights from Romans (2)



<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God [**God works all things together toward the ultimate good**], who are called according to his purpose.... <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord**. (8:28-38)

## Further Highlights from Romans (3)



<sup>1</sup>I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— <sup>2</sup>I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. (9:1-5)

<sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (10:12)

## Further Highlights from Romans (4)



■ <sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.... <sup>25</sup>So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, [my Gentile] brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup>And so all Israel will be saved.... <sup>33</sup>O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (11:1, 25-26, 33)

## Further Highlights from Romans (5)



<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [appropriate] worship. <sup>2</sup>**Do not be conformed to this world [age]**, but **be transformed by the renewing of your minds**, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (12:1-2)

<sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>14</sup>**Bless those who persecute you**; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another....<sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably [practice *shalom*]** with all. (12:15-18)

## Some Unique Features of Ephesians

- One of the “disputed” letters
- Best manuscripts omit “in Ephesus”







**Ephesus**



Terrace "Condos"  
in Ephesus

## Outline of Ephesians



- 1:1-2            Opening
- 1:3–3:21        The *Missio Dei* (Mission of God):  
God's Eternal Plan in Christ
- 4:1–6:20        Life in Christ: Worthy of God's Calling,  
Empowered by the Spirit
- 6:21-24        Final Matters

## A Few Highlights from Ephesians (1)



- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places (1:3)
- <sup>9</sup>[God] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, **to gather up all things in him**, things in heaven and things on earth. (1:9-10)
- <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—.... <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup>**not the result of works**, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (2:4, 8-9)

## A Few Highlights from Ephesians (2)



- <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For **he is our peace**; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has **broken down the dividing wall**, that is, the hostility between us. (2:13-14)
- <sup>4</sup>There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (4:4-6)
- <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **as God in Christ has forgiven you**. <sup>5</sup> <sup>1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup>and **live [walk] in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (4:31-5:1)

## A Challenging Text from Ephesians 5 (a)



- <sup>22</sup>**Wives, be subject to your husbands** as you are to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the **head of the wife** just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup>Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also **wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands**. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, **love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**, <sup>26</sup>in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup>In the same way, **husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies**. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, <sup>30</sup>because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>**Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.**



## A Challenging Text from Ephesians 5 (b)— MJG Revision of NRSV



- <sup>18</sup>... [B]e filled with the Spirit [and here are some specifics],
  - <sup>19</sup>singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves,
  - singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,
  - <sup>20</sup>giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - <sup>21</sup>being subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,
    - <sup>22</sup>Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord....
    - Husbands: note repetition of “Christlike sacrificial love” and see also 5:1.

## Hymn: Amazing Grace (selected verses)

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.