

The Apostle Paul

Was He Already Fighting the rise of Babylon the Great?

A look in the Book of Romans

While researching and studying about the subject of Ecumenism, I unexpectedly came to realize the beginnings of that movement and something more insidious being birthed after the sacrificial death of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Yeshua HaMashiach. Whether or not the Apostle Paul realized in full the future events of the attitudes and developing apostate teachings is unclear. The Apostle Paul did know that the attitudes and conflicts already manifesting themselves were under no circumstances right. It is clear from his comments, he knew once he, the other Apostles and the original 70 disciples from the time of our Lord's earthly ministry were gone, and it was going to be bad for the "church", the body of Christ.

It did not take long following the death and resurrection of our Lord, for Satan to begin influencing professed believers with his misleading and perverting of G-d's ways. Satan used the same old lies and the weak human flesh (pride, distrust, self importance, etc.) to bring division, hatred, and apostasy to the body of Christ.

Let us examine some background concerning the congregations or "churches" at Rome during that time. Since the Apostle Paul was addressing a mixed crowd, Jew and Gentile, one has to understand the semantics and events of the time.

By the vast majority of theological calculations, the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Roman congregation somewhere around late 55 C.E to early 57 C.E. There are a few facts that help us understand Paul's monumental writings to the congregations in Rome. Here are a few facts about Paul himself. One has to understand Paul's history and then it is easier to understand his writings. Paul would write according to the cultural background of the people he was addressing.

1. Paul was an educated man, having studied under the mentoring of Gamaliel (considered one of the greatest rabbinical teachers),
2. Paul was also educated in Greece, the other highest learning center of the known world of those days,
3. Paul sometimes, was considered a Hellenistic Jew because of his education in Greece,
4. Paul came from a strong family tradition of religious foundations,
5. Paul was a high ranking, well thought of Pharisee within Judaism. Paul considered himself a Jew's Jew,
6. Paul had a deep heartfelt, strong love and devotion to G-d, which drove him in his endeavors, study, and dedication,
7. Paul had an undying love for all followers of Christ and an overwhelming desire to see all of his people by blood (Jews) come to salvation by accepting Christ.

By the time Paul wrote to the congregations at Rome, there had been a multitude of events, most of which were negative, influencing the new believers, first the Jewish believers and then the non-Jewish believers

(Gentiles). These events, festering attitudes, and grudges became the foundation for a multitude of divisions and incorrect "theologies" or "doctrines" we see today.

1. The first and substantial numbers of believers in Christ, were Jews,
2. These Jews had carried over attitude and prejudicial "luggage" from their life under Rome and it's accompanying harshness,
3. The non-Jews, the Gentiles became believers in Christ through the ministries of the Apostles, such as Paul, Peter and the disciples who were with them,
4. The non-Jews, the Gentiles at the beginning, would as a normal course of action meet with their fellow believers, the Jews, most likely in and around the synagogues,
5. The non-Jews, Gentiles also carried over attitude and prejudicial "luggage" from their life in Rome and as Romans,
5. Both believing Jew and believing Gentile had many remaining prejudices (luggage) from their backgrounds.

Because of the evangelistic efforts of the Apostles and original disciples, there came to be a substantial number of believers in the Jesus as the true Messiah, both Jew and Gentile. Consequently, several if not many "churches" or congregations formed throughout Rome and the surrounding area.

Around 49 C.E. the "Edict of Claudius" came about, expelling the Jews, including the Jewish Believers from Rome. According some historians, both were expelled due to disturbances, which were the result of infighting between the non-believing Jews and the believing Jews, spilling over to the believing Gentiles. Shortly after Claudius's death around 54 C.E., the successor Nero allowed the Jews to return to Rome.

Under Nero's leadership, state persecution of "Christians" became common and after the Great Rome Fire in 64 C.E., the persecution became fierce.

During the period of Jewish expulsion, the Gentile Christians took over the leadership of the "Church" in Rome. During this period, "converts" were continuing to stream into the "Church", including new religious leaders. When the Jewish Christians returned, there was still, if not more dissention, as the Gentile Christian leadership was not inclined to relinquish the reigns. False teachings were raising their ugly heads already. Division and segregation were starting.

These years of separation between the "Gentile Christians" and the "Jewish Christians" created more dissent within the ranks. From the historical stand point, the expulsion of the Jews, including Jewish believers created an attitude among Romans of superiority to all Jews and a disdain for Jews and any Jewishness, in short anti-Semitism. It appears from historians secular and religious, this is the time that the Gentile side, likely with influence from the Roman mind set, began to blame the Jews, believing and non believing for Christ's death. There was animosity about the Jewish believers from Rome, insisting that the Gentile believers convert to the Jewish life style, the Torah and become circumcised, even though the Gentiles as well as the Jewish believers received salvation from their belief in Christ.

Those years of separation were ripe for the seduction of Satan with false ideas and theologies to prosper and take root in the congregations of Rome. The believers in Rome were still in their infancy of belief and understanding and still under the influence of their secular teachings and the politics of the Roman Empire.

During the years of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, there was a lack of direct teaching and guidance from the Apostles, and original disciples taught directly by Jesus. The Apostles and original disciples, the foundation of the "church", were Jewish to the dismay of many the non-Jewish believers who now made up the majority of the congregations of Rome. Spurred on by the influence of Satan through the politics and ethnical lines, many of the incorrectly taught (Jew and Gentile) began to segregate themselves and their congregations from each other. Gentile believers being the majority in Rome, pretty much were in charge there. Eventually with the influence of Satan and using what today we refer to as "race baiting", the chasm between Jewish and Non-Jewish (Gentile) believers became great. It took from the end of the first century to through the third century for the completion of the division and ethnical hatred (anti-Semitism) to take firm, solid hold.

At this point, keep in mind while dealing with both Jew and Gentile; both Peter and Paul had their specific assignments in their ministries. The Apostle Peter was an apostle to the Nation of Israel or the Jews and the Apostle Paul was the apostle to the Nations, non-Jews or in other words, the Gentiles. There is no actual scriptural reference to the Apostle Peter having been in Rome as there is for the Apostle Paul. It is by traditional thought that Peter may have gone to Rome in the days or months before his martyrdom, probably around 68 C.E., after the Apostle Paul was martyred. Also by traditional thought, Nero ordered Peter jailed and crucified. The timing is right for that assumption, but the actual location of which prison Peter was in and where he was crucified (reportedly upside down at his request) is speculation based on tradition.

The Apostle Paul had wanted to go to Rome over the years, but many instances kept him from doing so until later in his life and ministry. Paul was aware of the many problems within the congregations at Rome and desired to address the issues. He wanted to quell the problems and bring the brothers and sisters back onto the correct path. He desired to reach their hearts, thus giving them the means through Christ to adjust and make the corrections for a proper walk with the Lord, in unity.

By writing to the congregations ahead of time, the Apostle Paul was priming the congregations for his visit. He addresses the problems, offers Godly counsel and admonishment.

In his arrogance, Satan was working feverishly, laying the foundation for his Babylon the Great, the eventual one world wide religion, based on some truth as he always does and yet a stranger to the correct plans and commands of G-d Almighty, being laced with idolatry, pagan practices and false worship. Babylon the Great would come to encompass all "religions" with tolerance for all who succumb to its directives and theologies. However, Babylon the Great would be full of the "blood of the saints", those who refused to bow to it and choose to follow G-d's word correctly.

Revelation 17:4-6 (NKJV) ⁴The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. ⁵ And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. ⁶ I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

This is why the Apostle Paul prefaced his visit to Rome with the letter. He was addressing the things of which he would also in person address and correct and give encouragement. Paul was such a great choice for being the Apostle to the Nations (Gentiles) as he could relate to all on their level of understanding and culture, all due to his vast and varied education and experience. Awesome is it not how G-d always gives his people the proper direction from the proper person!

What were the reasons for Paul writing this letter ahead of time?

1. He was preparing the church in Rome for his visit,
2. He was giving a clear, concise and foundational explanation of the Gospel,
3. He was giving correction to any false ideas and theologies to the believers in Rome,
4. He was giving admonishment in a practical way for the proper relationship between the believers,
5. He was giving proper and Godly advice for a believer's relationship and behavior with the secular rulers.
6. He wanted to unite the Jewish and Gentile believers in proper faith and understanding of Christ and G-d's ways, because of the serious divisions and arguments occurring.

Paul addresses the things that have torn the congregations apart and led many astray in false teachings and theologies. Paul addresses the attitudes and the "hardness of the heart" on many in the congregations. Seems as though the Jewish believers were very self-righteous because of their piousness with the "law" and many Gentiles were very self-righteous believing themselves better than Jews and other Gentiles as they were not those terrible pagans doing such immoral and terrible things.

The Apostle Paul is speaking to both Jew and Gentile with such divisive and un-Godly attitudes. He even shows judgment and punishment to the Jew first, but that both Jew and Gentile will have judgment of G-d for their wrongs (Romans 2: 5-11).

Then Paul got to the meat of the matter and the wrong teachings and attitudes of both the Jews and the Gentiles concerning faith and belief. For the Jews thought that the Gentiles needed to become circumcised; in short convert to Judaism and follow the "Law" and rabbinical traditions in order to have salvation even through Christ. The Gentiles of course knew different and taught different, coming to resent and dislike those Jewish teachers. The Apostle Paul wrote in detail about the differences and the truth about the "law", faith, works, the way the body of Christ is supposed to be.

Paul also gives assurance that G-d's word, promises and ways are not changing, for G-d is true and fair. Paul teaches all those who are espousing the false teachings and heinous attitudes towards other believers that no one earns salvation by their own efforts, salvation is through G-d's Grace, through the sacrificial death of Christ and obtained by faith in the gospel, recognition of being a sinner, asking for the forgiveness for being a sinner and for the many wrongs in ones life and bringing ones life into line with G-d's requirements for us.

Whether or not Paul was aware of the spiritual fight he was already fighting against the up and coming Babylon the Great is not known. However Paul did know it was and is a spiritual battle. This early intervention had the blessings of our Lord, resulting in the preaching of the gospel in truth continually, even amidst the wrong things. But Paul did know bad was in store for the "church" after he was gone (dead) and the other teachers of the real truth were gone. First in his letter to the congregations at Rome he gives the following admonition:

Romans 16:17-19 (NKJV) ¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

The book of Acts gives this account of what the Apostle Paul has to say about his ministry, knowing what is ahead of him and the "church".

Acts 20:18-31 (TEV) ¹⁸ When they arrived, he said to them, "You know how I spent the whole time I was with you, from the first day I arrived in the province of Asia. ¹⁹ With all humility and many tears I did my work as the Lord's servant during the hard times that came to me because of the plots of some Jews. ²⁰ **You know that I did not hold back anything that would be of help to**

you as I preached and taught in public and in your homes. ²¹ **To Jews and Gentiles alike I gave solemn warning that they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.** ²² And now, in obedience to the Holy Spirit I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit has warned me that prison and troubles wait for me. ²⁴ *But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me; I only want to complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the Good News about the grace of God.* ²⁵ *"I have gone about among all of you, preaching the Kingdom of God. And now I know that none of you will ever see me again.* ²⁶ **So I solemnly declare to you this very day: if any of you should be lost, I am not responsible.** ²⁷ **For I have not held back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God.** ²⁸ So keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the blood of his Son. ²⁹ **I know that after I leave, fierce wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock.** ³⁰ **The time will come when some men from your own group will tell lies to lead the believers away after them.** ³¹ Watch, then, and remember that with many tears, day and night, I taught every one of you for three years.

It took a little over two centuries for the birth of Babylon the Great to take effect in Rome. The final separation of the Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ (the church), the acceptance and incorporation of the false teachings and doctrines brought in subtly over that period occurred with a pagan emperor who claimed to believe in Christ and follow him after seeing a "vision" during one of his military victories. While he accepted the Gentile faction of the "church", he never did change all his manner of living and attitudes. What he did do was to make the church the state church. This state sponsored church became headquartered in the location described by the prophets for Babylon the Great. This state church is full of the blood of believers, Jews, the saints and non-believers who refused to be forced to "conversion" or accept the falseness in this church. This church state is still in operation and holds great influence over the "kings of the earth" today. It is pursuing ecumenism for a one-world church, to bring in all other "churches" and "religions" under its "umbrella".

It took satanical influence within the body of Christ a couple of centuries to discard the plans and blueprints for worship and salvation as established by G-d Almighty down through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Yeshua HaMashiach.

- *In those couple of centuries, this church and its leaders believed they knew better than G-d Almighty,*
- *They believed and acted on the same old lies of Satan,*
- *First was the doubt – "Did G-d really say....?",*
- *Then belief - "you will be like G-d, knowing good from evil",*
- *So, do it their way they did and have been doing ever since, with the persecution (blood of the saints), riches, pomp and pageantry as described by the prophets through the final book of G-d's word, Revelation.*

Yes, the Apostle Paul was fighting the very roots and building blocks of Babylon the Great, whether he consciously knew it or not.