

An Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Value of Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome

It is well-known that certain scholars have accused Paul of changing the simple gospel of Christ which they allege is found in the Four Gospels-into another Gospel, i.e. a Pauline Gospel, compounded of certain elements which Christ did not at all espouse. For example it is said that Paul's gospel is primarily forensic, relating to law, doubtless having taken this shape because Paul was a convinced Pharisee a rabbi, and-as such-trained in matters of the law. Certainly Paul in Romans talks of 'my gospel' (2:16), but would not contrast that say-with the gospel other apostles taught. He knew only one gospel, and believed that was recognised by true believers. In Galatians 1:9 he speaks sharply against anyone preaching 'a gospel contrary to that which you received'. He contends that this gospel came to him by revelation and was [is] therefore pure.

Paul and the Gospel

When Paul said he was not ashamed of the gospel, he did not mean he had proof of its value because it worked certain effects when he preached it. Paul's criteria were always doctrinal and theological, i.e. biblical. He was never pragmatic. Whilst it was true that he had seen the gospel work in great power-both in his life and the lives of others yet it was because he understood the nature of the gospel that he had such faith in it. It should be said here that when Paul-as the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus-opposed the Christians and persecuted them, that he had obtained the whole form and substance of the gospel from what they believed and preached. He was not ignorant of their claims. Indeed he sought to refute these teachings from his own knowledge of Jewish belief, practice, and the Hebrew Scriptures.

This was why his encounter with Jesus of Nazareth on the road to Damascus was so devastating. He realised he had wrongly accused his former Christian opponents of heresy and blasphemy. Three days of blindness in the house in Straight Street in Damascus must have brought considerable revelation to him-albeit painfully. His own consequent experience of having his blindness healed, his sins washed away in baptism, and of being filled with the Holy Spirit, must have been of such radical nature and of such dynamic effect as to straightway launch him into a pure knowledge of the crucified, risen and ascended Lord. We can say, simply, that Paul never really expounded any doctrine which-in rich measure-he had not already experienced. His

Jewish theological and moral training-received prior to his conversion to Christ's gospel, must have been immensely valuable. Hence the breadth, length, depth, and height of this peerless apostle. The genius of Paul is that he does not venture into areas for which he was not commissioned. By this we mean that the three accounts-in the book of Acts-of his conversion (9:1-16; 22:6-16; 26:12-18) show that Christ met him with a view to Paul's proclamation of the Gospel to the nations, i.e. the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15-16). In one sense we can say the primary reason for his conversion was not his conversion, but the conversion of the nations to Christ!

Whatever the criticisms of scholars, it has to be admitted that the gospel Paul enunciates comports well with the Hebrew Scriptures, and is a clear rationale of Christ's incarnation, life, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. This gospel-as we shall see-is the gospel of the righteousness of God. Whenever it is viewed and understood through the eyes of faith, then a moral power is liberated into the affairs of men and nations. The reason for this will reveal itself more fully as our exposition proceeds, but briefly it is this-whenver human guilt is erased it is followed by moral freedom and power. Human guilt is demoralising and debilitating. Forgiveness and justification give man back the liberty he knew before his rebellion against God. Such moral liberty outworks itself in the affairs of faith in God and obedience to Him, of personal and inter-personal relationships, of social community, and is therefore of national and international significance.

The Power of The Roman Epistle in Christian and Secular History

Of this Letter to the Romans Tyndale said,

...this epistle is the principal and most excellent part of the New Testament...glad tidings that we call the Gospel and also a light and a way into the whole Scripture...no man can read it too oft or study it too well...for without doubt whosoever has this epistle perfectly in his heart, the same hath the light and the effect of the Old Testament with him. Wherefore let every man without exception exercise himself diligently, and record it day and night continually, until fully acquainted therewith.

It would be difficult even to begin to compute the effect this Letter has had in and upon history. Whenever the church has receded from the doctrine of justification by faith then its genius for moral power has waned. It-both church and man-necessarily returns to the principle of self-justification. The human conscience makes this inevitable. Paul is a rich example of the dynamic of justification by grace. Such justification released him to true understanding of law, and the way in which grace liberates man from Adamic bondage to sin and death, into life and liberty. Augustine found release into life through this very epistle, especially through 13:11-14. Luther was not only liberated from his exercises of self-justification, but his change of understanding brought transformation to his own age. Indeed it set the course-fairly speaking-for the outworking of modern Western history. In the Preface to his own commentary on Romans Luther wrote,

This epistle represents the fundamental teachings of the New Testament, and is the purest Gospel, well worthwhile not only to be memorised verbatim but also so to be used daily by every Christian as the daily bread of his soul. For no one could ever exhaust this

epistle by study and meditation. The better one becomes acquainted with it, the higher one will treasure it, and all the more delight in it.

Much of the social and moral change in England can be attributed to the Wesleyan and Evangelical Revivals of the 18th. and 19th. centuries: John Wesley records in his Journal for May 14th., 1738,

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, London where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Romans. About a quarter before nine while he [Luther] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ-Christ alone-for salvation, and assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more special manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now felt for the first time in my heart.

No one who has studied the change that Wesley's Methodism made to England can come to any other conclusion than that the power of the Gospel-as set out in the Epistle to the Romans-brought a dynamic change to the British Isles. Lecky the historian is reported to have said that but for the Wesleyan and Evangelical Revival, England would have known a blood bath even worse than that of the French Revolution. In this-and other ways-we can sense the enormous moral dynamic that lies within the realm of grace, especially as expounded in the Epistle to the Romans.

Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his Foreword to Robert Haldane's *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Banner of Truth Trust, Great Britain, 1963) speaks of the impact Haldane made when he went Switzerland in 1816 at the age of fifty. In Geneva he came into contact with a number of students training for the ministry. Lloyd-Jones narrates, 'They were all blind to spiritual truth but felt much attracted to Haldane and to what he said...one by one they were converted, and their conversion led to a true revival of religion, not only in Switzerland, but also in France. They [the students] included such men as Merle D'Aubigne the writer of the classic *History of the Reformation*, Fredric Monod who became the founder of the Free Churches in France, Bonifas who became a theologian of great ability, Louis Gaussen the author of *Theopneustia*, a book of inspiration of the Scriptures, and Cesar Malan. There were also others who were greatly used of God in the **revival.**'

Authorship, Occasion and Date of Writing

Probably no scholar debates the idea that the author of the Epistle was St. Paul. From Acts 21:39 we gather that Paul was born at Tarsus. Tarsus was a city of Greek culture. It was also a colony city of Rome, i.e. those born in it were by birth Roman citizens, i.e. free persons, no matter what their ethnic origins. Known as Saul the young man grew up in this city, but in fact had his education in Jerusalem, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Rabban Gamaliel I was one of the most outstanding of Rabbinic teachers. He is mentioned in Acts 5:34-39, where he seems benign enough, although we do not have other proof of this disposition

Paul was a zealous young man, quickly outstripping his contemporaries in knowledge, keenness, and action. If we read biographical elements given in Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1ff., I Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13; and Philippians 3:6 then we can gather

that he saw-as a Jew-the immense danger the new faith of the Christians posed to orthodox Judaism. As we have said above, Paul received a dynamic revelation of Christ, for nothing else would have sufficed to bring him to be worshipper of Christ.

Paul was at Damascus when the revelation broke through fully to him, and because he immediately preached Jesus as the Son of God, i.e. the Messiah he was in danger and had to be lowered over the wall of the city to escape in darkness. We do not know how long he was in Arabia-close by-but he must have shortly returned, ministered again in Damascus, and then three years later gone up to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:17-18). In Acts we can follow his history-first returning to Tarsus from Jerusalem, then called to Antioch in Syria, being sent from there, with Barnabas, on his first missionary journey, and after that journey returning for ministry to Asia Minor and then on to Europe.

We need not, here, fill out his life story, but in Acts 18 we read of Paul's first visit to Corinth. His visits to the synagogue on the Sabbaths and his proclamation, there, of the Gospel caused a church to spring to life from some of the people of that synagogue. The Jews who refused to believe in Jesus as Messiah strongly opposed him and his converts, but in accordance with a vision of the Lord Paul stayed on for some 18 months, teaching the word of God, and eventually returned to Jerusalem. On his final missionary journey-as recorded in Acts-Paul returned to Greece where he spent 3 months (Acts 20:3). His final return to Jerusalem resulted in his being placed in custody, and the long epic of his being brought to trial before Caesar in Rome.

It is generally believed-and even accepted-that Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome from Corinth, the time being in or about January to March 55 A.D. His letter speaks of his hope of coming to them as he hoped to journey on to Spain (1:8-15; 15:22-25).

Our Personal Approach to the Epistle

Practical usefulness of any teaching, material or document is almost a fetish in our present decade. For this reason we might think of Paul as dated, as living in a time when mind-set, world-view and life-practice would have differed so much from ours. Doubtless certain differences do exist, but we question strongly whether the basic themes of Romans have been *essentially* outdated by our modern thinking. We may also question whether this Epistle is less relevant than any other given portion of the Scriptures. We have ventured to say that since the Letter touches on the matters of human guilt, liberation from guilt through forgiveness and justification, and emancipation from the bondage of conscience that a legal-minded person would otherwise know, then the Epistle ought to be seen as wholly relevant, practical and useful. Not that these three criteria authenticate the Letter, but they do show that the themes Paul raises are by no means irrelevant.

Generally we need to accept Paul's apostolic authority, i.e. his commission by Christ to proclaim the Gospel in all the world. The apostles were unique in that the apostolic truth was given primarily to the apostles, and then through them to the world. Because they-the apostles-were so near to the events, and thus witnesses of Christ as well as to those events, their teaching is the richest we may procure. Also their commission was unique. They were given the task of interpreting the events of Christ in the light of their Hebrew Scriptures, and interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures in the light of the events of Christ. Thus they emerged with a new entity-'the Gospel of Christ',

also known as ‘the word of Christ’, and ‘the Gospel of the Kingdom’. With a certain humility of mind and heart we can learn from the Apostles-and Paul no less-what we may learn nowhere else. If we have this humble spirit, then we may expect great and life-changing revelations from this most princely of all Epistles.

The Primary Theme of the Epistle

The book has been divided into three sections the first being chapters 1-8, the second 9-11, and third 12-15. They teach righteousness, as follows,

- (i) Chapters 1-8 certainly deal with *God’s justifying righteousness*, i.e. God justifies the ungodly-the unrighteousness-though the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son, the heart of which is 3:19-31-i.e. ‘justified by his grace as a gift’.
- (ii) Chapters 3: 9-11 deal with *God’s universal righteousness*. i.e. His establishment of righteousness among the nation, by means of the Gospel, this involving the whole matter of election.
- (iii) Chapters 12-15 deal with we call *practical righteousness-i.e. God’s sanctifying power* which works in the life of the church and of each member of it, bringing each member into living righteously in the practice of life .

We will need to understand ‘the righteousness of God’ not merely as adherence to law as a block of legislation, but as the true way of life (cf. Psalms 1, 19 and 119), involving justice, and the mercy of God, and ultimately issuing-through justification and sanctification-in the true community which olives in recognisable righteousness.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

CHAPTER ONE

(1) Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God (2) which he promised beforehand through the prophets in the holy scriptures, (3) the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh (4) and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, (5) through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, (6) including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; (7) To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul: the name is from the Latin, Paul being a Roman citizen (Acts 22:3, 25-29, cf Acts 16:35f.). The same as Saul. See Acts 13:9. Saul a Benjamite name-Phil. 3:5-6---cf. King Saul.

A servant of Jesus Christ. Servant = 'slave'=Phil. 1:1, James 1:1, II Pet. 1:1. A slave is one without his own will doing Christ's will. Romans 6:16ff. The slave is free-but under law to Christ- I Cor 9:21. Also a slave to all-II Cor 4:4-5, cf.Rom.15:1ff. Gal. 5:13. Jesus is the True Servant Isaiah 42:1; 52:14-53:12, Mark 10:45; Acts 4:27, 30. Paul a slave captured by the Cross-by love II Corinthians 5:14.

Jesus Christ: Jesus= 'Joshua'='Yahweh is Saviour', cf. Matthew 1:21, Luke 1:31, Luke 1:68-'saved from our enemies'; Matthew 26:28. Jesus the historical figure-Acts 10:38-Jesus of Nazareth, Acts 9:5,10:38, cf. Acts 2:36, etc. Christ= Messiah, i.e. 'the anointed one'-Psalm 2: 2,7; Acts 2:38, Luke 4:18/Isaiah 61:1/Acts 10:38.

called to be an apostle: Paul's call seen in Acts 9:15-16, 22:14,15, 26:16-21. The call is from God. See Matthew 22:14 where the called (*kleta*) are the recipients of the call, but the 'chosen' (*eklektoi*) are those who respond. We have nothing but calling,-Galatians 4:9. For Scriptures on the theme see Romans 1: 6, 8:28; I Corinthians 1:9, 1:26, 7:21; I Thessalonians 4:7, I Peter 1:15, II Peter 1:10-11, cf. Ephesians 4:1f. 'Called...not merely externally...but internally and efficaciously'.

to be an apostle: no call is outside the economy of God..

apostle-the sent one-is a unique office. See Acts 1:15ff. in regard to Matthias. In Acts 12:2 James is not replaced. The ministry of the apostle was to interpret the events of Christ in the light of the O.T. Scriptures (cf. Acts 26:22-23, I Cor. 15:3-4), and the O.T. Scriptures in the light of the events of Christ. Note Paul's insistence upon his apostleship-Galatians 1:1, 15-16, I Corinthians 9:1-2, II Corinthians 12:12. There were secondary apostles--Galatians 1:19; James, Barnabas, and others are 'apostolic'. See the meaning as 'messenger' in Philippians 2:25 (Epaphroditus) as one who was sent. Paul was an apostle 'through Jesus Christ and God the Father' (Galatians 1:1).Note that Christ is called an apostle-Hebrews 3:1. John's Gospel says 'sent' over 40 times.

Set apart for the Gospel of God: Paul had previously been a Pharisee ('a separated one') and the idea of separatedness was not new to him. In Galatians 1:15-16 he places that separation 'from the womb' (cf. Jer. 1:5). For Paul this is the primary thing of his life. Hence in 2:16 he calls it 'my gospel'. In Mark 1:1 it is called 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. In Romans 15:19 it is 'the Gospel of Christ' (cf. II Thess. 1:8. In Revelation 14:6 it is 'the eternal gospel'. God's purpose for Paul is for him to proclaim the gospel.

VERSE TWO: which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures:

Galatians 3:8 says, 'the scriptures...preached beforehand the gospel to Abraham'. I Peter 1:10-12, II Peter 1:20-21, Luke 24:27, 44ff., and Acts 26:22-23 show that the gospel is (is) there in the Old Testament. It can be seen by reading those writings. Paul calls these scriptures 'holy'; and shows that the scriptures and the prophets are of the one piece. They are his authority for a true apostolic teaching. Thus there is nothing novel or innovative about Paul's ministry. Some of the prophecies we can study in regard to the Gospel are: Gen. 3:15, 12:1-3; Isaiah 7:7, 9:6; Jer 23:5, 33:14f.; Dan 7:13ff. and Mic. 5:2.

VERSE THREE: the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh:

his Son shows the meaning and nature of the Gospel is in Christ alone (I Cor. 1:30-31; Col. 1:19, 2: 2-3, Ephes. 3:7-11). Christ's Sonship here is his divine Sonship shows in Psalms 2, 45, and 89. This eternal Sonship is indicated in Rom. 8:1-3, Gal. 4:4ff., John 17:5, 24, but is also linked with his Messiahship-as a man- as seen in Matt. 16:16, 26:63. See also Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:19, 2:9 where Christ's person has its origin in the one who was with God, and was God.

who was descended from David according to the flesh: the genealogies of Matthew and Luke trace the man Jesus' ancestry back to David. The person of Messiah was to be from the line of Judah and David (Gen. 49:10; II Sam. 7:1-17; Isaiah 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5-6, cf. Mark 10:47, Luke 3:23-28). All that we say here relates to the sphere of the flesh.

VERSE FOUR: and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord:

designated Son of God: See on Sonship above in verse 3. All we say here relates to the sphere of the Spirit. designated can mean 'declared,' 'attested', or 'appointed', but what it cannot mean is that such Sonship began at the point of designation. If the word means 'appointed' then it must refer to what we may call 'Messianic Sonship'. At his baptism (Matt. 3:17) and transfiguration (Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:35), the Father declared Christ's Sonship, but it was linked with, or one with, his Messiahship (cf. Psalm 2 and Acts 4:25f., 13:33f.; Rev. 2:26, 3:21, 19:15). The Messianic ministry is confirmed by Christ in Luke 4:18 where he quotes from Isaiah 61:1. We do not need to contrast Messianic Sonship with what we may call 'eternal (divine) Sonship', but to see that both are contained in the man Jesus Christ.

in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead: for his resurrection and its power see Rom. 6:4, 8:11; Ephes. 1:19ff.; Acts 2:23f.; Phil 3:10. To be declared to be the Son of God without power is pointless and inadmissible.

That he rose from the dead (other passages have ‘was raised from the dead’) makes him unique as a man, and different from all men. He is Lord because he has risen (or been raised) from the dead (Acts 2:38, 3:19f., 10:36; Rom. 10:9; I Pet. 3:18; cf. John 11:25; Rev. 1:17-18), i.e. Lord over death and Lord over life (Rom. 14:9). **according to the Spirit of holiness** can mean one of two things (a) the spirit of Jesus (as a man) was holy, and so-he being incorruptible-death could not hold him, especially as he had defeated death on the Cross before he surrendered his spirit to the Father (cf. Heb. 9:14 where ‘spirit’ can possibly mean Jesus’ own spirit), or (b) the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead (cf. Rom. 8:11 where in fact the Father does the actual raising-as in Rom. 6:4). In either case power would be present, and would affirm God’s declaration of Jesus as the Son of God. Note the difference between ‘rising’ and ‘being raised’.

The link between Christ and the Holy Spirit is so close in the following verses that it is difficult to separate them, although each Person is discrete: II Cor 3:17, ‘The Lord is the Spirit’, II Cor. 3: 18, ‘The Lord [who] is the Spirit’, and I Cor. 15: 45, ‘The last Adam was made a life-giving spirit’. The Spirit is ‘the Spirit of Jesus’, ‘the Spirit of the Son’ etc.

Jesus Christ our Lord: had Jesus not been holy or God’s Son, or Messiah, resurrection would have been unthinkable (cf. Acts 2:24-28/7csalm 16:6-11, 13:35). As it is it affirms his victory over death, and so over sin and Satan (cf. I Cor. 15:55-56). The primary message of the New Testament is ‘Jesus is Lord’, i.e. the *man* Jesus is Lord of the universe (see Rom. 10:9; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 1:5). His Lordship is inherent in his eternal Sonship, but here ‘the man Christ Jesus’ is being considered.

VERSE FIVE: Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all nations:

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship: in verse 1-‘called by the will of God’-is the simplest statement possible. See then Galatians 1:1, 15; Ephesians 3:7ff.; I Corinthians 1:8-15; I Timothy 1:13f Paul see two things in regard to grace, (i) the grace that has appeared and saves (Rom. 5:20; Tit. 2:11-14; Ephes. 2:8-10; II Tim. 1:9, etc), and (ii) that all ministry is by the choice and aid of grace (Rom. 12:3f; Ephes. 4:7). Grace received is necessarily grace shared.

To bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all nations: Paul is saying that one does not receive grace merely for personal salvation, but for the ministry of proclaiming that grace which brings about the obedience of men and nations. the obedience of faith means obeying the Gospel by believing it as in Romans 15:18, 16:26, and here. *The Gospel is a command* (Acts 5:32; 6:7; 10:43, 44; 13:40C;17:30-31; Rom. 10:3; 10:16; I Cor. 1:21; cf. Matt. 29:19-20; II Cor. 10:5; Rom. 6:17; Gal. 5:7, Heb. 5:9; John 3:36; II Thess. 1:8). for the sake of his name should be compared with Acts 2:38; 3:16; Philippians 2:11. Among all nations means the Gospel is not only for individuals but for all the nations (Gen. 49:10; Psalm 2:6-7; Acts 1:8; Rev. 7:9ff.; 11:15; 22:2; Matt. 24:14).

VERSE SIX: including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

including yourselves: i.e. ‘you who are among the Gentiles’. Ephesians 2:11ff. shows the miracle of ‘the third race’, i.e. Jewish and Gentile believers being one, and equally

called. For the principle of calling see Rom. 4:17; 8:28; I Cor. 1:26; I Cor. 1:9; II Thess. 2:13; II Pet. 1:10. The calling is to belong to Jesus Christ, i.e. to become his slave.

VERSE SEVEN: To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

To all God's beloved in Rome: in regard to their being in Rome: whilst we do not know how the Gospel came to Rome we do know Jews from Rome were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10), and since it was the hub of the world, it would seem strange if the Gospel had not previously reached Rome..

To all God's beloved: here the great theme of God's love which is both *personal* and *elective*. Understanding God's love is most difficult, and the natural man has to see it by special revelation of God, i.e. through the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For God's love see John 3:16; I John 3:16; I John 4:7-19; Tit. 3:4-7. These are saints now because love has captured them. I John 4:7-19 shows, (i) that they love Him and others because He first loved them, (ii) they are chosen in the beloved (Isa. 42:1 with Matt. 3:17, and Ephes. 1:5-6; cf. I Pet. 1:12; I Thess. 4:7; I Pet. 1:15) i.e. called to be saints. Saints are God's holy ones, incorporated into His people. Daniel 7:13ff., show us that saints are people of the Kingdom (Col. 1:13; Luke 12:32; 22:29; cf. Acts 14:22).

grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ : the two things-grace and peace-are never found apart. For grace see above (vs. 5). For peace see (i) 'peace with God' as in Rom. 5:1 which is through the Cross (Ephes. 2:14-18), and 'peace from God', as in Philippians 4:7; John 14:27; Gal. 5:22-23. It is generally peace in and through conflict as in II Cor. 4:7ff.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: notice all the epistles speak of grace and peace coming from God and Christ. We constantly need and must utilize grace and peace. God our Father brings to us that not only is He is Father of the Son, but our Father-a most thrilling revelation and claim (cf. Gal. 3:26; 4:4-6). It is the heart of the Gospel (John 1:18, 14:1-10, I John 3:1-3).

VERSE EIGHT: First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

I thank my God: shows us the apostle as a man of thanksgiving, and of his regular thanksgiving for all of you, i.e. the saints (I Cor. 1:4; Ephes. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3 etc.). my God links with 'my gospel' (2:16) and shows Paul's personal relationship. through Jesus Christ shows that prayer is made to the Father through the Son (Col. 3:17; cf. Rom. 7:25)

because your faith is proclaimed in all the world: Paul himself has purposed-and is burning with it-to give the Roman saints a fresh declaration and explanation of the Gospel. He is overjoyed that the Roman saints are at the hub of the world, and so the churches everywhere will receive encouragement from their bold witness (cf. I Thess. 1:5ff.), knowing that many not of the churches (i.e. the pagans) will receive salvation through the proclamation.

VERSE NINE: For God is my witness whom I serve whom I serve with my Spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing **I always mention** you in my prayers.