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~ Our Spiritual Safari outlined what I called an “introduction” in our previous report, which was the first report from this Book of Romans, but the real introduction is the first full seventeen verses of this epistle. We won’t cover all of those verses in this report because this section of Scripture is simply too meaningful to move through it that quickly. We’ll take the next several reports to complete a proper introduction. As I stated in our previous report, we do not examine the Word of God from a doctrinal or theological perspective in this expedition – however, we *MUST* consider these key points of doctrine – which are the essential beliefs of Christianity – in order to properly take up the epistle to the Romans. So, this collection of reports may seem altogether different in style from my previous writings.

Apostasy abounds in the church today and every believer has a responsibility to understand what the Bible teaches about God, mankind, sin, salvation, rapture, church – and so much more – in order to correctly consider the complete spectrum of truth. I’m glad you’re with me – but I have to promise you that these lessons will become extremely difficult before they get easier! A complete understanding of Paul’s message to the Romans is absolutely critical at this point if the Scriptures are going to really mean something in our lives and hearts. This epistle must be seen as a whole in order to get the message God is teaching in the remainder of Holy Writ....

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God,

~ The verb “to be” in verse one is not in our better manuscripts because it is not in the original text. It should read *‘Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God.’* The Greek word used for “servant” literally means “bond slave.” Paul was and is an apostle, but he identifies as a servant. That’s important to see. Paul took the place of a

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servant *willingly*. The Lord Jesus Christ has loved us, and He has given Himself for us. Even so, Christ never forces anyone to serve Him. We come voluntarily and surrender as His slaves before we can ever begin a relationship. After we are called, we are still never forced to serve Him. Remember, Jesus said *"You'll not come to Me that you might have life."* This is altogether marvelous and frightening; He will never force anyone to do anything against their free will. We have the privilege of making ourselves bond slaves to Christ – or not – and, if we do, we must do it of our own free will!

When Paul was saved on the Damascus road, the first thing he asked Jesus was, *"... Who art Thou, Oh, Lord?"* Only then did Jesus identify Himself. That's when Paul came to know Him as his Savior! Only then could Paul ask, *"... what would You have me do?"* Paul's commitment as a bond slave of Christ began at that time. Notice Paul is not only an apostle, but he is also a *CALLED* apostle. The Lord Jesus called him to the office of His apostle. The Lord Jesus told Paul that he was to be His witness. Even so, Paul made himself a servant *BEFORE* he was called apostle! That's the only kind of man God is going to use, by the way; one that *HE* has chosen and one who gives himself freely!

I'm ashamed there are multitudes who presumptuously place themselves in the ministry, but who are not called to that office. Paul could say, *"... woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!"* Jeremiah was *CALLED*; Samuel was *called* – both as little children, too. Paul could say to the false prophets that God said He had not sent them – yet they did run; God had not spoken to them, yet they did prophesy. That's authority. Friends, before you deign open your mouth on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ, you better make sure you have been called! Further, if you have been called, you had better make sure you learn the Word of God properly, correctly and completely and know what you're talking about – *FIRST* – *BEFORE* you attempt to write things down and teach or preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, an apostle is one who has seen the resurrected Christ. Paul had seen Him. Paul said the Lord *'had appeared to him as one born out of due season'* in first Corinthians. Another mark of an apostle of Paul's day was

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what is known as the “sign gifts.” Paul said he could speak in tongues; and when he went through the Galatian country, the Lord enabled him to speak the language of each individual tribe so they could understand him preaching the Gospel. Paul also had the gift of healing; which was a gift that we do not believe is in existence today, as *God heals directly!*

If you are sick, you need to go directly to our Great Physician – not some man who is likely not qualified to present your case to the Lord! You’ll want to obtain the best medical care the Lord provides you, also, of course. When you are dying of cancer, you don’t go to an intern – you go to a specialist! I believe God heals today; but I know He doesn’t give that gift to man – because that would be relinquishing His glory – and God isn’t going to do that, friends. Moreover, Paul could do more than heal – he could raise the dead! All of those things *MUST* be in place as the mark of an apostle. Peter raised the dead and did these other things, too – but you and I cannot make any of those claims. That’s how we know there are no apostles today.

Verse one says Paul was separated *unto* the Gospel of God. That is a remarkable statement we need to notice and fully understand. Paul was separated “*UNTO*” – not “*FROM*” something! This is God’s Gospel; because He originated it and established it. No man thought this up – man could never have dreamed the Bible up in a hundred thousand billion years, friends! God never consulted with mankind about the fulness of time, or whether or not we would like said timing. God never wondered if we might develop a better plan and program. When I arrived on earth, the Gospel had already been around for twenty centuries! All God ever said to me was, “*take it or leave it!*” That’s what God is saying to you today, too, by the way! Paul said he was separated *UNTO* that Gospel.

Interestingly, there are many words used in the Bible that have an almost opposite meaning today. For example, the word “*cleave*” can mean “*fasten to*” and it can also mean “*to cut away from.*” Likewise, the word “*separate*” has two meanings. Paul was separated *UNTO* the Gospel – not *FROM* anyone or anything. We have too many so-called Christians who think they are separated from something or from some group; honestly,

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when I hear that talk, I know I am dealing with a bunch of liars and hypocrites. It's not pretty. It's shameful and embarrassing to everyone. They say they do this and don't do that; my question is always: what are they separated *UNTO*? Of course, they're babies, and babies can't understand that question, so they don't answer.

Remember, Paul told the Thessalonians they had turned *TO* God *FROM* idols. They never gave testimonies about no longer going to the temple of Apollo. They didn't need to say that. When we are separated *UNTO* the Lord Jesus Christ, we have no need to be separated *FROM* anything. Our relationship with God will speak for itself. Many lose their joy of faith altogether over this issue as they become extremely critical and cynical! Let's try getting ourselves separated *UNTO* Christ; because when we do that, *HE* will see to any other required separations, trust me on this.

In a marriage ceremony, we vow to keep ourselves separated unto one spouse – that's what marriage means. Can you imagine a man getting married and saying to his wife on the first night of the honeymoon, "*... well, honey, I have a girlfriend on the other side of town; I think I'll go over to see her!*" Well, that's the kind of separation many Christians have separated themselves from Christ with; they have separated themselves *FROM* something but not *UNTO* Him. If you are separated unto Christ, you're not going to worry about being separated from anything.

Many well-meaning people turn other people off completely by an extremely hypocritical and pious attitude towards separation. Christians are salt; and salt makes people thirsty. So, we need to ask ourselves, are we making anyone thirsty for the Living Water of the Lord Jesus Christ? The word "separated" occurs again but it will mean the same as our modern word "horizon." See, when you fly in an airplane, as you ascend, the horizon becomes greatly enlarged. The higher you fly, the wider the horizon becomes and the more of it can be seen. How wonderful it really is to be separated *UNTO* Christ! Christ lifts us up and expands our horizons. That can only happen when we surrender as His willing servant, and are given a new life in Him.

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If you want a new appreciation for life, and to honestly “*broaden your horizons*” – as the expression goes – there’s only One way to get there! Paul said that when he was a child, he spoke as a child, and he acted as a child; but when he became a man, he put away childish things. When we genuinely turn to Christ as the result of loving Him, we become interested in Him. Separation doesn’t mean to become withdrawn and narrow-minded. It means our understanding has broadened out, and many things are now available as revealed to us as God’s children....

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures)

~ God’s message throughout the darkness of the Old Testament is that He loves us – and that’s good news! God loves humanity, so He is providing a way to be saved today. Because He first loved us, we should desire a relationship with Him. Salvation is a love relationship. We have not seen Him, yet we love Him! Paul said that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us – that awareness should be very wonderful to us. The promise made by the prophets afore in the Holy Scriptures is as follows....

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

~ The word “*concerning*” in verse three is “*peri*” in Greek – from which we derive the modern words *perimeter* and *periscope*; it means “*that which encircles*.” The Gospel is all about Christ! That’s why our so-called safari seeks Him on every page of Scripture. It’s about what He has done for us. The Gospel is *HIS* work – not our work. The Gospel encircles *HIM* as Lord! We have His full title given. He is the Son of God, and He is Jesus Christ, and He is our Lord and Savior. To sum Him up: He is wonderful.

Liberalism demands man accept a religion of love. Well, Jesus didn’t have a religion; because He didn’t need one. Jesus was and is God – what *WE* need is to have a relationship that is all about Him. Our lives need to surround Him and glorify that which He has done. Jesus doesn’t worship us – He is to *BE* worshipped. The only reason Jesus prayed is because He had taken a place in humanity for our sake – and when He did pray, He did it only as a

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means of accommodation. Jesus prayed for *your* benefit and *my* benefit. He only prayed to help *our* faith. Remember, at the grave of Lazarus, Jesus lifted up His eyes and said: *“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”* ~

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

~ The resurrection did not make Jesus the Son of God; He already was the Son of God. What the resurrection did was reveal Who He already was. Here, *“declared”* is that same word *“horizon”* that we previously considered in this report. We have the perfect humanity of Christ; and the perfect deity of Christ. The oldest creed in the church says, *“... He is very man of very man and very God of very God!”* Well, Paul said it long before that creed said it. We just read it. Jesus wasn't any more of a man because He was God, and He isn't any less God because He was a man. He is the Theanthropic Person – the very God-Man.

All of this is according to the Spirit of Holiness. That is the Holy Spirit. We see the Trinity set before – and it is because of the resurrection. His resurrection proves everything we need as believers. The resurrection proves Christ is the Son of God; and sets Him forth as such. So, we have the Trinity of Christ before us in this report; we have the deity of Christ before us in this report; we have the virgin birth before us in this report; and Christ is set before us as being from the seed of David according to the flesh. That's the reason two genealogies are given in the Bible – the first in Matthew; which records through Joseph how Jesus received His legal title to the throne of Israel. However, the blood title comes from Mary; and her genealogy is found in the Gospel of Luke. Some say Paul never taught the virgin birth. They, obviously, do not understand this section of Scripture to make such an erroneous assertion. These are tremendous truths and weighty subjects that only beg more profound questions. We didn't travel far in this report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, but we're considering some of the finest truths in Holy Writ. Let's no rush it ~

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