



# BOLD TO SPEAK THE MYSTERY

Volume 1 Issue 9

November 2019

## The Things of Paul That You Have:

- LEARNED
- RECEIVED
- HEARD
- SEEN

## DO!

The God of Peace shall be with you!  
(Phil. 4:9)

### Inside this issue:

Romans Bible Study (Pt. 2) Witness of Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4	1-7
Church Information	8

## Romans Bible Study (Pt. 2) The Witness of the Law and Prophets Rom. 1:1-4

Last time in our study of Romans, we discovered several things in the first verses that most Bible teachers miss, ignore or down-right reject.

One of the things we learned last time was that Paul is a “God-called” or “God-appointed” apostle in the service of Christ, separated (ie., *from* all other “God-called” apostles in the service of Christ) *unto* His Good News (Gospel) (Rom. 1:1). God gave Paul a special place in His Good News for humanity that had never been revealed before. Not in the Old Testament. Not in the Gospels. Not even in the Ministry of Peter and the 12. Only in the Ministry of the Apostle Paul now recorded in his epistles.

**I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man (not even from Peter and the 12). For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it (not even by Peter and the 12), but (my Gos-**

pel came) **by the revelation of Jesus Christ** (Paul’s Gospel came through a direct revelation from Christ). (Gal. 1:11-12)

And in Rom. 16:25 he writes:

**Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the world began...**

Another thing we learned last time was that not only was Paul not qualified to fill an apostleship among the 12, none of the 12 were qualified to fill the apostleship God gave to Paul. This will take on special significance as we progress in the Romans, especially in Rom. 3 with regard to the BUT NOW Righteousness of God.

Finally, last time we also made the shocking observation that even though the Death of Christ is central to the Gospel God gave to Paul, it is not mentioned *directly* in these first verses of Romans. Here, in Rom. 1:3-4, Paul *directly* mentions

*(Continued on page 2)*

## The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

Christ's Incarnation (**Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh**) and His Resurrection (**declared to be Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead**) but he **SKIPS OVER THE DEATH OF CHRIST!** That is, he doesn't mention it *directly*. In fact, Paul does not mention the Death of Christ *directly* until Romans 5, four long chapters and over a hundred verses later! As serious Bible students, we should find this observation astonishing, and it should cause us to ask, Why?

### WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST in Romans 1-4?

Let's be clear. It is not that the Death of Christ is completely missing from the first four chapters of Romans. Rather it is that it remains in the background when one would have expected Paul to have brought it into the foreground from the very start. If these beginning chapters of Romans are especially about the sinner's justification (as most Bible teachers say), which is founded on the Death of Christ, why does Paul mention the Death of Christ only four times in Rom. 1-4, and of those all four are only *indirect* references? Let's take a closer look.

1. Rom. 1:2-4: We have already spoken about this passage and noticed that while Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection are mentioned *directly*, his Death is not. Of course, if there was a resurrection there must have been a death but it is only implied in the verse, not stated *directly*. Even the phrase "from the dead" in the underlying Greek means "out from among the dead" in general, not Christ's death in specific.

2. Rom. 3:22-25: Here, Paul refers to the "faith of Christ" and then narrows it down to two concepts from the Law and Prophets: The Kinsman-Redeemer/Redemption concept from Israel's Davidic Covenant and the Propitiation/Satisfying Sacrifice concept from Israel's sacrificial system. Of course, we know that the "faith of Christ" is His faithful Work on the Cross to redeem sinners, but the point is that Paul doesn't state that *directly* here.
3. Rom. 4:25: Finally, Paul says Christ was "delivered for our offences." Of course, we know that this handing over is by God and men to the Cross as prophesied in Ps. 22. Is. 53, the Gospel accounts and the Ministry of the 12 (Acts 2:23, et. al). But again, Paul doesn't state that *directly* here.

These are the only references to the Death of Christ in Romans 1-4, and they are all *indirect* references. In other words, we must read the Death and Crosswork of Christ into these passages. They do not mention it *directly* themselves.

When we compare this with Paul's other writings, we see how unusual this is. When Paul writes to the Corinthians, he opens with the Good News of the Death and Cross of Christ (1 Cor. 1-2). And to the Galatians he opens with a warning that in turning away Paul's Gospel of the Grace of Christ they were saying Christ died for nothing (Gal. 1-2). And Paul writes one of the highlight passages for all time and eternity in Phil. 1-2 when he describes how Christ entered into the world of sinful humanity for the sole purpose of being "**obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross**" (Phil: 1-2). And Paul opens Ephesians and Colossians with references to

## The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

“redemption through His blood” as he does in Rom. 3:24-25 (Eph. 1:7, 2:13; Col. 1:14) but unlike Rom. 3:24-25, he immediately connects them to Christ and His Cross (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:20-21).

### IN ROMANS 5, THE LEVEE BREAKS

When we get to Romans 5, however, all of this changes. The Good News of the Death and Cross of Christ explodes onto the scene. Paul moves it from *a* background topic to *the* foreground topic, shining the spotlight on it and placing it center-stage. And there it will remain for the next four chapters—Romans 5-8.

When Paul writes Rom. 5, it is as though God says: “Ok, Paul, now is the time to bring the Good News of the Death of Christ into the foreground!” In Rom. 1-4, Paul had done all he could to hold up the levee that held back the rushing waters of Christ’s Death, keeping it in the background. But in Rom. 5, God tells him to let go, let the levee break, letting the waters of the Gospel of the Death of Christ rush in, flooding the text with *direct* references to Christ and His Death. This gusher will not subside until the end of Rom. 8, four chapters and over 100 verses later. From here on everything, yes, everything flows out of the Death and Cross of Christ as Gospel, as Good News.

So we come back to our original question: Why does Paul keep the Death of Christ in the background in Rom. 1-4 when we would have expected him to have brought it into the foreground from the very start?

### THE WITNESS OF THE LAW AND PROPHETS

**Which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:2).**

**But now, the Righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed**

**by the Law and the Prophets (Rom. 3:21).**

In Romans 1-4, Paul uses the promises God gave to the Law and Prophets to “witness” to some things that God is doing today through the Revelation he gave to Paul. They cannot reveal, manifest or make them known. They can only “bear witness” to them.

We all have watched crime dramas on TV. The police or lawyers call witnesses in to give statements with regard to a crime, a “mystery.” Oftentimes, these witnesses don’t know anything about the crime itself, or even that a crime had occurred. In a recent detective TV show, a man had been murdered in his home in the middle of the night. When the police arrived the next morning to investigate, they fanned out into the neighborhood, going door to door, asking if anyone had seen or heard anything that might help in the investigation. Two blocks away, a little old lady answered the door. They asked her if she had heard or seen anything last night or early this morning. She responded that as a matter of fact she couldn’t sleep and had been up the whole night. She was constantly aware of the time because she kept looking at the clock, wishing she could fall asleep. So when she heard a car go by slowly and peeked around the curtains just in time to see a red Corvette moving slowly down the road toward the house where the murder occurred, she knew it was exactly 3:10 a.m. It turned out to be the car of the killer.

The woman could witness to certain aspects of the crime even though she didn’t know anything about it or that one had even occurred. At the trial, the lawyers called her into the witness box where she gave her testimony about what she heard and seen. Then the judge dismissed her from the

## The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

courtroom and sent her home. She didn't really know anything about the crime, or the "mystery," and if she wanted to learn what it was all about, she would have to read about it in tomorrow's newspaper just like everyone else.

Well, the "Mystery" revelation God gave to Paul is something like that. Paul uses the Law and the Prophets to bear witness to "Mystery" truth in Rom. 1-4, but they do not know anything about it because God had kept it a secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25), having hid it in Himself (not the OT) until He revealed it to and through the Apostle Paul, (Eph. 3:1-11).

### WHAT DID THE PROPHETS WITNESS TO IN ROMANS 1:2

**Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:1-4).**

Here are some of the things that the Law and Prophets can witness to. They can witness to the Good News of the Incarnation of Christ because that was the means by which God would fulfil the promise He gave to David, whereby be Israel's Redeemer, Deliverer, Avenger, King and Blessor by "enfleshing" *Himself* into the human line of David. And

they can witness to the Good News of the Resurrection because that was the means by which God would fulfil His promise to be Israel's King, sitting on David's Throne in Jerusalem, *in spite* of the BAD NEWS of the Death of Christ (Acts 2:30).

But one thing they could NOT witness to is the Good News of the Death of Christ, the very core of Paul's Gospel and the Revelation God gave to him.

**The Preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the Revelation of the Mystery, which was kept Secret since the World Began BUT NOW is Made Manifest ... (Rom. 16:25-26)**

Just hours before Christ went to the Cross, Peter and the 12 knew nothing about the Death and Resurrection of Christ. When Jesus mentioned

His coming Death to the 12, Peter took Him and said, No way! Jesus' response was: **Get thee behind me Satan** (Matt. 16:23)! And when Jesus told them about His resurrection, they turned away and whispered among themselves, **What is the resurrection from the dead** (Mk. 9:9-10)?

No, not only did Peter and the 12 not know anything about the Death of Christ, let alone as Good News, they didn't know anything about His resurrection either. Based on this, it is clear that if even the 12, after three years under the teaching ministry of Jesus, knew nothing these things, no one before them (i.e., the Law and Prophets), who had far less information, did either.

Even after Christ's Resurrection, Peter preached Christ's Death only as bad news.

**Ye men of Israel ... Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God ... Him ... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God has raised up**

# The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

... (Acts. 2:22-23)

For the Law and the Prophets, beginning in the Old Testament and going through Christ's earthly ministry and the ministry of the Twelve the Death and Cross of Christ was only Bad News.

God had kept the Good News of the Cross a secret until He revealed it to and through the Apostle Paul. Yes, Paul viewed the Incarnation of Christ as Good News not because it fulfilled the Davidic Covenant but because that is how God the Son went to His Death on the Cross for sinners.

... (Christ) made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2:6-8)!

And, yes, Paul viewed the Resurrection of Christ as Good News not because it meant Christ could sit on His Throne in Jerusalem but because it provided for the sinner's justification unto life (Rom. 4:25), spiritual victory (Rom. 8:11-12) and oneness with Christ (Col. 2:12)! In fact, without Christ's Resurrection there would be NOTHING! Paul's preaching would be vanity. Our faith would be vanity. Christ's death would have been for NOTHING! If Christ is still dead in the grave, then we are all still dead in our sins! (1 Cor. 15:12-18).

**OTHER THINGS THE PROPHETS CAN WITNESS TO IN ROMANS 1-4**

The Law and the Prophets can witness to the pattern of fallen humanity in rejecting God's works, words and God Himself in unbelief, resulting in sin that leads to death (Rom. 1:18-32). They can witness to the foolishness of using the time when God is extending His Longsuffering Goodness to sinners as an opportunity to establish a righteousness of their own by minimizing sin rather than falling on the Grace God has made available to them (Rom. 2). They can witness to the utter ruin and sinfulness of fallen humanity, Jew and Gentile alike (Rom. 3:22-23; 3:9-20). They CAN witness

to the hopelessness of being justified by the Law (Rom. 3:31; 3:9-20). To list a few.

**THINGS THE PROPHETS CAN WITNESS TO IN ROMANS 3:21-4:25**

**BUT NOW! The Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the Righteousness of God which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all who believe (Rom. 3:21-22).**

Now, before he dismisses the Law and Prophets from the witness box, Paul brings out some final things that the Law and Prophets can witness to. They can witness to Christ's faithful work with regard to Israel's concepts of "Redemption" and "Propitiation through a satisfying sacrifice" (Rom. 3:22, 25), and they can witness to justification by faith, especially through the example of Abraham (Rom. 1:17; 3:28; Rom. 4; Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4).

**IT WAS A MYSTERY A SECRET UNTIL GOD REVEALED IT TO AND THROUGH THE APOSTLE PAUL. HID IN GOD NOT THE OT, THE GOSPELS OR THE MINISTRY OF THE 12 (Eph. 3:1-11)**

## The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

They can witness to the fact that God is the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Rom. 3:29-30; Gen. 2-3; Is. 42:5-6). They can witness to Jesus being handed over for our offences (Rom. 4:25; Is. 53; Ps. 22; the Gospel accounts; the Ministry of the 12 in early Acts). But once again, they CANNOT witness to is the GOOD NEWS of the Death and Cross of Christ. Together, the Law and Prophets, including the Gospel accounts and the ministry of Peter and the 12, only knew the Death of Christ on the Cross as BAD NEWS. It wasn't GOOD NEWS until the revelation God gave to Paul.

While it depends on how you count them, one Bible commentator counted some 120 references to the Old Testament in Rom. 1-4—about once for every verse—and the vast majority of those are *direct* references. In Rom. 5-8, however, there are only 3, and they are only *indirect* references. No matter how you count them, Paul's use of the Law and Prophets permeates everything in the first four chapters of Romans. But then, at the end of chap. 4, it is as though he dismisses them from the witness box and sends them home so that he can reveal something that they could not only not reveal but could not even bear witness to: THE GOOD NEWS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

In Romans 1-5, Paul only refers to the Old Testament four times—twice directly (7:7; 8:36) and twice indirectly (5:12-19; 8:15) None of these references act as “witnesses.” Rather, they simply give background information. In Rom. 7:7, he quotes the commandment that killed him—**Thou shalt not covet**, and in Rom. 8:36, he quotes Ps. 44:22 to show that God's people have always suffered. In Rom. 5:12-19, Paul uses the background of how sin and death entered the world through Adam's disobedience to display the Righteousness and Life that has now en-

tered through Christ's obedience, His Death on the Cross. And in Rom. 8:15 he quotes the words of Jesus, **Abba Father**, with regard to our sonship position today. And that's it. Four long chapters, 108 verses, and only four clear references to the Old Testament, none of which are used in the same way he used them in Rom. 1-4.

In Romans 1-4, Paul brought the witness of the Law and the Prophets into the foreground while keeping the Death of Christ in the background. In Romans 5-8, however, he pushes them into the background while bringing the Death of Christ into the foreground, placing it in the spotlight, center-stage.

### THE GOOD NEWS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND ROMANS 5

**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ DIED for the ungodly ... God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ DIED for us ... being now justified by His blood ... when we were His enemies, we were reconciled to God by the DEATH of His Son ... (Rom. 5:6-10)**

Everything flows out of the Death of Christ.

The Death of Christ frees from Sin and Death:

**Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are DEAD to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into (placed into or identified with by the Holy Spirit) Jesus Christ were baptized into His DEATH? ... knowing this: that our old man is CRUCIFIED with Him ... he that is DEAD is freed from sin ... being made free from Sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6).**

The Death of Christ frees from the Law:

## The Witness of the Law and Prophets: Rom. 1:1-4

**Know ye not ... ye are become DEAD to the Law by the body of Christ that ye should be married to another, to Him who is raised from the DEAD ... (Rom. 7)**

### The Death of Christ frees from the Flesh:

**There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus ... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and DEATH ... God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, CONDEMNED SIN IN THE FLESH (Christ's Death on the Cross) ... (Rom. 8: 1-3).**

### The Death of Christ Means Eternal Security

**If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not His Own Son (on the Cross), but delivered Him up for us all ... It is Christ who died, yes rather, who is risen again ... Who will separate us from the Love of Christ? ... (nothing) can separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:31-34)**

### CONNECTING THE DOTS

Why is it so important for us to appreciate what the Old Testament can and cannot bear witness to? It is because most of historic Christianity in rebellion against God has rejected the distinctive apostleship He gave to Paul. Therefore, they come to the first 4 chapters of Romans and conclude that they are *primarily* about us and our redemption. Let me be clear! Our justification is there, and it is important, and it is wonderful and glorious, and I thank God for it every second of every day! But Paul didn't stop there and neither should we. The *primary* purpose of these chapters is to use the Old Testament Scriptures to witness to the Glory of God now being displayed through the distinct revelation God gave to Paul (Rom. 1:5; 2:4; 11:36).

In the very act of justifying ungodly sinners on the basis of faith and grace in accord with Paul's new revelation of the BUT NOW Righteousness of God, in that very act, His Righteousness is not called into question (as Paul's critics charged). It **DECLARES HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS!** It doesn't detract from HIS Glory. It **DISPLAYS HIS GLORY!** (Rom. 3:21-26 4:20). And all of this comes today through the new, unique and distinct apostleship of Paul, his preaching of Christ according to the Mystery Program for the Body of Christ, which had been kept secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3).

Contrary to man-made religions and man-centered theological systems, God's Purpose does not center on man. It centers on the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, who began a new Program that now displays the Glory of His Name (Rom. 1:5-7). To carry this out, He raised up His worst enemy and chief sinner, the Apostle Paul, telling him to proclaim this to the world (1 Tim. 1:11-16). Instead of returning in His Wrath and Judgement to destroy His enemies, especially the Gentiles, as Peter preached in Acts 2-3, He returned in His Grace and Peace to save His enemies, especially the Gentiles, as exemplified and preached by Paul!

**BUT NOW!  
THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN  
SAVING HIS ENEMIES BECAUSE HE  
HAS NO FRIENDS—  
IS MANIFESTED!**

(Rom. 3:21)

**To Hear More, click here:  
[The Old Testament and the  
Death of Christ](#)**

**We preach *Christ Crucified*<sup>1</sup>; we worship *Jesus Christ According to the Revelation of the Mystery*<sup>2</sup>; and we study the Bible using the principle of *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*<sup>3</sup>.**

**1. 1 Cor. 1:23**

**2. Rom. 16:25**

**3. 2 Tim. 2:15**

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**All Articles in the Bold To Speak The Mystery Newsletter are by Steve Walker**

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