

### THE BOOK OF ROMANS

#### Lesson 1, Introduction

Today we embark on a study of the New Testament Book of Romans. We're going to have quite the dialogue about this exquisite work of the Apostle **Sha'ul** (Paul) because it has more to do with shaping the Christian faith as we know it than any other book in the Bible. Therefore if not properly interpreted it has the potential to lead followers of Christ down some paths that were never intended.

I think if a survey was taken among Christians not only would the Book of Romans probably be the most widely read, but we would find that more commentaries have been written on Romans than any other Bible book. So why if I'm so greatly aware of that would I offer yet another commentary and teaching on Romans? There are a number of worthy commentaries available on Romans written by excellent scholars and brilliant people. Frankly, that reality was a personal dilemma and it is why it took much urging and encouragement from family and friends to convince me to go ahead and teach Romans even though I was so unsure as to what more I could possibly offer you that wasn't already on the book shelves.

What probably most influenced me to turn the page from my skepticism to a determination to teach this book had much to do with a few provocative words written in the introduction to James D.G. Dunn's highly academic treatise on the Book of Romans. There he says this:

***“The dialogue (present in the book of Romans), of course, arises out of the fact that this apostle to the Gentiles is precisely Paul the “Hebrew of Hebrews” and zealous Pharisee...now converted, but still sharing many of his earlier concerns. The suggestion that in his conversion Paul totally abandoned all that constituted his previous identity and made a quantum leap into a wholly different pattern of religion is unnecessary and unjustified. More serious still, it cuts itself off from the possibility of reaching a proper exegesis of Romans and condemns its interpretation of Paul to confusion and contradiction. For as will soon become apparent in the exegesis, Paul is debating not with an alien system but with himself and his own past; the weft of his faith in Christ interweaves with the warp of his Jewishness”.***

Professor Dunn is expressing a fairly recent turn in the mindset of New Testament scholarship that is often labeled as “the new perspective”. And the new perspective is entirely about Paul and his Epistles. The champion of this new perspective on Paul and his writings is E.P. Sanders, a highly renowned Bible scholar, someone I've spoken to you about in other lessons. While the new perspective is anything but universally accepted, thanks to Sanders and others like Dunn it has entered the world of mainstream Christian scholarship because Sanders and Dunn are at the headwaters of the 21<sup>st</sup> century evangelical Christian stream of New Testament thought and study. So what is this new perspective? Basically it is asserting that Paul was a full fledged Jew, remained a full-fledged Jew in every way after his turning to Christ, and so it logically follows that if we are to correctly interpret and understand Paul then we must do so

within the boundaries of his Jewish religion, mindset, upbringing, education, and life context. In short: Paul was a Jew who only knew life experiences as a Jew; he was not a gentile who experienced a gentile life nor at some point did he come to identify with gentiles.

To Believers who are disposed to accept the Hebraic Roots of Christianity worldview (the correct worldview of the Bible in my opinion) this is not much of a leap; but to the majority of New Testament scholars, Bible expositors and those Pastors and lay Christians who rely on their works, this new perspective comes dangerously close to heresy.

However it is one thing for a Bible scholar to make this well-founded observation about Paul's Jewishness, and even to admit that it fully aligns with what is literally stated in the New Testament about him....and also how Paul describes himself....but it is quite another to then seriously explore what this could actually mean when it comes to the effect it might have on cherished and embedded Christian doctrines. Their concern over those effects on long standing Christian doctrine is quite real because almost all Church doctrines are based on the sayings of Paul. So **if** it turns out that for 19 centuries institutional Christianity has not correctly understood what Paul meant because his words have a different meaning within the Jewish societal context in which they were written versus the gentile societal context in which those words have been studied and used to establish a systematic theology of the Church, it opens up a Christian Pandora's Box of all sorts of challenges and possibly inconvenient if not embarrassing discoveries. So this is the point at which even open-minded commentary writers find themselves at the end of a promising road to new discoveries in the Bible because they are unwilling to pursue it; they will journey no further down this path of a new perspective on Paul because they are well aware that to do so risks careers, livelihoods, and valued academic and religious associations that they have worked lifetimes to gain. As one who has read the works of E.P. Sanders and James Dunn, I'm sorry to say that they, too, are reluctant to go further....at least for now. Some of that concern no doubt comes from knowing that if their deepest suspicions of where this road leads to were to be realized it could be most disruptive to the inner workings of the institutional Church as we know it today; in ways that aren't predictable.

Do not think for a moment that I am overdramatizing this crucial matter of how one is to characterize Paul, the author of Romans, and therefore how one must interpret Paul. Have you ever considered what it would mean to Baptist, or Methodist, or Calvary Chapel, or any number of evangelical Christian denominations if suddenly the leading and most trusted Bible academics admitted that the Law of Moses was NOT abolished? Or that mankind does NOT face a choice of salvation methods between law (the old way for Jews) or grace (the new way for gentiles)? Or that God has not abandoned His original people, the Jews, and replaced them with His new people, gentile Christians? How about if it turns out Sabbath keeping is still an ongoing commandment of God, as well as keeping His holy appointed times as ordained in the Bible? What we are dealing with are some of the most foundational issues that God's Word sets forth; issues that our early Church Fathers (all gentiles, of course) decided upon, declared them as doctrines, and these doctrines have generally been followed and accepted as unassailable by the Christian community ever since (Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox).

What I'm preparing you for, then, is an all out re-examination on the meaning of the Book of

Romans. Or better, an in-depth cross examination of what so many acclaimed and lettered scholars have said about the Book of Romans, and have faced little opposition or push-back until now. What we are going to do is to blast through the institutional blockades that warn “go no farther” when acknowledging Paul’s Jewishness. Blockades that have been erected on a road that represents the troubling nuances presented by the so-called new perspective on Paul. Blockades that do nothing but what Dunn readily admits “**condemns the interpretation of Paul to confusion and contradiction**”.

Clearly it is a denomination’s particular interpretation of Paul that gives each denomination its uniqueness. But how can that be if we are all reading the same words from the same Apostle from the same New Testament? How can the doctrines of various denominations vary so greatly from one another if we have but a single source of reference that we all look to? The answer is again as Dunn stated: when the Hebrew context and Jewish reality of who Paul is, is removed, what remains is confusion and contradiction. And for centuries Paul has been accused by insiders and outsiders of the Christian faith of confusion and contradiction in his several Epistles. Thus each denomination has cherry picked statements of Paul that suits their agenda and belief, and ignores others of Paul’s statements that seem contradictory, and it is this set of Paul’s statements that has formed the basis of their particular brand of Christianity.

So what does all of this mean for us and our study of Romans? It means that we’re going to do our best to choose truth over tradition. We’re going to go where the Scriptures lead even when it troubles us and we don’t like it. We’re going to venture where angels fear to tread and we’re going to open up a few cans of worms and some will no doubt escape. And we’re going to delve deep into who Paul actually was, and the Jewish cultural terms in which he, of course, spoke, thought, and wrote. All along the way, no matter how challenging or uncomfortable this may get, rest assured that the one constant will be that Yeshua is the Messiah; He is the Son of God and He is God. And other than by Him and His sacrifice on the cross, there is no way for anyone to be delivered from sin. But it also means we are going to have to learn about the **one thing** that is missing from every commentary written on the New Testament; whether that commentary is on Paul’s letters or on the Gospels. And that missing thing is the context of Jewish society in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.; what is called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple period. It was a Jewish society that was based from birth to death on Jewish Law: **Halakhah**.

If you have studied the Book of Acts with me you will be much more prepared for Romans than if you haven’t. However I will take the time to revisit some of the teaching I presented in Acts especially about Jewish Law and what it means and how it worked, adding some new information to what I’ve already given to you. This is not to teach you Judaism; it is to teach you about a society that operated strictly within Judaism. I think between the books of Acts and Romans you will have been given enough of a foundation to read the remainder of Paul’s letters in a different and more enlightening (and less confusing) way. So what we are going to learn is not terribly hard, but there will be a lot of information, much of it new to you. We will go through Romans carefully and verse by verse. At the same time I want to be careful not to bog us down too much that we lose the flow and purpose of this wonderful work. The main value of Romans for a Believer is as a source of inspiration, theological instruction, and practical application that must not be lost or buried under mountains of detail. Yet without the essential background and preparation we will do no better than what any other of the many

commentaries on Romans has accomplished and that is to provide incomplete information based on a gentile rather than Biblical Hebrew worldview that has sometimes led to erroneous conclusions. I'm not speaking about theological nuances that interest only college professors; I'm speaking about the basics of our faith.

The first thing to know about Romans is that it is no different than any other book of the Bible in the respect that it is but one part of a much larger whole. Romans is not a Bible unto itself nor is it a self-contained systematic theology that Paul created. Romans is only truly intelligible when we have the rest of the Bible to provide the foundation and texture for what Paul has to say. And (I can't say this strongly enough) we must always evaluate what Paul is teaching in light of what Christ taught, and Paul's thoughts must also uphold what the **Tanakh**, the Old Testament, taught; especially the words of the Prophets. If Paul in anyway refutes Christ or the Prophets then we have but a mere man, Paul, providing little more than an error-filled personal theology that only has value as interesting Jewish literature from that era and is anything but divinely inspired.

It is not uncommon for me to quote Yeshua from the Gospels, explain the application and the principles it exposes only to later have some one approach me and say "well, yes, but Paul said...." Folks let me speak plainly: Paul and Christ are in no way on equal footing. If Paul and Christ seem to disagree then the fault is with Paul. We can't have a Gospel of Christ but then turn around and say that Paul has the power to override it, or remake it, with his own inspired thoughts. And although the average Church go-er doesn't realize it, inside the hallowed halls of our Christian institutions, long ago doctrinal decisions were made that pitted Paul against Christ with the winner pre-determined to be Paul. And this is because there were ways to spin Paul's statements that made him appear to agree with the gentile Church authorities. On the other hand if I truly thought that Paul disagreed on any theological point of consequence over and against Yeshua, we wouldn't be studying his most famous letter: the Book of Romans. Rather, I'd be telling you to avoid it.

What we're going to see in Romans is Paul working out a very sticky cultural and theological problem; the participation of gentiles within the early community of Jewish Believers that as of that time still operated as a sect of Judaism. In fact so much of **Sha'ul's** dialogue is about, or is aimed directly towards, gentile Believers that some commentators think that the Book of Romans was written strictly to and for gentiles. And this belief, popular in the early gentile-dominated Church, is what propelled the viewpoint that the Book of Romans ought to be the primary source of doctrine for the new religion called Christianity; a religion offered only to gentiles. To this day the bulk of Christian commentators (again, all gentile of course) refer to the Book of Romans as Hellenistic literature. Hellenism refers to the lifestyle and culture practiced by the gentile Greeks and Romans; this was the dominant and desired culture of the Roman Empire. By thinking of the Book of Romans as Hellenistic literature then we necessarily discard the Jewishness of its author, the Jewishness of its context, the Jewishness of its theology, and the Jewishness of its meaning and message. In truth the Book of Romans is thoroughly Jewish literature that even employs rather standard debate and defense principles and terminology used by the Sages and Rabbis in the Talmud. Yes, the oldest extant manuscripts of this book are written in Greek; but this should not be troubling. Greek was the most universally spoken language in the Roman Empire. Paul was a Diaspora Jew whose first

language was Greek, the Jews (believing and not) in Rome (to whom the letter was written) would have spoken Greek. But nevertheless all the history, theology, Scripture passages, and thought patterns that Paul was transmitting were purely Hebrew in origin. It is only that these Hebrew thoughts were necessarily being transmitted in the Greek language.

Let's remember who Paul was. Although a Diaspora Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, he identified with mainstream Judaism (let's call it Rabbinic Judaism to give it a clearer picture). I say that because the ordinary common Jews of the holy land and those of the Diaspora can't really be called adherents to Rabbinic Judaism; that connection occurs mainly with those who fancied being religious experts (like the Pharisees). The common folks would not have identified themselves with any specific Jewish party. Thus we don't find ordinary Jews saying that they are Pharisees. In fact Paul was part of a specific strand of Rabbinic Judaism that was espoused by, and taught by, the highly acclaimed teacher Gamaliel. Paul expressly came to live in Jerusalem in order to be taught by Gamaliel. The Talmud makes it clear that Gamaliel only took students who had exceptional aptitude and devotion, and who showed promise such that one day they could become rabbis. We don't have to conjecture in any way about Paul in this regard; he calls himself a Pharisee, and his training at Gamaliel's school is a recorded fact. When his training was complete he didn't graduate as a novice or an intern; but rather as one having mastered the philosophy and nuances of this particular strand of Judaism. Paul was a rabbi through and through.

I'm going to make an analogy now in order to make a point that I've touched on before and I hope you can give me all your focus for a few moments; it will be valuable to you. Although in Paul's schooling studying the Biblical Torah and the Prophets was certainly part of his training, in reality what was taught were the theological views of Gamaliel **about** the Torah and the Prophets. Further this particular strand of Rabbinical Judaism that Gamaliel followed operated within a set of doctrines that we commonly call Jewish Law. In Hebrew this is called **Halakhah**. These Jewish laws were NOT the same thing as the Torah Law (the Law of Moses) called in Hebrew **mitzvot**. Rather these Jewish laws were essentially manmade rulings and doctrines (Yeshua called them Traditions of the Elders) purported to accurately reflect the true interpretation of the Law of Moses and the Prophets. These rulings and doctrines established a system of behaviors and customs and theological expectations that those who adhered to the Gamaliel rabbinic philosophy (those like Paul) believed in and followed scrupulously.

For centuries (although much more so in modern times), training centers for the future leaders of Christianity have operated the same way as these ancient rabbinical schools. We usually call these Christian training centers seminaries. However each strand of Christianity (called a denomination) has its own peculiar set of doctrines and so each has its own designated school to teach their doctrines. So what happens at a seminary? While the Bible is certainly taught, the larger emphasis is placed on the doctrines and customs and theological expectations of the particular denomination that operates the seminary because those doctrines are purportedly derived from the Bible and define what that denomination believes that the Bible says about any number of subjects. So when a student signs up to attend a certain seminary he or she has already made a conscious decision about which strand of Christianity that they have faith in and intend to follow. The rulings and doctrines they are taught at seminary establish that particular denomination's system of behaviors and customs and theological expectations that



those students are not only to follow but are, as graduates, expected to lead others to follow.

In both the cases of Judaism and Christianity while the Bible is highly venerated and taught at their schools, it is given second place to the doctrines and customs that are taught. Let me say it this way: the Bible is viewed through the lens of that denomination's doctrines and not the other way around. So although the student might not be fully conscious of it, what they wind up gaining is the greatest knowledge of, and devotion to, the ways that a board of religious scholars and elders long ago decided are the right ways. In Christianity these ways are called doctrines; in Judaism they are called **Halakhot** (plural of **halakhah**). Once again: are these "ways" taught in the religious schools the same as the Bible? Are they Scripture? No. But they are said to capture the correct essence and meaning of the Bible. This is why I regularly say that the Christian Church is no more nor less Bible based than Judaism. The Church is doctrine based just as Judaism is **Halakhah** based. Paul's theology revolved around the **Halakhah** of the Pharisees; in fact it was the **Halakhah** of a specific brand of Pharisees as championed by Gamaliel (and it did not always agree with the **Halakhah** of the other brands of Pharisees, which, like with Christianity, there are numerous brands).

Thus when Paul thinks, speaks, writes and instructs he does so with the underlying foundation of the **Halakhah** he learned at the feet of Gamaliel. But since meeting his Messiah on the road to Damascus, Paul (somewhere, somehow) began assimilating a new **Halakhah**; the **Halakhah** taught by Yeshua of Nazareth. Remember: **Halakhah** is but a certain group's interpretation of the Bible. So Paul was adopting Yeshua's interpretation of the Bible that would become intertwined with his established **Halakhah** taught by Gamaliel. And much of what Yeshua teaches as His **Halakhah** generally fits with the **Halakhah** of the Pharisees, although some (obviously) does not.

But Paul's dilemma was this: Yeshua told him that he was to be the emissary of this new **Halakhah** to the gentiles. And the core of Christ's **Halakhah** was the Gospel. The problem is that there was no school to teach this because Yeshua was now in Heaven, and because Messianic Judaism was far too young and embattled to have formed schools. There was no precedent in Jewish history for offering salvation to gentiles based on faith in the covenants God made with the Hebrews. So Paul had to think it through to come to some conclusions and to establish solutions and rulings to go by. In other words, from Paul's perspective, he (as a rabbi) was establishing Messianic **Halakhah; Halakhah** that included the advent of Messiah Yeshua and all that entailed. And that thinking involved much debate and processing of information; and he didn't necessarily agree with James, Jesus' brother, who headed up The Way in Jerusalem. For one thing, James wasn't a trained rabbi; he was merely a country boy who happened to be the brother of Yeshua. On the other hand Paul thought like a rabbi, because he was a brilliant formally trained rabbi at one of the two most prestigious rabbinical schools in Jerusalem. As James Dunn points out, Paul didn't somehow give up all that he was and all that he had learned as a Jewish rabbi to start a new gentile based religion; rather he sought to assimilate the new revelations about Messiah Yeshua into all that he was and all that he knew. Thus when Paul makes a point in Romans (and in his other letters) he does so in the style, protocol and thought processes of a rabbi.

The Hebraic Roots Bible commentators Shulam and LeCornu have researched and cross

referenced some of the terminology that Paul likes to use in his letters with what is used by rabbis in their arguments and debates as they appear in the Talmud, and they found some expected similarities. For those of you who might not know, the Talmud is essentially a large volume of Jewish writings containing the religious rulings, traditions, and customs of Judaism. But it operated in a unique way. Rabbis whose thoughts were included in the Talmud used certain standard phrases when commenting on certain matters of **Halakhah** (Jewish Law) that indicated agreement or disagreement with the ruling of another earlier rabbi. Those who study the Talmud perfectly understand that the insertion of these key phrases helps the reader to know the salient matter under discussion and what point is being made by the rabbi. That is, the Talmud operates on certain literary conventions and rules unique to the Hebrews, and especially to rabbis, and Jewish students are taught their significance. For instance: one of Paul's favorite phrases is "what shall we then say?" This is not unique to Paul; rather it is standard rabbinic terminology used in the Talmud to introduce a matter for debate. Later in the discussion the conclusion (the religious ruling) on this matter that an earlier rabbi had decided is quoted, and then this later rabbi refutes it because he thinks the ruling is wrong. So after the words "what shall we then say?" will come a discussion of the particular matter that is under examination. Evidence is produced usually in the form of Scripture verses. Sooner or later a conclusion (that is, a ruling that rabbi so and so had made about the matter) is given, but then it will be discredited by the rabbi who is now commenting on it. The phrase used to indicate that the later rabbi disagrees with the conclusion of the former rabbi is "God forbid" or "Heaven forbid" or sometimes "may it never be". So the entire argument begins with "what shall we then say?" and it ends with "God forbid" (or its equivalent).

So not surprisingly in the Book of Romans we find a passionate discussion on a matter of extreme importance to Paul beginning at verse 30 of chapter 9. Because Paul is a rabbi and this discussion (or argument) is a matter of arriving at a proper ruling (establishing the correct **Halakhah**) as concerns gentile participation in the covenants given to Israel then naturally Paul begins his debate as any trained rabbi would:

### Romans 9:30-10:2 CJB

<sup>30</sup> ***So, what are we to say? This: that Gentiles, even though they were not striving for righteousness, have obtained righteousness; but it is a righteousness grounded in trusting!***

<sup>31</sup> ***However, Isra'el, even though they kept pursuing a Torah that offers righteousness, did not reach what the Torah offers.***

<sup>32</sup> ***Why? Because they did not pursue righteousness as being grounded in trusting but as if it were grounded in doing legalistic works. They stumbled over the stone that makes people stumble.***

<sup>33</sup> ***As the Tanakh puts it, "Look, I am laying in Tziyon a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will trip them up. But he who rests his trust on it will not be humiliated."***

**CJB Romans 10:1 *Brothers, my heart's deepest desire and my prayer to God for Isra'el is for their salvation;***

**<sup>2</sup> *for I can testify to their zeal for God. But it is not based on correct understanding;***

The next several verses, right on through Romans chapter 10 and on into Romans 11 is but the body of the discussion about whether or not gentiles ought to be able to participate in Israel's covenants with God and what effect this might have on Israel. A number of OT Scriptures are quoted to bolster Paul's position, along with some of his comments on those Scriptures, until we finally arrive at Romans 11:11. And there we read:

**Romans 11:11 CJB <sup>11</sup> *"In that case, I say, isn't it that they (Israel) have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?" Heaven forbid! Quite the contrary, it is by means of their stumbling that the deliverance has come to the Gentiles, in order to provoke them to jealousy.....***

So essentially Romans 9:30 to 11:11 is a unit; we have the issue presented and then the debate that follows Romans 9:30. Essentially Paul is having this debate with himself; he sets up the straw man and argues with him. The beginning of this unit is indicated with the phrase "what shall we then say?" This is the standard rabbinical signal that at some point a conclusion or ruling is going to be made, and then the person leading this discussion (Paul) is going to indicate that he strongly disagrees with the conclusion about what ought to be decided by saying "Heaven forbid". The erroneous conclusion that Paul is battling against (with himself) is that if Israel has indeed stumbled, and now God has included gentiles, does it mean that Israel has permanently fallen away from God? Paul's answer to this erroneous conclusion? Heaven forbid! Then in the next sentence he states what he considers to be the right ruling (the correct ***Halakhah***), which is that by means of Israel stumbling deliverance has come to the Gentiles, but all this is with the hope that all Israel will be saved.

Most gentile New Testament commentators who have no idea of 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple Judaism or Jewish culture (and certainly have no working knowledge of the Talmud) look at the erroneous conclusion in Romans 11 about Israel having permanently fallen away and say "See! Paul has just admitted that Israel has fallen away from God forever. And Paul is dismayed by this terrible outcome and so he cries out in agony for his fellow Jews: Heaven Forbid!" Nothing could be further from reality as I have just demonstrated to you. But if one is ignorant of how Jewish society and culture and religion operated in New Testament times, how could one possibly come to the correct conclusions about what these Bible characters and writers meant by what they said?

My point is this: we need to read Paul's letters through the eyes of a rabbi in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. and that is no easy task; there are some things we have to be open to learning in order to do that. When Paul wrote he realized that he was handcuffed by the fact that many who will read his letters are gentiles who have little means to truly understand what he is telling them because they have no understanding of Jewish culture or Judaism, or the Hebrew Bible. So he tries his best to use terms that gentiles might understand better; terms that may not be an exact fit to what he is trying to communicate, but terms that gentiles with a low level, or no



level, of Biblical knowledge can better understand.

But this brings up another important matter. Who, then, but a Jew in Paul's day could explain to gentiles what the Hebrew Scriptures (the Bible, the OT) meant? Who but a Jew could expound upon what Paul meant in his letters, and then explain it to gentiles? This is why Paul was firmly synagogue-based in his evangelism. He needed Believing Jews in the synagogues of foreign lands to be the representatives of the faith; Believing Jews who had a heart for gentiles being included. I would go so far as to say that Paul counted on, depended upon, Believing Jews to interpret his letters to Believing (or even seeking) gentiles. For by the end of Paul's century when gentiles began to dominate the Jesus movement and then quickly moved to sever all Jewishness from it in order to make it a new gentile religion called Christianity, the message of the several inspired Jewish writers of the Bible suffered from distortion; accidental and intentional. It would not be until early in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. that the New Testament was ordained into existence. By then, anti-Semitism was a basic foundational doctrine of the Church so there was little hope that these New Testament writings, written by Jews, would be properly interpreted and applied by gentiles. But today, as demonstrated by the recent "new perspective" on Paul that so far has been adopted by a few of our most prestigious modern Bible scholars, we are seeing a change of attitude. Perhaps we are living in the era in which the Spirit is moving across the face of this planet, in the souls of Believers, to bring a better understanding of the Word of God to His worshippers. I have no other way to explain the sudden eruption of the Hebrew Roots movement.

This is the challenge that we face as 21<sup>st</sup> century Believers when reading Paul's Epistles and none more so than the Book of Romans. Since followers of Christ rely so heavily on the Book of Romans it is imperative that we get it right; and it is clear that anti-Jewish prejudices have for centuries tainted the teachings of Bible scholars and Bible translations. The good news is that because of the lateness of our era as the time of Messiah's return approaches, we are seeing a movement of Believers towards an openness to rediscovering the Bible in its Hebrew context and towards looking to Jews to help unravel the true meaning of Holy Scripture. So I think that while what I intend to teach you may presently not be well accepted within the institutional Church, more and more Believers will see the truth of it and grab hold as the days go by. Why do I think this? Because it was prophesied 2500 years ago and I see it happening with my own eyes.

**Zechariah 8:23 CJB <sup>23</sup> ADONAI-Tzva'ot says, 'When that time comes, ten men will take hold- speaking all the languages of the nations- will grab hold of the cloak of a Jew and say, "We want to go with you, because we have heard that God is with you."'"**

Next time we'll conclude our introduction and get started on the first chapter of the Book of Romans.