

Romans: A Study on Reformation
Lesson 31 “Provoked to Jealousy”

I. Introduction and Review - We are continuing our series on **Romans** today. Our focus in this series reformation, specifically reforming our relationships.

A. The first thing we need to reform about our understanding of **Romans** it isn't just a letter about how we are justified by faith. While that's true, but only the context of the letter is human relationships and bringing together different people groups with different belief systems around the centrality of Jesus.

B. Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome to reform it in 57 A.D. prior to his trip to Jerusalem. He wrote to deal major issues the church in Rome was having issues which related to the banishment of the Jews from Rome in the year 49 A.D.

1. When the church in Rome began it was mostly comprised of Jews who converted to Christianity. The church culture was very much in line with Judaism (keep the law of Moses, focus on circumcision, keep the feast days, etc.)

2. In 49 A.D. the Roman Emperor Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome because of their religious and political disturbances. **Acts 18:1-2**. The Jews were banished until 54 A.D. when Nero became Emperor and said they could return.

3. When the Jewish Christians were banished, the only Christians left were Gentiles (the heathen). They were now in charge in the church in Rome and the culture of the church was completely different. Modern example would be if all of the traditional people were banished from town and the church was turned over to Millennials/Gen Z who brought in a more contemporary vibe to service.

4. Each side had an aura of superiority. The Jews thought they were better because they were God's original chosen people and the Gentiles thought they were better because they were the replacement of the Jews since they rejected Jesus.

C. Last week we studied **Romans 10:14-18** about the source of faith. We discovered faith comes by hearing the word of God. We also saw that many of the religious Jews who had God's word didn't believe because they had wrong expectations about the Messiah. They thought He would be a conquering king who would overthrow the Romans and not a suffering servant that would die a criminal's death on a cross.

1. Wrong expectations led to wrong believing. This led God to have to do something dramatic in order to provoke the religious Jews to faith.

2. What we'll see today is sometimes God will go to dramatic means in order to bring people to faith. Sometimes He'll even provoke them to jealousy.

II. Provoked to Jealousy

A. **Matthew 28:16-17** This is a fascinating passage because all 11 disciples believed Jesus was the Christ and worshipped Him, yet some had doubt at the same time.

1. Doubt - **distázō**,; properly, to duplicate, i.e. (mentally) to waver (in opinion):
2. Why? All of these men grew up as good Jewish boys who were raised under the law. They were taught the Messiah would be a conquering king who would overthrow Rome. Even though they walked with Jesus, heard His teachings, and saw Him after the resurrection, they had a lot of bad teaching put in them for years that it would take of the Holy Spirit to get over. Ex: Healing
3. If the best of the best who walked closely with Jesus could struggle, don't you think religious Jews who didn't walk closely with Jesus could really struggle? It would take something dramatic from God to move them to faith. **God loves His people enough to do dramatic things in order to get them into faith (this is still true today).**

B. **Romans 10:18-Romans 11:5**

1. **Verse 18** the word of God went out, but not all heard (with their spiritual ears).
2. **Verse 19** quotes **Deuteronomy 32:21**. God's plan to bring the legalistic Jews to faith, was to provoke them to jealousy. Ex: People who date someone else to win the heart of someone they really want. It worked too - **Acts 13:44-45 AMP**.
3. **Verses 20-21** quote **Isaiah 65:1-2**. The modern example of this is the Jesus movement in the 60's and 70's. Many of those who were in church did religious works, but never came to a saving faith. Others were saved, but were highly religious and legalistic and so God could not use them for His purposes in the earth, therefore He moved on to the rejects of society.
4. In **verses 1-5**, Paul begins to answer the question some were having in that day... Was God done with the Jews? No. Is God done with legalistic Christians today? No. Even amongst the most religious, there will always be a remnant that will receive the new wine of grace.

C. **Romans 11:11-15** Paul again states that God's plan was to win the hearts of His chosen people, Israel, by provoking them to jealousy. Paul also is telling the gentiles as good as it was the Jews fell (riches for the world), it's gonna be better for all of us when they come to faith. Modern Example: Chuck Smith

III. Conclusion

A. God is in radical pursuit of all people (religious or irreligious). He is also in radical pursuit of you receiving all of His promises. He'll appeal to you by wooing your heart, but if you won't respond, He'll provoke you to jealousy (Pastor Lawson story)

1. We need to learn to rest in God live in the presence of Jesus when we don't have enough faith or have too many doubts. He knows how to get us into faith. Ex: The 11 disciples.
2. We need to cultivate in our heart, God's heart for all humanity (religious or irreligious). Some of us need to get compassion for the legalistic while others need to get compassion for those in the Woke movement.

B. Transition to Craig