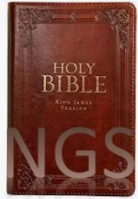


# ROMANS RAMBLINGS



## **Romans Ramblings**

*“I do not have to prove to you that God exists, because I think you already know it. Your problem is not that you do not know that God exists; your problem is that you despise the God whom you know exists. Your problem is not intellectual; it is moral—you hate God.”*

— R.C. Sproul

I love my Old Testament. I love the stories, characters, and the feel of it. There isn't any place in the old book that I would not wander. Is it into the Psalms or the kingdom of David? Oh, how I would have loved to sit in the Garden of Eden. Would I take a journey with Isiah or glean in the fields with Ruth? This collection of ancient books is home for me. Yet, every time I crack open the New Testament book of Romans, I get the feeling I have returned home.

I feel that the Old Testament opens you up to the world of God. He gives us insight into how he views creation. How would God deal with fallen humankind? I can see it in the stories. The book of Genesis seems to be setting up something big. We have so few words about how it all began. What is God and his kingdom? What is his plan? The answers to those questions would not come for thousands of years. Not until an Old Testament Bible scholar named Paul of Tarsus wrote Romans. Why does the book of Romans feel like home to me? It's because Paul has found a way to bridge the Old and New Testaments together. Giving us good analogies as to why we should believe in the God of creation.

Why did God make creation? Why is he so interested in the nation of Israel? Is the law of Moses the most important thing to God? How does Jesus fit in? I could come up with a hundred questions. They say that there are about 63,000 connections between the Old and New Testament. Paul could see it. He knew the old writings inside out. Yet, splashed on the pages of Romans is connections. Paul got God and he got Jesus. The book of Romans has our basic theology. It gives us reasons to see Jesus as God. To see why God did it this way. Yet, there is so much more. Before Paul was on the scene there was an understanding that Jewish people were the only children of God. Gentiles (everyone else) were on the outside looking in. In-fact, Jewish culture dismissed those that were not of their heritage. Paul would have been one of those people. Yet, Paul met Jesus on the Damascus Road. His vast understanding of God became limited. You can see in his writing how he tries to understand how Jesus, God, the Mosaic law, and creation work together. So, he created the book of Romans.

This book is a bridge between Gentiles and Israelites. Paul grew up an Israelite. In this culture to be a pharisee meant that you were the best of the best. They spent years memorizing the Old Testament. Not just anyone can do it. If anyone could make a bridge between the old and new teachings it was Paul. Romans is considered to have some of the best scripture for leading someone to Jesus. In Christian terms they call it the Roman road. We will get into it in next week's study. Paul is painting a picture throughout the book of Romans of what we knew about God and how He is tied to Jesus.

Secondly, I want to go down another rabbit trail designed by Paul. In Romans, Paul points out the six laws of Romans. They are all connected to the Roman road. Yet, they also teach us a bunch about God and Christianity. To be sure, to understand the Old Testament, is a bridge to the New Testament. Yes, in Paul's day the New Testament was not written yet, Romans is based off

of Paul's encounter with Jesus and his knowledge of the Old Testament. He saw the laws of God, Moses, sin, faith, mind, and Spirit. Each of these gives us a clearer understand of who God was to the ancient people of the Old Testament and who God is to us today.

Romans comes off as a very difficult book to read. The terms law, predestination, circumcision and many more difficult words make it hard to understand. A Jew two thousand years ago would have understood Paul. Why? It's because their culture lived and breathed the word of God. They knew so much. Yet, as Paul points out in 16-chapters that God's world is not what it seems. Paul's encounter with Jesus changed everything. Come with me on the Roman road and see how God is bringing us back to him. Within all that let's try and unpack the laws of Romans through Paul's eyes. We might just see God a little more clearly like his fellow Jewish readers did.