

The Epistle of Paul to the *Romans*

Author: There is no controversy over the author of Romans: he was the apostle Paul. ^{1:1-4}

Date: A.D. 56-57

Setting: Paul was probably in Corinth toward the conclusion of his 3rd Missionary Journey ^{Acts 20:2-3}.

Corinth was a chief city in Greece (45 miles west of Athens) with a population of about 750,000.

It was an immoral city ^{1 Corinthians 6:18-20} famous for commerce and religion (12+ pagan temples).

Ancient Rome was the capital and most important city in the Roman Empire. It was located on the Tiber River, about 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Rome had magnificent buildings, including the palace of the emperor, Circus Maximus (chariot racing) and the Forum (market).

The church(es) in Rome were not founded by Paul, but probably by converts at Pentecost ^{Acts 2:10}.

Recipients: "All in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints..." ^{1:7a}

Of the 21 letters (epistles) in the NT, Romans is one of the 14 letters authored by the apostle Paul (if Hebrews is included). Paul authored nine letters to believers in specified geographic locations (Rome, 2 to Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, and 2 to Thessalonica), one to a group of believers (Hebrews) and four to individual saints (2 to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon).

Content: Romans is primarily a book of doctrine, with a little historical information.

There are many interpretive challenges in Romans. Among the major theological topics are: spiritual leadership principles (1:8-15), God's wrath against sinful man (1:18-32), divine judgement principles (2:1-16), universality of sin (3:9-20), a defense of justification by faith alone (3:21 – 4:25), the security of salvation (5:1-11), the transformation of Adam's sin (5:12-21), sanctification (6-8), sovereign election (9), God's plan for Israel (11), spiritual gifts and practical godliness (12), believer's responsibility to human government (13), principles of Christian liberty (14:1 – 15:12).

Theme: Romans 1:16-17 *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."* ^{Habakkuk 2:4}

G.R.A.C.E.: **G**od's **R**edemption **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense

Man's Iniquity ⇒ **G**race ⇒ God's Righteousness

Key Passage: Romans 8:1-2 *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Purposes: Paul had many reasons for authoring this letter. A few of the more important ones were:

- † Paul wrote to proclaim his great desire for a future visit with the saints in Rome.
- † He wanted to teach the truths of the gospel of God (Christ) to the believers in Rome who had never received direct apostolic instruction. (Paul also referred to “my gospel” 2:16, 16:25.)
- † Paul explained the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan of redemption.
- † He wrote to instruct mankind about God’s plan for His righteous judgement of the wicked.
- † Paul also wrote to present God’s system of being saved to righteousness (salvation) by faith.
- † He longed to describe God’s past, present and future relationship with the Jews (Israelites).

An Outline of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans:

- † *Greetings and Introduction* (1:1-15)
- † *Theme* (1:16-17)
- † *Condemnation: The Need for God's Righteousness* (1:18 - 3:20)
 - Unrighteous Gentiles (1:18-32)
 - Unrighteous Jews (2:1 - 3:8)
 - Unrighteous Mankind (3:9-20)
- † *Justification: The Provision of God's Righteousness* (3:21 - 5:21)
 - The Source of Righteousness (3:21-31)
 - The Example of Righteousness (4:1-25)
 - The Blessings of Righteousness (5:1-11)
 - The Imputation of Righteousness (5:12-21)
- † *Sanctification: The Demonstration of God's Righteousness* (6:1 - 8:39)
- † *Restoration: Israel's Reception of God's Righteousness* (9:1 - 11:36)
- † *Application: The Behavior of God's Righteousness* (12:1 - 15:13)
- † *Conclusion, Greetings and Benediction* (15:14 - 16:27)