

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

OPENING STATEMENTS

- A. Romans is the most systematic and logical doctrinal book of the Apostle Paul. It was affected by circumstances in Rome, therefore, it is an “occasional” document. Something occurred that caused Paul to write the letter. However, it is the most neutral of Paul’s writings, in that Paul’s way of dealing with the problem (possibly the jealousy between believing Jewish and Gentile leadership) was a clear presentation of the gospel and its implications for daily life.
- B. Paul’s presentation of the gospel in Romans has impacted the church’s life in every age:
 - 1. Augustine was converted in A.D. 386 reading Romans 13:13-14.
 - 2. Martin Luther’s understanding of salvation was radically changed in A.D. 1513 as he compared Ps. 31:1 to Rom. 1:17 (cf. Hab. 2:4).
 - 3. John Wesley was converted in A.D. 1738 by hearing Luther’s sermon on the introduction to Romans.
- C. To know Romans is to know Christianity! The letter shapes the life and teachings of Jesus into bedrock truths for the Church of all ages.

AUTHOR

Paul was definitely the author. His typical greeting is found in 1:1. It is generally agreed that Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” was bad eyesight, therefore, he did not physically write this letter himself, but he used a scribe, Tertius (cf. 16:22).

DATE

- A. The probable date for the authorship of Romans is A.D. 56-58. This is one of the few New Testament books which can be dated fairly accurately. This is done by comparing Acts 20:2ff with Romans 15:17ff. Romans was probably written at Corinth toward the end of Paul’s third missionary journey, just before he left for Jerusalem.
- B. Possible chronology of Paul’s writings following F. F. Bruce and Murry Harris with minor adaptations.

<u>Book</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place of Writing</u>	<u>Relation to Acts</u>
1. Galatians	48	Syrian Antioch	14:28; 15:2
2. I Thessalonians	50	Corinth	18:5
3. II Thessalonians	50	Corinth	
4. I Corinthians	55	Ephesus	19:20
5. II Corinthians	56	Macedonia	20:2
6. Romans	57	Corinth	20:3
7.-10. Prison Letters			
Colossians	early 60's	Rome	
Ephesians	early 60's	Rome	
Philemon	early 60's	Rome	
Philippians	late 62-63	Rome	28:30-31
11.-13. Fourth Missionary Journey			
I Timothy	63 (or later,	Macedonia	
Titus	63 but before	Ephesus (?)	
II Timothy	64 A.D. 68)	Rome	

RECIPIENTS

The letter states its destination as Rome. We do not know who founded the church at Rome:

- A. It may have been some of the people who were visiting Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and were converted and returned home to start a church (cf. Acts 2:10);
- B. It could have been disciples who fled the persecution in Jerusalem after the death of Stephen (cf. Acts 8:4); or

- C. It could have been converts from Paul's missionary journeys who traveled to Rome. Paul had never visited this church, but he longed to (cf. Acts 19:21). He had many friends there (cf. Rom. 16).

Apparently his plan was to visit Rome on his way to Spain (cf. Rom. 15:28) after his trip to Jerusalem with the "love gift." Paul felt his ministry in the eastern Mediterranean was finished. He sought new fields (cf. 16:20-23). The bearer of the letter from Paul in Greece to Rome seems to have been Phoebe, a deaconess, who was traveling in that direction (cf. Rom. 16:1). Why is this letter, written on the back streets of Corinth in the first century by a Jewish tentmaker, so valuable? Martin Luther called it "the chief book in the New Testament and the purest Gospel." The value of this book is found in the fact that it is an in-depth explanation of the gospel by the converted rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Most of Paul's letters are strongly colored by a local situation, but not Romans. It is a systematic presentation of an apostle's life-long faith.

Did you realize, fellow Christian, that most of the technical terms used today to describe "faith" ("justification," "imputation," "adoption," and "sanctification") come from Romans? Pray for God to open to you this marvelous letter as we search together for His will for our lives today!

PURPOSE

- A. An appeal for help for his missionary trip to Spain. Paul saw his apostolic work in the eastern Mediterranean finished (cf. 16:20-23).
- B. To address the problem in the Roman church between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. This was probably a result of the expulsion of all Jews from Rome and their later return. By then the Jewish Christian leaders had been replaced by Gentile Christian leaders.
- C. To introduce himself to the Roman church. There was much opposition to Paul from sincere converted Jews in Jerusalem (Jerusalem Council of Acts 15), from insincere Jews (Judaizers in Galatians and II Cor. 3, 10-13), and from Gentiles (Colossians, Ephesians) who tried to merge the gospel with their pet theories or philosophies.
- D. Paul was accused of being a dangerous innovator, adding recklessly to Jesus' teaching. The book of Romans was his way of systematically defending himself by showing how his gospel was true, using the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus (the Gospels).

BRIEF OUTLINE

- A. Introduction (1:1-17)
 - 1. Salutation (1:1-7)
 - a. Author (1-5)
 - b. Destination (6-7a)
 - c. Greeting (7b)
 - 2. Occasion (1:8-15)
 - 3. Theme (1:16-17)
- B. Need for Divine Righteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - 1. Decline of the Gentile World (1:18-32)
 - 2. Hypocrisy of the Jews or Pagan Moralists (2:1-16)
 - 3. Judgment of the Jews (2:17-3:8)
 - 4. Universal Condemnation (3:9-20)
- C. What is Divine Righteousness (3:21-8:39)
 - 1. Righteousness by Faith Alone (3:21-31)
 - 2. The Basis of Righteousness: God's Promise (4:1-25)
 - a. Abraham's right standing (4:1-5)
 - b. David (4:6-8)
 - c. Abraham's Relation to Circumcision (4:9-12)
 - d. God's Promise to Abraham (4:13-25)
 - 3. The Attainment of Righteousness (5:1-21)
 - a. The subjective aspect: unmerited love, unequalled joy (5:1-5)
 - b. the objective basis: God's amazing love (5:6-11)
 - c. Adam/Christ typology: Adam's offense, God's provision (5:12-21)

4. Divine righteousness must issue in personal righteousness (6:1-7:25)
 - a. Freed from sin (6:1-14)
 - (1) A supposed objection (6:1-2)
 - (2) The meaning of baptism (6:3-14)
 - b. Satan's slave or God's slave: your choice (6:15-23)
 - c. Man's marriage to the Law (7:1-6)
 - d. The Law is good, but sin prevents the good (7:7-14)
 - e. The continuing struggle of good and evil in the believer (7:15-25)
 5. The observable results of divine righteousness (8:1-39)
 - a. Life in the Spirit (8:1-17)
 - b. The redemption of creation (8:18-25)
 - c. The Spirit's constant help (8:26-30)
 - d. The judicial triumph of justification by faith (8:31-39)
- D. The Divine Purpose for All Humanity (9:1-11:32)
1. The election of Israel (9:1-33)
 - a. Real heirs of faith (9:1-13)
 - b. Sovereignty of God (9:14-26)
 - c. God's universal plan includes the heathen (9:27-33)
 2. The salvation of Israel (10:1-21)
 - a. God's righteousness vs. mankind's righteousness (10:1-13)
 - b. God's mercy necessitates messengers, a call for world missions (10:14-18)
 - c. Israel's continued disbelief in Christ (10:19-21)
 3. The failure of Israel (11:1-36)
 - a. The Jewish remnant (11:1-10)
 - b. Jewish jealousy (11:11-24)
 - c. Israel's temporary blindness (11:25-32)
 - d. Paul's outburst of praise (11:33-36)
- E. The Result of the Gift of Divine Righteousness (12:1-15:13)
1. Call to consecration (12:1-2)
 2. The use of gifts (12:3-8)
 3. Believers' relations with other believers (12:9-21)
 4. Relations with the State (13:1-7)
 5. Relations with neighbors (13:8-10)
 6. Relations with our Lord (13:11-14)
 7. Relations with fellow church members (14:1-12)
 8. Our effect on others (12:13-23)
 9. Relations in Christlikeness (15:1-13)
- F. Conclusion (15:14-33)
1. Paul's personal plans (15:14-29)
 2. Requests for prayer (15:30-33)
- G. Postscript (16:1-27)
1. Greetings (16:1-24)
 2. Benediction (16:25-27)

READING CYCLE ONE (see p. vi)

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the entire biblical book at one sitting. State the central theme of the entire book in your own words.

1. Theme of entire book

2. Type of literature (genre)

READING CYCLE TWO (see pp. vi-vii.)

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the entire biblical book a second time at one sitting. Outline the main subjects and express the subject in a single sentence.

1. Subject of first literary unit
2. Subject of second literary unit
3. Subject of third literary unit
4. Subject of fourth literary unit
5. Etc.