

# The Epistle of Romans

**Theme:** The Righteousness of God (1:17)

**Author:** The Apostle Paul (1:1)

**Recipients:** The Church in Rome (1:7)

**Date of Writing:** c. A.D. 57

**Place of Writing:** Corinth (3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey)

**Bearer of the Letter:** Phoebe of Cenchrea (16:1)

**Major Emphases:**

1. The Power of the Gospel
2. Justification by Faith
3. Universal Sinfulness
4. Redemption in Christ
5. The Sovereignty of God
6. The Future of Israel
7. The Consecrated Life

# Romans

“In it [the gospel of Christ] the righteousness of God is revealed” (1:17)						
<b>Introduction</b>	Gentiles are guilty (1:18-32)	Jews are guilty (2:1 – 3:8)	The world is guilty (3:9-20)	Justification is stated (3:21-31)	Justification is illustrated (4)	Justification is explained (5)
	Victory over the flesh (6)	Victory from the Law (7)	Victory in the Spirit (8)	Israel’s past riches (9)	Israel’s present rejection (10)	Israel’s future restoration (11)
	To the Church (12)	To society (13)	To the weaker believer (14:1 – 16:21)		<b>Conclusion</b>	
	Sin	Salvation	Sanctification	Sovereignty	Service	
1:1 – 17	1:18 – 3:20	3:21 – 5:21	6:1 – 8:39	9:1 – 11:36	12:1 – 16:21	16:22 – 27
“The just shall live by faith” (1:17)						

Paul develops a theological masterpiece in the book of Romans as he expounds the doctrine of salvation in all its fullness. The whole world is guilty of sin and worthy of spiritual death, but God has made provision for salvation through the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. This salvation will supernaturally mature through sanctification until we are conformed to the image of Christ. Until then, we are to present ourselves to God as daily living sacrifices in His service.

# Introduction to Romans

## I. Author

Paul the apostle is the author of this letter (Romans 1:1). There is near unanimous support for this view. No voice from the early church was ever raised against it and even modern liberal scholars affirm its authenticity. The letter is Pauline in doctrinal content and literary style, and it contains a number of historical references that are consistent with other known facts of Paul's life.

Formerly Saul (Hebrew name) of Tarsus and persecutor of the church, he was converted on the road to Damascus by the risen Lord Jesus (Acts 9:1-19) and commissioned to the gospel ministry, especially to the Gentiles. Paul (Greek name meaning "small") was the name he utilized beginning in Acts 13:9.

## II. Date of Writing

This letter was written c. A.D. 57 at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey from either Corinth or Cenchrea (Acts 20:1-3; Romans 16:1, 23; 1 Cor. 1:14). Phoebe is the probable deliverer of the letter (16:1) and Tertius the amanuensis or secretary (16:22).

## III. Recipients

The Church at Rome was the original recipients (1:7). The church was made up of Jewish and Gentile converts, probably with a Gentile majority. The founding of the church is uncertain. There is little, if any evidence to support the Roman Catholic position that Peter is the founder. Most likely the church was founded either: (1) by Pentecostal converts (Acts 2:10), and/or (2) Pauline converts from the East who had migrated to Rome for various reasons (no apparent synagogue connection in Rome and the number of Pauline acquaintances listed in chapter 16 support this view). Paul had not been to Rome when he penned this epistle (1:11-15).

#### IV. **Theme**

The righteousness of God which is available to all who are justified by faith in the salvation provided in Jesus Christ (1:16-17, 3:21-26). This summarizes the heart of the letter.

#### V. **Occasion / Purpose**

Paul writes with several purposes in mind, both theological and practical. Having never been to Rome, he wrote to prepare the way for his proposed coming visit and mission to Spain (1:10-15, 15:22-29). He also presents in a systematic fashion the basic doctrines of the Christian faith as they relate to salvation. This is the most theological and systematic of all the Pauline letters. The plan of God as related to Jew and Gentile also is a concern, and receives extensive treatment in chapters 9–11.

#### VI. **Key Verse(s)**

Romans 1:16-17

#### VII. **General Characteristics of the Book**

1. The most systematic of Paul's letters. It reads more like a developed theological essay than a letter.
2. Emphasis on Christian doctrine. The number and importance of the theological themes touched upon are impressive: sin, salvation, grace, faith, righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, death, resurrection, eschatology, and divine sovereignty.
3. Widespread use of OT quotations. Although Paul regularly quotes from the OT in his letters, in Romans the argument is sometimes carried along by such quotations (see especially 3:9-20; chs. 9–11).
4. Deep concern for Israel. Paul writes about her present status, her relationship to the Gentiles, and her final salvation.

## VIII. Content

Paul begins by surveying the spiritual condition of all mankind. He finds Jews and Gentiles alike to be sinners and in need of salvation (1:18–3:20). Salvation has been provided by God through Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross. It is a provision, however, that must be received by faith—a principle by which God has always dealt with mankind, as the example of Abraham shows (3:21–5:21). Since salvation is only the beginning of Christian experience, Paul moves on to show how the believer is freed from sin, law, and death—a provision made possible by his union with Christ in both death and resurrection and by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit (6:1–8:39). Paul then shows that Israel, too, though presently in a state of unbelief, has a place in God’s sovereign redemptive plan. Now she consists of only a remnant, allowing for the conversion of the Gentiles, but the time will come when “all Israel will be saved” (9:1–11:36). The letter concludes with an appeal to the readers to work out their Christian faith in practical ways, both in the church and in the world. None of Paul’s other letters states so profoundly the content of the gospel and its implications for both the present and the future (12:1–16:21).

## IX. Observations of Interest

1. Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire and therefore the most strategic city for Christian missions. Population: estimated at over 4,000,000.
2. Nero (A.D. 54–68) was reigning as emperor in his early and more sane days.
3. Romans is the longest of Paul’s letters, thus the reason it heads the Pauline corpus in our New Testament.
4. Paul quotes from the OT in this letter more than in all the other Pauline letters together. There are at least 61 direct quotations from 14 different books. Psalms and Isaiah are the most frequently quoted.
5. This book is often called Paul’s *magnum opus* (major or ultimate work). Martin Luther (1483–1546) called it “the masterpiece of the New Testament.”

## **An Outline of Romans**

Major Theme: The Righteousness of God

Key Text: “The just shall live by faith” (1:17)

Introduction — 1:1-17

- I. SIN — Righteousness Demanded (1:18 – 3:20)
  1. The Gentiles are guilty – 1:18-32
  2. The Jews are guilty – 2:1–3:8
  3. The whole world is guilty – 3:9-20
- II. SALVATION—Righteousness Declared (3:21 – 5:21)
  1. Justification is stated – 3:21-31
  2. Justification is illustrated in Abraham – 4
  3. Justification is explained in Adam – 5
- III. SANCTIFICATION—Righteousness Developed (6 – 8)
  1. Victory over the flesh – 6
  2. Liberty from the Law – 7
  3. Security in the Spirit – 8
- IV. SOVEREIGNTY—Righteousness Declined (9 – 11)
  1. Israel’s past riches – 9
  2. Israel’s present rejection – 10
  3. Israel’s future restoration – 11
- V. SERVICE—Righteousness Demonstrated (12:1 – 15:13)
  1. In the church body – 12
  2. In society – 13
  3. Toward the weaker believer – 14:1 – 16:21

Conclusion — 16:22 – 16:27

## **Biblical Facts Concerning Sodomy, Lesbianism, and Homosexuality As Taught in Romans 1 and the Whole of Scripture**

1. It is sin, not sickness (cf. Gen. 18:20ff; Lev. 18:22, 29; 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32; I Cor. 6:9; I Tim. 1:10; Jude 7)
2. It is the ultimate manifestation of a society turned from God.
3. It is wrong by nature's standards.
4. It leads to rampant sin in other areas.
5. It is inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle.
6. It can be forgiven and conquered.
7. Saved homosexuals should be accepted.
8. Lost homosexuals should be loved and witnessed to.

### **Biblical References to Homosexuality**

1. Sodomy (Gen. 19:4-10; Deut. 23:17-18; I Kings 14:24, 15:11-12; II Kings 23:7)
2. Abomination (Lev. 18:22; Deut. 22:5)
3. Vile affections (Rom. 1:26-27)
4. Burning with lust (Rom. 1:27)
5. Dishonoring the body (Rom. 1:24)
6. Wickedness (Gen. 13:13, 14:7; Judges 19:23)
7. Violating nature (Rom. 1:26)
8. Shameful lust (Rom. 1:27)
9. Lusting for strange flesh (Jude 7)
10. Filthy dreamers (Jude 7-8)
11. Abusers of themselves (I Cor. 6:9)
12. Effeminate (I Cor. 6:9)
13. Defilers of themselves (I Tim. 1:9-10)
14. Inordinate affections (Col. 3:5-6)
15. Reprobate (Rom. 1:28)

# **The Essentials and Excellence of Christian Salvation**

## ***Romans 3:21-31***

- I. God has given the **revelation** of His salvation (3:21-23)
  1. The Righteousness of God is Revealed (vs. 21-33)
  2. The Requirement of Faith is Revealed (vs. 22)
  3. The Reality of Sin is Revealed (vs. 23)
  
- II. God has given the **reasoning** of His salvation (3:24-26)
  1. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Justification (vs. 24)
  2. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Redemption (vs. 24)
  3. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Satisfaction (vs. 25)
  4. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves a Demonstration (vs. 25-26)
  
- III. God has given the **results** of His salvation (3:27-31)
  1. It results in Humility (vs. 27-28)
  2. It results in Unity (vs. 29-30)
  3. It results in Continuity (vs. 31)



## **“Precious Promises of our Powerful God”**

**(Romans 8:27-39)**

- I.     We have the promise of His prayers                     8:27, 34
  - 1.     The Spirit prays for us 8:27
  - 2.     The Son prays for us 8:34
  
- II.    We have the promise of His providence               8:28
  - 1.     It is a certain promise (we know).
  - 2.     It is a comprehensive promise (all things).
  - 3.     It is a comforting promise (work together for good)
  - 4.     It is a Christian promise (those who love God)
  
- III.   We have the promise of His perfection               8:29-30
  - 1.     We are predestined to perfection, 8:29
  - 2.     We are called to perfection, 8:30
  - 3.     We are justified for perfection, 8:30
  - 4.     We are glorified for perfection, 8:30
  
- IV.    We have the promise of His provisions               8:31-34
  - 1.     He is our helper 8:31
  - 2.     He is our provider 8:32
  - 3.     He is our defender 8:33
  - 4.     He is our mediator 8:34
  
- V.     We have the promise of His presence                   8:35-39
  - 1.     No problem can separate us from His love 8:35
  - 2.     No persecution can separate us from His love 8:35-37
  - 3.     No power can separate us from His love 8:38-39
  - 4.     No person can separate us from His love 8:38

**A Call to Total Commitment:  
Living Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ**

**Romans 12:1-2**

- I. God's Call is to Consecration or Complete Commitment 12:1
  - 1. It is spiritual
  - 2. It is volitional
  - 3. It is total
  - 4. It is sacrificial
  - 5. It is moral
  - 6. It is worshipful
  
- II. God's Call Involves Transformation or Complete Change 12:2
  - 1. You must reject the pressure to conform outwardly
  - 2. You must accept the power which changes inwardly
  
- III. God's Call Includes Satisfaction or Complete Contentment 12:2
  - 1. God's will is proven
  - 2. God's will is pleasing
  - 3. God's will is perfect



## A Survey of the Thirteen Epistles of Paul



Book	No. of Chapters	Theme	Place Written	Date Written	Recipients
Romans	16	The Righteousness of God	Corinth	Winter 57	Beloved of God in Rome, called to be saints (1:1)
1 Corinthians	16	Solving Divisions and Disorders	Ephesus	56 – 57	Church of God at Corinth, those sanctified in Christ Jesus (1:2)
2 Corinthians	13	The Ministry of Reconciliation	Macedonia	56 – 57	Church of God at Corinth with all the saints in Achaia (1:1)
Galatians	6	Freedom in Christ	Antioch (?)	48 – 49 or 55 – 57	Churches of Galatia (1:2)
Ephesians	6	The Church: The Body of Christ	Rome	60 – 63	Saints of Ephesus, faithful in Christ Jesus (1:1)
Philippians	4	Joyful Christian Living	Rome	60 – 63	Saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi with the bishops and deacons (1:1)
Colossians	4	The Cosmic Christ	Rome	60 – 63	Saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse (1:2)
1 Thessalonians	5	The Coming of Christ	Corinth	51 – 52	Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)
2 Thessalonians	3	The Day of the Lord	Corinth	51 – 52	Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)
1 Timothy	6	Pastoral Advice	Macedonia (?)	62 – 66	Timothy, a true son in the faith (1:2)
2 Timothy	4	A Farewell Word of Encouragement	Rome	66 – 67	Timothy, a beloved son (1:2)
Titus	3	A Christian Conduct Manual	Macedonia (?)	63 – 66	Titus, a true son in our common faith (1:4)
Philemon	1	Receiving a Slave as a Brother	Rome	60 – 63	Philemon, our beloved friend and fellow laborer (1:1)



# The Pauline Epistles in Historical Perspective



Acts 13:1-14:28

Acts 15:36-18:22

Acts 18:23-21:17

Acts 28:30-31

1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey  
Galatia

Acts 15  
Jerusalem Council

2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey  
Macedonia  
Achaia  
Greece

3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey  
Asia

Trials

1<sup>st</sup> Roman Imprisonment  
60 – 63  
Rome

4<sup>th</sup> Missionary Journey  
63 – 67

2<sup>nd</sup> Roman Imprisonment and Martyrdom  
67 – 68  
Rome

A.D. 70 Destruction of Jerusalem; continue scattering and growth of the church

A.D. 48

49

50

53

57

60

63

67

68

95

Galatians  
Place: Antioch  
Date: 48 – 49(?)

1 Thessalonians  
Place: Corinth  
Date: 51 – 52

2 Thessalonians  
Place: Corinth  
Date: 51 – 52

1 Corinthians  
Place: Ephesus  
Date: 56 – 57

2 Corinthians  
Place: Macedonia  
Date: 56 – 57

Galatians  
Place: Antioch  
Date: 55 – 57

Romans  
Place: Corinth  
Date: 57(?)

Ephesians  
Place: Rome  
Date: 60 – 63

Colossians  
Place: Rome  
Date: 60 – 63

Philemon  
Place: Rome  
Date: 60 – 63

Philippians  
Place: Rome  
Date: 60 – 63

(End of Acts)

1 Timothy  
Place: Macedonia  
Date: 62 – 66

Titus  
Place: Macedonia  
Date: 62 – 66

2 Timothy  
Place: Rome  
Date: 66 – 67