



Overview for Romans

Author: Paul the Apostle

To Whom Written: The Church at Rome

Purpose: Paul's purpose was to introduce himself to this group of believers whom he had never met and to systematically explain the plan of salvation: the facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the relationship between Christ and the Law, and that justification by faith is offered to Jew and Gentile alike through Jesus Christ. He also desired to enlist the support of the Roman Christians for his next missionary outreach, as Rome would be the natural base for such an endeavor because of its strategic location and political importance.

Key Verses: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17).

Date Written: Composed in approximately A.D. 57, the epistle was dictated to Tertius (Romans 16:22) and delivered by Phoebe, a deaconess who lived in Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth (Romans 16:1).

Setting: Paul wrote the Epistle from Corinth to the Christians at Rome at the conclusion of his third missionary journey and culmination of his ministry in the eastern area of the Mediterranean. He was preparing to travel to Jerusalem and deliver relief money which had been gathered for impoverished believers in that city. Once his mission there was complete, he intended to visit Rome as he began a trip that would inaugurate his missionary effort toward the west and reach the end of the known world: Spain.

There is no Biblical indicator of the origin of the church at Rome, but it possibly sprang from the testimony of individuals who had been witnesses to Pentecost in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:9-11). At the time of this writing, neither Paul nor any of the other

Apostles had visited Rome. Since travel was common during that era, many people had migrated to the capital city from around the Roman Empire, and the church was comprised of both Gentile and Jewish Christians (see Romans 1:13 and 4:1).

Rome was a powerful, wealthy, and influential city, and many of its philosophies and practices were in opposition to the Christian faith, so the believers there faced many challenges. Even within the church there were differing perspectives, for while Gentile Christians came from a background of idolatry and unbelief, those with a Jewish heritage were rooted in the Mosaic Law. Paul wanted those of both backgrounds to understand that God's purpose was for all nationalities to be united in the Body of Christ.

Special Features: Paul's epistle to the Romans is his most theological and organized presentation of the Gospel, and is the longest of the Pauline epistles.

Summary: Paul began his epistle by stating unequivocally that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of what God had "promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Romans 1:2)—the God-ordained summation of the symbolism of the ancient rituals and of the glowing anticipations of prophets through the ages. The Apostle incorporated numerous Old Testament examples such as Adam, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David as illustrations of the timeless principles of God's working with man.

Themes developed in Romans include the righteousness of God, the unrighteousness of all mankind, the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, justification through faith in Christ, sanctification as the remedy for the struggle with inbred sin, and the victorious life in the Spirit. The Apostle also reviewed Israel's unbelief and rejection of God, and the Gentiles' place in God's overall plan of redemption. He explained the fruits of God's righteousness that were to be exemplified in the lives of believers, and concluded his epistle with an outline of his personal plans and some final exhortations and greetings.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.

Jesus crucified; Pentecost; Church begun A.D. 30	Stephen martyred; Paul's conversion 35			Peter's ministry in Asia Minor 47	Jerusalem council 50	PAUL IMPRISONED (CAESAREA) 57-59	PAUL'S HOUSE ARREST 60-62	James (Jesus' brother) martyred 62	Peter & Paul martyred 67/68?	Jude martyred 72						
	PAUL IN CILICIA & SYRIA 35-46			PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS 46-48	50-52	53-57	Paul's trip to Rome 59			Rome destroys Jerusalem 70						
			Holy Spirit falls on Gentiles 41	James (the Apostle) martyred; Peter imprisoned 44	Galatians; James 49	1 & 2 Thessalonians 51/52	1 & 2 Corinthians 55	Romans 57	St. Mark 58/60	Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon 60	Philippians 61	St. Matthew; St. Luke 61/64	1 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter 64	Jude 65	Acts; 2 Peter; 2 Timothy 66/68	Hebrews 68

Outline

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- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
 - A. Greetings to the Romans (1:1-7)
 - B. Paul's concern for the believers in Rome (1:8-15)
 - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. God's plan of salvation (1:18—11:36)
 - A. The need: the human race is universally guilty (1:18—3:20)
 - B. God's remedy (3:21—8:39)
 - C. Illustrated by Israel's history (9:1—11:36)
- III. The results of salvation (12:1—15:13)
 - A. Live holy toward brethren (12:1-21)
 - B. Live holy under government (13:1-7)
 - C. Live holy in society (13:8-14)
 - D. Liberty: don't judge (14:1-12)
 - E. Liberty: don't offend (14:13-23)
 - F. Live holy by strengthening others (15:1-6)
 - G. Live holy in fellowship (15:7-13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14—16:27)
 - A. Paul's purpose for the letter (15:14-21)
 - B. Travel plans (15:22-33)
 - C. Greetings to friends in Rome (16:1-16)
 - D. Warnings (16:17-20)
 - E. Greetings from believers in Corinth (16:21-23)
 - F. Final benediction (16:24-27)