

## Romans Introduction

### What do you know about Romans?

### What has been your experience with this book?

My experience . . .

- Teenager – I saw it as one of the most confusing books
- College – It became a source for evangelism (Romans Road)  
Romans 3:23 . . . 6:23 . . . 5:8 . . . 10:9
- Seminary – I learned WHY it was written
- Pastoral – I've never taught it . . . It is still daunting

### Testimonies

**Augustine** tells how Romans 13:13–14 was used by God to convert him. As he struggled with sin and the claims of Christ, Augustine came to a solitary place. He cried out in anguish for his sin, a conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit. Quickly, he heard a child saying or singing (Take Up and Read!!). He took this as a divine command, went and found his Bible (=copy of Romans) and read

**<sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.**

**Martin Luther** also found salvation in Romans—Romans 1:16–17. In his torment over sin, he came to the beginning of Paul's words and read . . .

**<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

He would go on to say: "Romans is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."<sup>1</sup>

It was reading these words and the rest of Luther's Preface to Romans, that **John Wesley** was converted, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt did trust Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." (Wesley's Journal, May 24, 1738).

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle to the Romans," in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (ed. Timothy F. Lull and William R. Russell; Philadelphia: Fortress, 2012), 76.

## What do you need to know when you read a book?

1. Author
  - a. Who
  - b. When
  - c. Where
  
2. Audience
  - a. Who
  - b. When
  - c. Where
  
3. Aim
  - a. Why
  - b. How
  - c. What
  
4. Big Picture of the Book

## Author: Who is Writing?

1. A Servant / Slave of Christ Jesus
  2. Called to be an apostle
  3. Set apart for the gospel of God
- When did God enslave Paul? Call him to be an apostle?

**Acts 9, 22, 26** – Recount his conversion

**Galatians 1–2; 1 Timothy 1:12–15** – Also recount his conversion

**Read Acts 9:1–18**

- **What do we learn?**

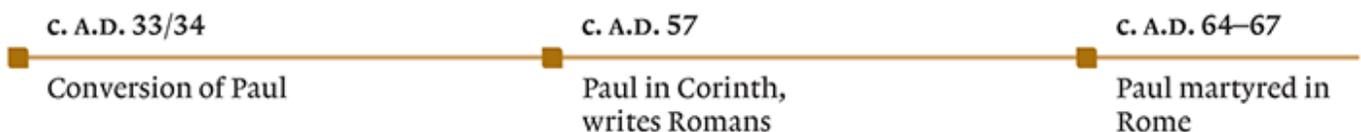
- (1) An Insolent Opponent of the Church / Christ
- (2) A Brilliant Student of the Law and Rising Star among the Jews
- (3) A Sinner Saved by Christ . . . when Christ came and confronted him
- (4) This advocate for Israel was called to be a gentile to the nations

He received his salvation and his calling in the same moment!

Paul's experience as a Jew sent to the Gentiles will be critical for Romans.

**When did Paul write this letter** – immediately after his conversion, later, when?

- When was Paul converted . . . 33/34 AD
- What happened next . . . Ministered in Syria / Cilicia (Gal. 1:21) + 14 years in Arabia
- First missionary journey (Acts 13–14) . . . 46–47 AD
- Second missionary journey (Acts 16–18) . . . 48/49–51 AD
- Third missionary journey (Acts 19–20) . . . 52–57 AD
- Arrival in Corinth (Macedonia) . . . 57 AD



**What does the date tell you about Paul?**

- This is the mature work of Paul
- It is not as though Paul's later letters corrected his earlier letters – false belief!
- But this letter does embody the gospel Paul proclaimed from the beginning
  - 1 Thessalonians 1:5–6
  - Romans 1:1
  - 2 Timothy 1:8
- **Why does Paul preach the same gospel throughout?**
  - Galatians 1:11–12 – For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. <sup>12</sup> For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Order of Paul's Letters**

Galatians	49	
1–2 Thessalonians	51–52	
1–2 Corinthians	55–56	
Romans	57	
Ephesians	62	
Philippians	62–63	
Colossians	62	
Philemon	62	
Pastoral Epistles	65–67	

**Where is Paul Writing?**

- From Corinth – Romans 16:1 . . . Phoebe, the letter carrier, is from Cenchræe
- From Corinth – Romans 16:23 . . . If Gaius is same as 1 Corinthians 1:14
- Two early MSS have notes affirming the Corinthian provenance (ESVSB)

## **Audience: Who is Receiving? What do we know about them?**

### **1. “Church” at Rome?**

- a. “To all those in Rome” – **why doesn’t he say church?**
- b. Not an individual . . . **What application does this have?**

### **2. What do we know about this church? – Romans 1:5–7**

- a. Composed of Gentiles and Jews
- b. In Rome
- c. Loved by God and called to be saints (holy)

### **3. Paul has never met them – Romans 1:8–15**

### **4. How do we know they have received the true gospel?**

- **Acts 2:10** – When visitors from Rome received Spirit and returned home
  - There was in AD 33/34 a strong Jewish population in Rome. Some of these became first Christians. However, there were also Gentiles (proselytes?) from Rome who believed.
  - These would have known the OT; others might not have known.
- No evidence that Peter founded the church

### **5. What do we know about church in Rome in AD 57?**

- **Late 40s** – Claudius issues a decree “expelling Jews from Rome because of their constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus” (Seutonius) – **Chrestus, Christus?**
- **Acts 18:2** – Christian and non-Christian Jews were sent out  
Instantly, the mixed church became entirely Gentile . . . and remained that way for years.
- **AD 54** – Claudius died. Under Nero (ironically) . . . Jews were permitted to return.
- **AD 57** – Paul writes a letter to a church struggling to find unity because of Jew / Gentile divisions
- **AD 48** – Jerusalem Council may or may not have been applied to Rome when Jews were there

From these facts . . . what do begin to know or suspect about WHY Paul is writing?

## Why Does Paul Write?

### 1. Personal and theological introduction

- He has not met the church . . . yet
- He knows many people there

### 2. Defense of the gospel

- 3:8 – Some people slanderous say . . .
- 3:31; 6:1–2, 15 – “by no means”

### 3. Evangelism and Missions

- To preach the gospel (1:15) – **What does this tell you about the gospel?**
- Paul has finished his work in Med. (15:19, 23) – **What does this tell you about Paul?**
- To take the gospel to Spain (15:24) – **What does this tell you about the gospel?**

### 4. Fundraising

- Paul has been gathering funds for Jerusalem (15:25; cf. 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9)
- Paul seeks their help (15:24, 28)

### 5. Prayer

- Paul asks for their prayers (15:25–27)
- Acts 20–28 shows God’s answer, as Paul arrives in Rome – not in the way he expected but in the way God intended

### 6. Unity in the Gospel

- The book is the largest exposition of the gospel
- The book is written to bring unity between Jews and Gentiles in the church

**Romans 14:–15:13** is written to bring unity to Jews and Gentiles.

Paul is writing to apply the gospel to the church in Rome.

## How is he writing?

### 1. The book is all about the gospel

**Romans 1:1–7**

**Romans 1:16–17**

**Romans 16:25–27**

### 2. The gospel is all about the righteousness of God

*Justification and Justified; Righteous and Righteousness all come from same word*

**1:17** – R. of God is revealed . . . in the gospel (Righteousness as a gift)

**3:5** – R. of God is also seen in his judgment of sin

**3:21, 22, 25, 26** – R. of God manifested apart from Law and Gospel but testified by them; the gift of R. of God comes through faith; the gift of Christ displayed R. of God; R. of God seen now, unlike before (in the OT)

**4:3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 22** – R. of God reckoned to the believer (Gen. 15:6); righteousness is found apart from works (Ps. 32); circumcision is a sign post-righteousness; faith was the means receiving God's righteousness

**5:17, 21** – righteousness is as free gift; grace is greater than sin, resulting in righteousness

**6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20** – present your members/bodies as instruments of righteousness; those in Christ are slaves to righteousness; righteousness leads to sanctification

**8:10** – the Spirit is life because of righteousness [= life results from the declaration "just"]

**9:30, 31** – righteousness by works fails; righteousness comes by works

**10:3, 4, 5, 6, 10** – those who seek their own righteousness reject (or prove ignorance) of God's righteousness; righteousness is a matter of the heart

**14:17** – righteousness is a characteristic of God's kingdom

## Righteousness is . . .

1. An attribute of God seen in his salvation (1:17) and judgment (3:5)
2. A gift from God (1:17; 5:17)
3. A result of faith (4:13; 9:30; 10:6, 10)
4. A way of life (6:13)

## The righteousness of God is what unifies the church of Christ<sup>2</sup>

The Gospel as the Revelation of the Righteousness of God ([1:1–17](#))

- A. Salutation: the gospel concerning God's Son ([1:1–7](#))
- B. Thanksgiving: prayer for an apostolic visit ([1:8–15](#))
- C. Theme: the gospel of the righteousness of God ([1:16–17](#))

### **FAITH**

God's Righteousness in His Wrath against Sinners ([1:18–3:20](#))

- A. The unrighteousness of the Gentiles ([1:18–32](#))
- B. The unrighteousness of the Jews ([2:1–3:8](#))
- C. The unrighteousness of all people ([3:9–20](#))

The Saving Righteousness of God ([3:21–4:25](#))

- A. God's righteousness in the death of Jesus ([3:21–26](#))
- B. Righteousness by faith for Jews and Gentiles ([3:27–31](#))
- C. Abraham as the father of Jews and Gentiles ([4:1–25](#))

### **HOPE**

Hope as a Result of Righteousness by Faith ([5:1–8:39](#))

- Assurance of hope ([5:1–11](#))
  - Hope in Christ's triumph over Adam's sin ([5:12–21](#))
    - The triumph of grace over the power of sin ([6:1–23](#))
    - The triumph of grace over the power of the law ([7:1–25](#))
  - Life in the Spirit ([8:1–17](#))
- Assurance of hope ([8:18–39](#))

### **LOVE**

God's Righteousness to Israel and to the Gentiles ([9:1–11:36](#))

- A. God's saving promises to Israel ([9:1–29](#))
- B. Israel's rejection of God's saving promises ([9:30–11:10](#))
- C. God's righteousness in his plan for Jews and Gentiles ([11:11–32](#))
- D. Concluding doxology ([11:33–36](#))

God's Righteousness in Everyday Life ([12:1–15:13](#))

- A. Paradigm for exhortations: total dedication to God ([12:1–2](#))
- B. Marks of the Christian community ([12:3–13:14](#))
- C. A call for mutual acceptance between the strong and the weak ([14:1–15:13](#))

The Extension of God's Righteousness through the Pauline Mission ([15:14–16:23](#))

- A. The establishment of churches among the Gentiles ([15:14–33](#))
- B. Appreciation and greetings to coworkers in the gospel ([16:1–23](#))

Final Summary of the Gospel of the Righteousness of God ([16:25–27](#))

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<sup>2</sup> This outline comes from the ESV Study Bible.

## Key Themes in Romans<sup>3</sup>

1. All people are sinners, therefore all, without exception, need to be saved from their sin. [1:18–3:20; 5:12–19](#)
2. The Mosaic law, though good and holy, cannot counteract the power of sin. [2:12–29; 3:9–20; 5:20; 7:1–25; 9:30–10:8](#)
3. Through the righteousness of God, sin is judged and salvation is provided. [3:21–26; 5:12–19; 6:1–10; 7:1–6; 8:1–4](#)
4. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the former age of redemptive history has passed away and the new age of redemptive history has begun. [1:1–7; 3:21–26; 5:1–8:39](#)
5. The atoning death of Jesus Christ is central to God's plan of salvation. [3:21–26; 4:23–25; 5:6–11, 15–19; 6:1–10; 7:4–6; 8:1–4](#)
6. Justification is by faith alone. [1:16–4:25; 9:30–10:21](#)
7. There is a certain hope of future glory for those who are in Christ Jesus. [5:1–8:39](#)
8. Those who have died with Christ and who enjoy the work of the Holy Spirit are enabled to live a new life. [2:25–29; 6:1–7:6; 8:1–39](#)
9. God is sovereign in salvation; he works all things according to his plan. [9:1–11:36](#)
10. God fulfills his saving promises to both Jews and Gentiles. [1:18–4:25; 9:1–11:36; 15:8–13](#)
11. The grace of the gospel calls Christians to personal holiness, mutual service, good citizenship, and wholehearted neighbor-love in Christ. [12:1–13:14](#)

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<sup>3</sup> This list comes from the ESV Study Bible.