

Outline of Romans

This outline of Romans is intended to assist you as you study God's Word.

The book of Romans is the theological masterpiece of the New Testament. It is placed first in every list of Paul's epistles, although it is not the first written. Perhaps it is because of its role in providing a strong theological foundation for the gospel. Perhaps it is the most logical book to follow Acts as it deals with those in Rome. Perhaps, it is because it is the longest book. But whatever reason, we come first to the book of Romans.

The book of Romans is written by Paul from Corinth, while on his third missionary journey, in about 57 A.D. [His host is Gaius (Romans 16:23), an early convert in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) and he commends to the Romans Phoebe from Cenchrea, a neighboring city of Corinth (Romans 16:1). Further, he is about to go to Jerusalem with an offering (Romans 15:25-26), which he made preparation in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and apparently took in Acts 20:1-3.]

The theme of the book is the righteousness of God. Two out of every five times the Greek word "righteousness," appears in the New Testament, it is in this book (36 out of 92 times), a usage five times that of any other book. The verb "to make righteous" occurs only 40 times in the New Testament, 15 (or three out of every eight) of which are in this book. The book is about the righteousness of God being brought to humanity.

Associated with the righteousness of God are some other concepts. "Sin" is found some 47 times in this book, almost twice as much as any other book. The term "grace" (24 times) is found herein two times as often as in any other New Testament book. While the verbal concept of believing is found more in John (99 times) and Acts (39 times) than in Romans (21 times), the noun "faith" is never found in John but is found in Romans 40 times, more than in any other book (Hebrews 32 times, 24 times in Hebrews 11). The term "gospel" (10 times) is found here more than in any other book.

The book of Romans is a theological masterpiece of logic. After a brief introduction, Paul begins to develop his great argument. He begins with the strongest indictment found in Scripture against humanity, concluding that all are sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. Then he brings in the righteousness of God in the person of Jesus Christ and argues for the imputation of that righteousness to us through faith. Having obtained that righteousness, he then argues that we need to live that righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, in an interlude of three chapters, he explains the relationship between the Jews and the church. Finally, he closes with exhortations on living out the Spirit-filled life. We enter into the book in sin and we come out living in a new kingdom, having a new righteousness, and protected in His love.

But who were the Romans? At this time, no apostle had been to Rome. The church may have been started by believers returning after the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). By 49 B.C., some suspect that the church was causing such a stir among the Jews that it led Rome to expel all Jews. From historical sources we know that the Jews were expelled because of an uprising involving one "Chrestus."

But although His name, which the supreme Father gave Him from the beginning, is known to none but Himself, nevertheless He has one name among the angels, and another among men since He is called Jesus among men: for Christ is not a proper name, but a title of power and dominion; for by this the Jews were accustomed to call their kings. But the meaning of this name must be set forth, on account of the error of the ignorant, who by the

change of a letter are accustomed to call Him Chrestus.

LACTANTIUS (A.D. 260-330) (a rhetorician converted later in life and in his old age taught the son of Constantine)

But the Jews and Christians quickly returned. Apparently, relying on Romans 16, believers from all over the Mediterranean world were going to Rome. By the time of that Paul wrote this book, Priscilla and Aquila who had been exiled from Rome (Acts 18:2) had returned (Romans 16:3). Epaphroditus, who was an early believer from Asia, was there (Romans 16:5). Ephesus was in Asia. Andronicus and Junia, relatives of Paul who were Christians before Paul was, were there (Romans 16:7). Although Paul had never been there, he knew many people who were there.

It appears that by the time this letter was written, Christianity was reaching its way into the upper strata of Roman society. In the year this letter was written, the wife of Aulus Plautius (who had added Britain to the Roman empire 14 years earlier), was accused of embracing a foreign superstition which may well have been Christianity. Archeological evidence shows that in the following century Christianity was widespread in her family. By the time of the first great persecution under Nero in 64 A.D., a Roman secular historian, as well as Christian writers, bear witness to the great number of Christians in Rome.

Paul writes for the purposes of setting forth the gospel, of uniting Jewish and Gentile Christians, and of alerting the Romans to his plans.

Date:

57-58 A.D. Following James (48 A.D.?), Galatians (49 A.D.?), Matthew (52 A.D.?), 1 and 2 Thessalonians (51 A.D.), and 1 and Corinthians (57 A.D.), Romans comes as the last epistle written by Paul prior to his imprisonment. It is written in the winter before Paul goes to Jerusalem and is taken prisoner.

I. Introduction 1:1-17

- A. Salutation 1:1-7
- B. Paul wants to visit 1:8-15
- C. Paul is bold for the gospel 1:16-17

II. The Prevalence of Sin 1:18-3:20

- A. God's wrath is on man's unrighteousness 1:18-19
- B. The steps downward to condemnation
 - 1. Forsaking the true God 1:20-21
 - 2. Transforming God into the cosmic man 1:22-23
 - 3. Serving creation rather than the Creator 1:24-25
 - 4. Followed homosexual perversions 1:26-27
 - 5. Wanting to rid oneself of God 1:28-32
- C. God judges all equally 2:1-16
- D. In fact the Jews, who had the law, stand judged by the law 2:17-24
- E. And circumcision will not save 2:25-29
- F. But the Jews have the advantage of God's words 3:1-8

G. Yet, all are sinners 3:9-20

III. The Provision of Salvation 3:21-4:25

A. God justifies sinners by faith in Jesus 3:21-26

B. This excludes all boasting 3:27-4:8

C. This righteousness comes apart from circumcision 4:9-12

D. This faith-sourced righteousness has its source in the Promise to Abraham 4:13-25

IV. The Promotion of Sanctification 5-8

A. Having been saved, the same faith gives us access to the grace we need for living 5:1-11

B. Grace triumphs over sin 5:12-21

C. Those under grace are not under sin 6:1-14

D. Those under grace should not choose sin 6:15-23

E. We are married to Christ that we might live by the Spirit 7:1-6

F. The problem was not with the law, but me 7:7-12

G. Nothing good dwells in my flesh 7:13-25

H. But now I am free from the flesh that I might live in the Spirit 8:1-17

I. Suffering increases our desire for Christ 8:18-23

J. For we are saved by hope 8:24-25

K. And the Spirit prays for us 8:26-27

L. And we know God works in our lives for good 8:24-30

M. He is for us. 8:31-39

V. The Problem of Separate Peoples 9-11

A. Paul loves for Israel 9:1-5

B. God chooses according to His will 9:6-29

C. But His chosen people stumbled 9:30-33

D. They have a zeal for God, but they are ignorant of God's righteousness 10:1-3

E. Christ provides righteousness to anyone who believes 10:4-13

F. That's why we need to share the gospel. 10:14-17

G. But though they hear, they have rejected the good news 10:18-21

H. Nevertheless, God is not through with Israel 11:1-6

I. Israel, as a nation, is temporarily blinded 11:7-27

J. They are still loved by God 11:28-36

VI. The Practice of Service 12-15:13

A. Prove the Will of God by surrendering all 12:1-2

- B. Serve one another with the gifts God has given 12:3-8
- C. Live as Christians 12:9-21
- D. Submit to governments 13:1-7
- E. Love each other 13:8-10
- F. Put on Jesus Christ 13:11-14
- G. On matters of conscience, have toleration 14:1-23
- H. Please your neighbor for his good 15:1-4
- I. Pursue unity 15:5-13

VII. Conclusion 15:14-16:27

- A. Paul's position as an apostle to the Gentiles 15:14-21
 - B. Paul's plan to visit Rome on the way to Spain. 15:22-32
 - C. Paul's greetings to the church 16:1-16
 - D. Avoid those who cause divisions 16:17-20
 - E. Greetings from Paul's associates 16:21-24
 - F. Closing Benediction
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Key Idea: God's Righteousness Comes by Faith in Jesus

Key Passage: 1:16-17

Key Lesson: We must live by faith.