THE BOOK OF ROMANS

What is It?

Romans is the first epistle (letter) in the New Testament, and it's the first epistle by the apostle Paul. It's often said that Romans sums up Christianity.

Who, What, When, Where and WHY

Who – Paul (formerly Saul) self-identifies as the author of this letter in the first verse, though he later allows a scribe, Tertius, to admit to recording Paul's words.

What – In Romans, Paul summarizes the entire message of the Gospel: that all humans are sinful and need salvation, including the Jews. He further explains that the needed justification comes from Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross and is acquired through faith alone. This is made possible through the work of Holy Spirit and results in our freedom from sin, the law and death.

When – The Epistle of Romans was probably written in the first half of 57 AD.

Where – Most experts believe Paul wrote Romans while he was on his third missionary journey, mostly likely from Corinth. He wrote this epistle to the young church developing in Rome.

Why – Many experts think Romans was written to help unify the church in Rome; a church that was experiencing division, not the least of which was between gentiles and Jews. Short of his own presence, which was not possible at the time since Paul was committed to seeing that the collection for the poverty-ridden Christians in Jerusalem got there, nothing unifies better than a personal communication stating shared beliefs. This epistle becomes one of the primary sources for the Reformation as it inspired Martin Luther 1500 years later.

Reading Advice

To read Romans in one week you will need to read 2 to 3 chapters a day (16 chapters/6 days = 2.7 per day). We recommend 10 minutes a day, Monday through Saturday. If you include a Sunday reading, then you can reduce the chapters and/or minutes per day a little. Even if you have never read through Romans completely before, this book will be very familiar to you – these verses are used so often in church - so you should be able to read it through quickly.