

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS (Romans 1-16)

The Righteousness of God Revealed

PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 7/28/2024

I. Title | II. Author | III. Purpose, Place, & Time of Writing | IV. Background | V. Theme |
VI. Key Phrases & Words | VII. Divisions & Contents | VIII. Conclusion

INTRO: **In the summer of A.D. 386**, a young man wept in the backyard of a friend. He knew that his life of sin and rebellion against God was killing him, but somehow couldn't find the strength to make a real decision for Jesus Christ... **until he read a passage from Romans: (Rom 13:13-14)** – *“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”* – At that moment, the power of God's Word cut him to the heart, and **ST. AUGUSTINE** found faith to entrust his whole life to Jesus Christ.

CHRYSOSTOM, one of the early church fathers, **also found this to be so true** that he had the epistle read to him twice a week!

Much later, in the **16th century**, another important man was moved by what he learned in the book of Romans. **MARTIN LUTHER** concluded that the epistle to the Romans is, *‘the chief part of the New Testament, and truly the purest gospel’*. He continued: *‘It 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’*.

These **“MEN OF OLD”** obviously had been **GREATLY IMPACTED by this letter to the Romans**. And so have countless others...Why? Because the book of Romans exposes the Gospel truth about sinful man and his NEED for God's Saving Grace through Jesus Christ!

Unfortunately, many have forsaken the richness of this epistle, along with the rest of God's infallible truths that are contained in the Bible.

“If you understand Romans, you will have the key to understanding the rest of the Bible. Better still, you will have the secret of successful Christian living” – Warren Wiersbe.

I. TITLE: The name of the letter comes from its original recipients: the members of the **Church of Rome**, the capital of the Roman Empire **(1:7)** – **Latin: *Pros Romaious***

II. AUTHOR: The epistle is attributed to the apostle **PAUL**, written to the Roman Church.

III. PURPOSE OF WRITING

A. Primary Purpose: Because the believers there lacked apostolic instruction, he desired... To **PRESENT the PURE GOSPEL MESSAGE** to the believers in Rome!

- Paul knew that the **Judaizing teachers** which had disrupted churches in **Antioch, Corinth and Galatia** were likely to make their way to Rome. – So, **to PREVENT the spread of false teachings**, Paul writes this letter.

B. Secondary Purpose: In view of his personal plans, Paul wrote to **INTRODUCE HIMSELF** to a Church that he had never visited. – Paul expresses in this epistle that he had for some time *planned to preach the gospel at Rome (1:13) and from there go on to Spain (15:22).*

- He hoped to visit Rome: to **EDIFY** the believers' (1:11), to **PREACH** the Gospel (1:15), and to **get to know** the Roman Christians... (*What are our motives when visiting churches?*)
- So that **THEY** could: **Encourage him** (1:12; 15:32), **Help him** with his planned ministry in Spain (15:28) (*Be Mutually edifying... members of the body are to build each other up!*)

C. The Letter was NOT Corrective! – Unlike some of Paul's other epistles (e.g., 1 & 2 Cor., Gal.), he was not correcting bad theology or rebuking ungodly living. – This infant Roman Church was experiencing a time of relative peace (*no persecution yet*). Paul felt that they needed a strong dose of basic **DOCTRINAL truths along with PRACTICAL instructions** to help them remain as a healthy church. (*Sound Doctrine is essential for every church*) (**tt. 2 Tim 4:2-4**)

IV. PLACE OF WRITING: Paul wrote the letter from **CORINTH**; this is evident from the *greetings of Gaius*, who lived at Corinth (16:23; 1 Cor 1:14), and of *Erastus*, who had settled down there (16:23; 2 Tim 4:20). Additionally, *Phoebe*, who apparently accompanied the epistle (16:1-2), was from the church at Cenchrea, a "suburb" of Corinth.

V. TIME OF WRITING: The apostle wrote the letter towards the close of his third missionary journey, most likely **A.D. 56**, as he prepared to leave for Palestine with an offering for the poor believers in the Jerusalem Church (**Rom 15:25, 26; Acts 20:16; 24:17**).

VI. BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AT ROME

A. The FOUNDER: The N.T. is unclear as to "who" started of the Church in Rome. *However,*

1. It is possible that visitors to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension were among the 3000 saved and **later took the gospel home (Acts 2:10).**
2. Or it could be that among those dispersed following Stephen's death, were **some that went to Rome** and preached the gospel there (**Acts 8:1-4**). (*Fulfilling the commission!*)

B. The FIRST MENTION of Christians: **AQUILA** and **PRICILLA** were **the first Christians mentioned** who along with all Jews, **were expelled from Rome by Claudius** and were found by Paul at Corinth during his second journey (**Acts 18:1-2**).

- After traveling with Paul to Ephesus and working with the Church there (**Acts 18:18-19, 24-26; 1 Cor 16:19**), **we find them back at Rome** and hosting a church in their house (Rom 16:3-5).

C. The Church STRUCTURE – From the greetings given by Paul in chapter sixteen, it appears that there were **several churches in Rome** meeting in **VARIOUS HOMES (16:5,14,15)**. – The names of individuals suggest that the Christians were primarily Gentiles, with a smaller number of Jews.

- The **REPUTATION** of the Christians in Rome was widespread; both their **faith (1:8)** and **obedience (16:19)** were well known.

VII. THEME: The **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of God in the **GOSPEL** of Jesus Christ. *As stated in ...*

Romans 1:16-17

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

- A. In these two verses Paul states his CONFIDENCE in the Gospel and the reasons for it.
- B. The bulk of his epistle is devoted to explaining WHY and HOW the **Gospel of Christ is God's power to save those who believe.**

VIII. KEY PHRASES & WORDS

- A. **Righteousness – 38 times:** The main emphasis is on the Righteousness of God!
- B. **FAITH – 38 times:** The emphasis here is that we EXERCISE faith in God and his plan of salvation.
- C. **Justification – 16 times:** The action of declaring or making one righteous before God, is **IMPUTED** only to those who believe in Jesus Christ.
- D. **LAW – 77 times:** The emphasis here is that we are dead to the law, and *alive in Jesus Christ*, according to the Spirit of God.
- E. **Grace – 22 times:** God's **UNMERITED FAVOR** towards mankind. (*Poured out on all races!*)

VIII. DIVISIONS & CONTENTS: THE DIVISION OF ROMANS: (*J. MacArthur Study Bible – Adapted*)

- I. **INTRODUCTION & GREETINGS (1:1-15)**
- II. **THEME (1:16-17)** - *The Gospel of Righteousness Revealed*
- III. **CONDEMNATION (1:18-3:20): THE NEED OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - a. Unrighteous Gentiles (1:18-2:16)
 - b. Unrighteous Jews (2:17-3:8)
 - c. Unrighteous Mankind (3:9-20)
- IV. **JUSTIFICATION (3:21-5:21): THE PROVISION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - a. Justification Stated (3:21-31)
 - b. Justification Illustrated in Abraham (4:1-25)
 - c. Justification Imputed In Christ (5:1-11)
 - d. Justification Explained in Adam (5:12-21)
- V. **SANCTIFICATION (6:1-8:39): THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - a. Freedom from Sin pt.1 (6:1-10)

- b. Freedom from Sin pt.2 (6:10-23)
- c. Freedom from the Law (7:1-25)
- d. Freedom from Death pt.1 (8:1-11)
- e. Freedom from Death pt.2 (8:12-17)
- f. Freedom from Death pt.3 (8:18-30)
- g. Freedom from Death pt.4 (8:30-39)

VI. RESTORATION (9:1-11:36): THE PROVISION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR ISRAEL

- a. Israel's Past Rejection (9:1-33)
- b. Israel's Present Rejection (10:1-21)
- c. Israel's Prospective Restoration (11:1-36)

VII. APPLICATION (12:1-15:13): THE BEHAVIOR OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- a. The Believer's Relation to God (12:1-2)
- b. The Believer's Relation to God's Gifts (12:3-8)
- c. The Believer's Relation to Others (12:9-21)
- d. The Believer's Relation to Society (13:1-14)
- e. The Believer's Relation to Weaker Brethren pt. 1 (14:1-22)
- f. The Believer's Relation to Weaker Brethren pt. 2 (15:1-13)

VIII. CONCLUSION (15:14-16:27): Paul's Relationships, Instructions, and Benediction

- a. Paul's Relationship with Gentiles (15:14-32)
- b. Paul's Relationship with Christians (16:1-27)

◆ THE CONTENTS OF ROMANS

1. After the introductory matters, Paul demonstrates the **UNIVERSAL SINFULNESS** of Mankind and the need for divine righteousness (1:18-3:20).
2. He then sets forth the **JUSTIFYING RIGHTEOUSNESS** that God has provided for every believer through the redemptive work of Christ (3:21-5:11).
3. Paul also combats **THREE OBJECTIONS** against God's way of salvation through the work of Jesus Christ on the basis of faith alone.
 - a. **First Objection** presumes That men can be saved and still can continue in sin. This is untrue because of the believer's union with Christ into a new moral life (Rom 6:1-14)
 - b. **Second Objection** presumes That Deliverance from the law releases one from moral obligations. This is impossible since the believer takes a new and higher obligation, devoting himself to the law of God.

c. **Third Objection** presumes *That God's law is now evil because of justifying grace*. This is simply not true, because, as we shall see in **(7:7-25)**, the law's inability to save is not because it is evil, but that man is incapable of keeping it.

4. Personal Application:

a. Romans ultimately teaches us that we should not trust in **OURSELVES** for salvation, but in Christ alone **(Chs. 1-5)** – *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* **(Rom 5:8)**

b. It also teaches us that we should **IMITATE** the faith of Abraham **(ch. 4)** – *“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”* **(Rom 4:20-21)**

c. An important truth is given in **(6:1-7:25)**, which teaches that **we are to DIE TO SIN daily**. – *“Likewise, you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* **(Rom 6:11)**

d. The **Practical Climax** of this entire book is found in **(8:1-17)**, which teaches the importance of **WALKING IN THE SPIRIT**. – *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit* **(Rom 8:1)**

e. The latter part of chapter **(8:18-39)** expounds on... *Our hope in the FUTURE GLORY, assuring that God will work out all things for His good!* **(v.28)**

As we venture into this letter over the next few months, I pray that it will impact you as it has so many others.

◆ LET'S PRAY!