

Romans Introduction and Background

Scriptures:

Acts 7:54-58 -

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 13:9 - Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him...

Acts 23:11 - But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Habakkuk 2:6 - Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.

Acts 18:12-13 - When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, 13 saying, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

Notes:

Romans has been one of the most influential books of the Bible. Many great men of God were either saved through this book or it was the catalyst for great spiritual awakening. Names like St. Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and John Bunyan, the writer of Pilgrim's Progress.

"Apart altogether from the question of inspiration, we may think of it [Romans] as a treatise of transcendent, intellectual power, putting to shame the most brilliant philosophies ever conceived in the minds of men." (Ironside, 2006) page 11

Paul's first appearance in the Bible is at the stoning of the first martyr of the church, Stephen (Acts 7:54-58). There he is named Saul, but his name is changed after his conversion (Acts 13:9).

As a Bible student I am very excited to be going through Romans. No other book in the Bible promises so much possibility for spiritual growth. I am looking forward my time in this book to change me.

As a Bible teacher, I am a little intimidated by the thought of expounding upon Paul's letter to the Romans. There are discussions that are so deep that theologians are still discussing and seeking complete understanding about them. There are some things that Paul said that were controversial when he wrote them and are still controversial today. I covet your prayers so that I can share with you what the Spirit wants to say to you.

Paul was not like the other writers of the New Testament. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews trained in the best schools of Judaism. If he hadn't been apprehended by Jesus on the road to Damascus, he might have ended up in the Sanhedrin. He was also a Roman citizen and had grown up in a Roman colony. He was very familiar with Roman, Greek, and Jewish culture. Jesus chose just the right man to write this amazing book.

Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-seven New Testament books: Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

There are some who also believe Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, but the evidence is inconclusive.

Romans was written in the winter of A.D. 57-58 while Paul was in Corinth for about three months at the end of his third missionary journey right before he left for Jerusalem to bring an offering to the struggling Christians there. It was carried by Phoebe, a woman of Corinth who was traveling to Rome. Women were not treated with same regard as they are today. It is a testimony of God's regard for women that He entrusted this infinitely valuable letter into the faithful hands of this little-known woman.

This letter was written to the believers who were in Rome. It is likely that many who first believed in Christ were those who were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit breathed on the 120 disciples and Peter stood up and preached. Three thousand men were added to the church that day and some of them were from Rome.

Paul hadn't been to Rome yet, but he had a desire to do so. In chapter sixteen you find that Paul had many friends in Rome, probably people he had encountered on his missionary journeys. Paul's primary ministry was to places and people who had not heard the gospel of Christ yet.

Paul was on his way to Jerusalem and wasn't certain what awaited him there. Paul wrote this letter to make sure the believers in Rome have a strong foundation of the main doctrines of the faith. It wasn't until Paul was well on his way to Jerusalem that God told him that he would make it to Rome, though not in the way Paul probably expected (Acts 23:11).

Most believers in the first years of the church were Jews. That started to change when Saul/Paul was called to preach the gospel in Acts 9 and then later Peter was given a vision in Acts 10.

Paul's purpose for writing this letter is not clearly stated in the letter but is alluded to near the end of his introduction (Romans 1:13). Paul then goes into a description of the gospel and how it relates to the life of a believer. Paul says in this letter what he hopes to help them

Series Title ideas:

ROMANS: Radical Righteousness

ROMANS: The Gospel of God

ROMANS: Radically Redeemed

ROMANS: Radically Right

understand when he comes to visit them.

"Paul's letter, then, does for the Romans what Paul says he wants to do for them when he arrives in Rome: it preaches the gospel to them and discusses the implications of the gospel for their day-to-day lives." (Thielman, 2018) page 37

Paul's goal, as it should be every pastor's goal is to help them see how the gospel is relevant to the challenges of day-to-day life in the culture in which they lived.

One of the reasons Paul is writing this letter is because there were many false teachers who were misrepresenting the things that Paul taught (Acts 18:13). The book of Romans is filled with references to the Jewish Scriptures, what we refer to as the Old Testament. Before he arrived, he wanted them to have a good understanding of what he taught.

We should be so thankful that Paul wrote this letter. There is no better explanation of the gospel in existence.

Paul's reasons for writing Romans. First, to exercise his role as apostle to the Gentiles and preach the gospel in the capital of the Roman Empire. Second, once he finished his work in Asia, after bringing the offering to Jerusalem, he was going to ask them to support his mission work in Spain. He wanted their prayers in support of his ministry.

The theme of the book of Romans is the righteousness of God. The key verse of Romans is (Romans 1:16-17). This verse includes the first of many quotes from the Old Testament (Habakkuk 2:4). For the Jews doing the works of the law was how someone became right with God. Paul's doctrine, outlined so well in Romans, is that it is faith in the works of Christ that make someone right with God. Paul taught that the key to pleasing God is not in what we do but in believing what Jesus did for us.

In that truth is the blessing of the book of Romans. We don't have to strive for righteousness, through faith in Christ we are right with God. Instead of striving for righteousness, we walk in the righteousness of Christ and cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He conforms into the image of Christ.

Romans 1

Scriptures:

Title ideas:
The Gospel Introduced!

Romans 1:1-7 - The Gospel Introduced!

Scriptures:
2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Ephesians 4:11-16 - And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Micah 6:8 -
He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

¹ Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called

G1401 - δούλος
(doulos) – slave,
servant.

to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of

G652 – “apostle n. — an envoy of Jesus Christ commissioned directly by Him or by other apostles; normally someone who has been taught directly by Jesus and who is invested with the authority to speak on His behalf.”

 God

G873 – “to be assigned (state) v. — to be or become selected and assigned for a specific purpose.”

G2098 – ‘the good news.’

Notes:

Paul introduces himself as the human vehicle of God’s inspiration. While many in the world reject the Bible on the basis that it was written by men, they are only partially correct (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The phrase ‘by inspiration of God’ is the Greek word ‘theopneustos’ – ‘God-breathed’. God breathed His Word into men, and they wrote down what He said. Every word of the Bible is God’s word, and it is all true and truth! If you don’t believe that the entire Bible is true, then you can’t trust that any of it is true, and your faith is built on sand.

Paul first identifies himself as a bondservant or slave of Jesus Christ. Paul’s understanding of his role in this world was to serve Christ. Everything he was in life was a function of serving Christ. Paul then describes how he serves Christ.

‘called to be an apostle-- An apostle is someone who has been appointed and dispatched by God to act as an envoy for God. They have been given the authority and power to speak on God’s behalf.

Paul did not choose this appointment, he was ‘called’ or summoned by God to it.

He then goes to the specific message he was called to take – ‘the gospel’. The word ‘separated’ can also be translated as ‘set apart’.

Turn to **Ephesians 4**. As believers grow in their faith, they will eventually come to realize that God did not save them just so that they are saved. God saves us and then calls us to serve Him. But He doesn’t call us to serve Him in the same way (Ephesians 4:11-16). Some are chosen for specific acts of service while everyone is called to do the work of the ministry. That word ‘ministry’ = service. What is the work of the ministry (Micah 6:8)? It is a sign of spiritual maturity when you realize that you exist to serve God. And then we humbly walk with God as He reveals to us what work He created for us to do. Ask yourself throughout the day, is what I am doing an act of service to God?

Paul was called by God to be an envoy to the world and carry the gospel of God to the nations. Paul then elaborates on the gospel.

Scriptures:

² which He promised before through His

G4279 -

prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

Notes:

(verses 2-4) Paul said he was called to be an apostle of the gospel of God, but that this is not a new message. God promised this gospel in the Holy Scriptures – the Old Testament.

The threads of the gospel are all throughout the Old Testament, especially as it relates to the Savior and Messiah. He would be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem. He would be of the lineage of King David and that He would die on a cross in Jerusalem. It even predicted the exact date the Messiah would come into Jerusalem and the fact that He would do it on the back of the foal of a donkey.

It even tells us that the Messiah would not stay dead but would be raised by the supernatural power of God and be seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

Scriptures:

³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,

Notes:

who was born of the seed of David according

G1096 -

G4690 - σπέρμα (sperma),
ατος (atos) – “descendant
⇔ seed n. — a
descendant, understood as
the scattering of seed
which will grow and bear
fruit.”

to the flesh,

Scriptures:

4 *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with

Notes:

power according to the Spirit of holiness, by

G1411 - δύναμις (dynamis) – supernatural power.

the resurrection from the dead.

Scriptures:

5 Through Him *we* have received grace and

G2983 -

G5485 - χάρις (charis) – unmerited favor of God.

Notes:

It was an expression of God’s grace that Paul and his companions were called to take the gospel out to the nations. There was nothing about Paul that make him worthy of that noble calling. There may have been things that made him useful for that calling, but those did not make him worthy.

apostleship for obedience to the faith among

G651 -

G5218 – obedience (state) n. — the state of submissive conformity to the law, custom, or practice of an authority.”

G4102 – “trust in the gospel n. — trust in Jesus as contained in the content of the Gospel.”

When God calls us to serve Him, it is not because He needs us or that He can’t get the work done without us. It is not because we have earned that calling through some effort of our own or some special qualities that we possess. It is solely based upon His sovereign will that He chooses to use us to take His message out into the world.

all nations for His name,

G1484 - ἔθνος (ethnos) – people groups.

This is good news to those who don’t feel they have anything to offer God in the way of serving Him. The only requirement for serving God is faith. Like the lad and his five loaves and two fishes, bring what little you think you have, in faith, and then watch God multiply it miraculously.

Paul describes the goal of his ministry, ‘for obedience to the faith among all nations...’ Paul’s goal was that the whole world would come to faith in Jesus Chris and that they would walk in obedience to His Words.

Scriptures:

⁶ among whom **you** also are the called of

G2822 -

Notes:

Paul confirms that they are believers and are called to walk in righteousness with Christ.

Jesus ⁺Christ;

Scriptures:
Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:5 - Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God,

G27 – dearly loved.

called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace

G2822 – summoned.

G40 – holy ones.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus

Christ.

[Top of Section](#)

[Top of Chapter](#)

Notes:

As believers in the gospel, we are beloved of God (Romans 5:8). Not only does He love us, but He has also poured His love into our hearts (Romans 5:5). This allows us to love Him back and to love others, especially the unlovable. We should be very comfortable with the thought that Jesus loves us, but, at the same time, it should fill us with wonder – God, Creator of heaven and earth loves me.

Another thing that should amaze us is that God chose to save us. We are all called to be saints. A saint is a believer. The word saint means holy one. One who has been set apart to God for Him and His glory and purposes. And again, that should amaze us because there is no good reason for God to do that found in us. Every reason God would choose any human is found solely in Him.

Paul closes this section with a greeting he uses in many of his letters – grace and peace. In a way it is something like a prayer. He is asking God the Father and Christ Jesus to help them experience more of God's grace and the peace that can accompany God's grace.