



Epistle to The Romans



Lesson 1: Introduction and Romans 1:1-7

The Epistle to The Romans is regarded by many experts as being the most profound piece of writing in existence! Because of the breadth of the subject matter, it is considered one of the most challenging books of the Bible. The main theme of Romans is **The Grace of God Revealed**. God's grace is easy to say, but not so easy for us to understand.

Our preconceptions of Grace are probably different from person to person. The goal of this series is to bring us into a greater understanding of "What is the Grace of God?"

- † God: Is righteous and Holy
- † The Problem: Our Iniquity (Sin) and the gulf that exists between God's Holiness and sin.
- † The Remedy: God's Grace (Presented to us in Romans)

It may be that the Deity can forgive sins, but I do not see how.

Socrates, to Plato, 360 b.c.

GRACE = "God's Riches At Christ's Expense."

Spoiler Alert: Nothing less than the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ was necessary to bridge the gulf between our sinfulness and God's holiness. It sounds so simple on the surface, but so complex in its understanding. We will address this in the Epistle to The Romans.

General Background

The Bible starts out with the 5 Books of Moses (Called the Torah by the Jews, Pentateuch by the Greeks). The New Testament also starts out with 5 books, 4 Gospels + Acts (often referred to as Luke II). The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome; his epistle to the Romans appears as a natural continuation.

The Role of Romans

Many scholars refer to Romans as "The Definitive Gospel According to Paul" and consider it the most comprehensive book in the NT. Paul is a bit different than other disciples at the time. Paul, by all considerations, was a genius. Most of the disciples were uneducated fisherman, a colorful set of characters who are endearing for many reasons, whose writings are God breathed.

In Paul, God chose a person who was an expert in Judaism. Was from a wealthy background and also went to the best Greek schools. His knowledge of secular literature and culture was very deep. A brilliant mind.

The Book of Roman's impact on History is unequalled. As we study the history of the church, the wonderful teaching of Grace gradually erodes to forms of legalism. The Grace of God is to

free us from bondage. Religion is man's attempt to reconcile himself to God. All forms of religion can lead to bondage. Pagans are definitely under bondage, but certain Christian religions can put us under bondage as well.

The years from about 590 to 1517 was the "The Dark Ages." During this time the Bible was not readily available, and Grace of God was not taught. It was during this time we see the rise of religion and religiosity. Jesus Christ was the most anti-religious person who ever walked the face of the Earth.

The Reformation

In the year 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony, a baby boy was born to a poor coal miner. As he grew up and observed the poverty of his father, this boy, named Martin, chose to pursue a different vocation. He decided to become a lawyer and, in 1501, entered the University of Erfurt, where he excelled in his studies.

As he came to the end of his schooling in 1504, an event took place which changed his life. While he was walking the campus grounds, a storm broke so forcefully that Martin fell on his face in fear. The thunder was deafening, and lightning struck all around him.



Instinctively, he cried out to the patron saint of coal miners, whose name he had heard invoked during his childhood, "Saint Anne! Save me from the lightening. If you save me, I will become a monk." Shortly thereafter the storm stopped.

Being a man of his word, Martin withdrew from Law school and entered an Augustinian monastery where he applied himself so diligently that he obtained a Doctorate of Theology within a few years.

But the more he studied, the more troubled his heart became; for although he was becoming an expert in theology, he lacked peace personally. The question he repeatedly wrote in his diary was: "How can a man find favor with God?"

In search of such peace, Martin devoted himself to an exceedingly pious lifestyle: he would fast for ten to fifteen days at a time; when temperatures dropped below freezing, he slept outside without a blanket. Between his studies, he beat his body until it was black and blue and bleeding hoping that somehow by punishing his flesh, he could rid himself of the thoughts and motives that he knew were not right. (These were typical practices of the medieval church.)

He went to confession so many times a day that finally the abbot said, "Martin, either go out and commit a sin worth confessing or stop coming here so often."

Finally, in 1509, Martin decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome in hope of finding the elusive peace for which he longed. He set out on foot and crossed the Alps. On his descent, he almost died of a high fever before making his way to a monastery at the foot of the mountains there the Brothers nursed him back to health. While there, a wise monk approached him and said, "You need to read the Book of Habakkuk." And so, Martin did just that. He read Habakkuk and it changed his life.

It was a good suggestion. Habakkuk was a struggler just like Martin. Like today: If God is good, why does He allow suffering? If there really is a devil, why doesn't God just obliterate him?

We throw out questions, then plunge into our personal pursuits—and wonder why we don't get answers. One verse captured Martin's imagination: Hab 2:4. "The just shall live by faith." He couldn't get it out of his mind.

Having recovered sufficiently to continue his journey to Rome, he went to the Church of St. John's Lateran, a typical cathedral of that day. There is a staircase there that is said to be from Pilate's judgment hall. The existing stairs are four parts: the special inner two are said to have been transported there miraculously from Jerusalem. The outer two are ordinary. The inner steps are not walked on. Here pilgrims mount painfully on their knees, a step at a time, saying prayers as they go. The pope had promised an indulgence to all who would undergo this rite.

As Martin repeated his prayers on the Lateran staircase, Hab. 2:4 suddenly came into his mind: the just shall live by faith. He ceased his prayers, returned to the University of Wittenberg, went on to explore the revolutionary idea of "justification by faith," and ultimately nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, and started the movement known today as the Reformation—one of the single most important events in modern history.



His name, of course, was Martin Luther.

The leadership didn't like the implications of his views and ultimately, at the Diet (council) of Worms (a town) they excommunicated him as a heretic. He went on to write commentaries that are classics today; hymns like, "A Mighty Fortress is our God"; and translated the entire Bible into German, a classic which remains the literary masterpiece in the Germanic tongue (Rom 1:15-17; Gal 1:6-9; 3:1-3, 11).

Habakkuk 2:4

Habakkuk 2:4 has led to a Trilogy of epistles in New Testament: "The Just Shall Live by Faith."

- † The Just... (Who are they?) Romans (Rom 1:17)
- † ...Shall live (How?) Galatians (Gal 3:11)
- † ...By Faith! Hebrews (Heb 10:39)

Authorship of Romans

That Paul is the author of this letter is denied by almost no one. Even the ancient heretics admitted Romans was written by Paul. So, do the modern (19th century and later) radical German critics, who deny many other facts in the Scriptures.

He did not address it to "the church in Rome." That a church did exist in Rome is obvious, because Paul sent greetings to the church that met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla (16:5). Probably several churches were in Rome; perhaps this multiplicity of churches is why Paul addressed the letter to "the saints" instead of to "the church."

This was not a church founded by Paul. “Visitors from Rome” (Acts 2:10) were in the crowd that witnessed the miracle of Pentecost and heard Peter’s sermon. Some of them probably were among the 3,000 converts that day and returned to Rome as believers in Jesus Christ to propagate their faith. These were churches founded by average believers like you and me. You and me should be founding churches in homes, in small groups, inquiring, studying and sharing.



Subsequently, other believers migrated to Rome, for it was a magnet that drew people from all over the empire for business and other reasons. Aquila and Priscilla are good examples. They had lived in Italy before (Acts 18:2), and undoubtedly returned as soon as circumstances permitted. Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), apparently the courier of this letter, is another example as she was making a trip to Rome for other reasons. In fact, Phoebe’s planned trip to Rome was probably the specific occasion for Paul’s writing this letter. Humanly speaking, Paul seized this opportunity to communicate with a group of Christians he was deeply interested in and planned to visit as soon as possible.

Just as Paul’s absence of greeting to Peter in chapter 16 is evidence that Peter was not in Rome at the time (only Catholic tradition teaches he was there), so his numerous greetings to individuals (28 persons are named or referred to, plus several groups) reveal the impact of Paul’s ministry on the establishment and the development of the church in Rome. Many of the believers there were Paul’s converts or associates in other parts of the empire. As a result, Paul had a proprietary interest in the Christian community of Rome. He considered the church there one of his, as this letter bears witness. He was writing to believers, not preaching for them to be converted. Rather, teaching them what salvation is really all about.

Though Paul never named the city, it is obvious that he wrote this letter from Corinth, Cenchrea (Rom 16:1) being its eastern harbor. The letter was written at the close of Paul’s third missionary journey during the “three months” he was in Greece (Acts 20:3), just before his return to Jerusalem with the offering from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the poor believers there (Rom 15:26). After leaving Corinth, Paul was in Philippi during the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Acts 20:6) and desired to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16). The letter was written, therefore, in the late winter or early spring of a.d. 57 or 58.

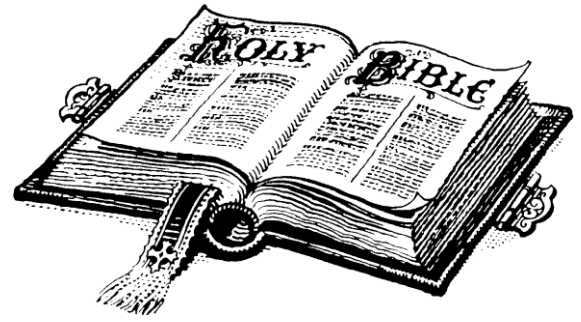
Paul was not an unlettered fisherman: this is the most profound writing that exists anywhere. It has an international outlook: Paul was a Roman citizen, with both Hebrew and Greek culture of history, religion, philosophy, poetry, science, music, etc. Yet, he was also a Hebrew of Hebrews, born in Tarsus of Cilicia; he studied under Gamaliel in Jerusalem...

This is a book which will delight the greatest logician; hold the attention of the wisest of men; and will bring the humblest soul in tears of repentance to the feet of the Savior.

A God small enough for our mind would not be big enough for our need.

Romans Outline

- 📖 Chapters 1 - 8 FAITH Doctrinal
 - - 1-3 Sin (the most complete diagnosis)
 - - 4-5 Salvation
 - - 6-8 Sanctification
- 📖 Chapters 9-11 HOPE Dispensational
 - - 9 Israel – Past
 - - 10 Israel – Present
 - - 11 Israel – Future
- 📖 Chapters 12-16 LOVE Practical



Chapter 1 Summary

- 📖 verses: 1-7 Salutation
- 📖 8-17 Introduction: reasons for writing
- 📖 18-32 Need for the Gospel

1) Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God
Romans 1:1

“Paul” his name means the least or the little one. He really understood the grace of God. He referred to himself “I am the chief of sinners” (1 Tim 1:12-15). Something to think about: All of God’s Word is true. So, If God has already saved one (Paul, a pharisee) who was far worse than you or me...What does that tell us? We should take comfort in that. (Luke 7:39-43)

The word here for “Servant” (doulos) means slave or a person owned by another but not in today’s context. This refers specifically to a bondsman (Paul revealed in this title (Gal 1:10; Titus 1:1), It is an Old Testament designation of a slave who, in love, binds himself to his master for life (Ex 21:2-6).

“An Apostle” is one sent with delegated authority (cf. Mt 10:1-2)—a position to which he was called. (Lit., the Greek is, “a called apostle.”) Founding apostles had to be an eyewitness (1 Cor 9:1; 15:1-9). This calling was from God (Acts 9:15; Gal 1:1), though it was acknowledged by men (Gal 2:7-9). (The “least”; 1 Cor 15:9. And yet he dominates the Book of Acts and wrote 14 of the 21 epistles in the NT!) Can there be Apostles today?

“Separated” in this passage means involved in being “set apart.” Paul was set apart for the gospel of God, the message of good news from God that centered on “His Son” (Rom 1:2, 9) which Paul was “eager to preach” (v. 15) without shame (v. 16). Note that this “setting apart” did not keep Paul from independent employment to support himself and his companions (Acts 20:34; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8), nor from mingling freely with all levels of pagan society. This was a “setting apart” to something—a commitment and dedication, not from things in isolation like the Pharisees. Interestingly, the word “Pharisee” means “separated one” in the sense of being isolated and segregated. What are you “separated to”?

The Gospel

The Gospel is not a code of ethics or morals; not a creed to be accepted; not a system of religion to be adhered to; not a good advice to follow...

It is a divine Person, Jesus Christ. He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; He was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:3-4).

Consider the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15): Did the Father say, "My son has become good"? No! "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!"

Christ did not come to make bad men good; but to give dead men life! The Book of Romans is the most complete and penetrating statement of God's divine plan for the redemption that God has given us. (By the way, the Prodigal Son never lost his "sonship.")

Why was the law given? _____ ! 😬 (Covered in Romans 5&6)

2) (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Romans 1:2

"Holy Scriptures" refers to the Old Testament. It occurs only here in the New Testament (2 Tim 3:15 uses different Greek words for "holy Scriptures.")

"Promised afore." God is distinctive in that he makes and keeps His promises. [vs. Allah, et al...]
The gospel is not brand new: It was promised by His prophets all the way through the Old Testament. Prophecy is an undeniable authentication of His Word.

"To Him give all the prophets witness..." Acts 10:43. Inaccuracy as a prophet resulted in death by stoning (Deut 18:20). There were lots of rock piles in Israel!

What "had been promised afore?" The Gospel! (= a person!) His first promise of redemption (Gen 3:15). Messianic details: family, birthplace, etc.

Hidden in Genesis 5 (cf. Isa 53:11; Jer 23:6; 33:16; 1 Cor 15:1-8). Philip's use of Isaiah 53:7-8 with the Ethiopian eunuch is a good example (Acts 8:30-35; cf. Luke 24:25-27, 45-47). Paul will also use Gen 18 and 22 in chapter 4.

3) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; Romans 1:3

This asserts Christ's deity as basic to His person and prior to His Incarnation, since His identification with David's line "came to be," the literal rendering of the participle is translated to "was made." He was genuinely human too, as declared by His linkage with David and (v.4) His resurrection from the dead.

Claims of Deity

4) And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: Romans 1:4

The resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God because it validated His claims to deity and His predictions that He would rise from the dead (Jn 2:18-22; Mt 16:21).

“The Spirit of Holiness” is the Holy Spirit, and not, as some have suggested, Christ’s human spirit.

5) *By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:* Romans 1:5

Paul’s ministry from Jesus was “among all the nations,” which included the Romans, whom Paul addressed not as a church but as individual believers.

Paul was the human agent from and for Christ he received “the grace of apostleship” (cf. Rom 12:3; 15:15), but the calling (God’s summons to salvation; cf. Rom 8:28, 30) came from the Lord and set his readers apart as “saints.”

Obedience to the Faith

Obedience (produced by) faith as obedience and faith are often linked (cf. 15:18; 16:26; also cf. 1 Peter 1:2). Obedience to the Lord as our King is too often overlooked as the essential in our Christian walk!

6) *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:* Romans 1:6

Just as Paul was a “called” apostle, so the believers in Rome were “called of Jesus Christ” to be saints.



7) *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Romans 1:7

Paul’s salutation, like that in all his epistles, expressed the desire that they enjoy God’s grace (Gr. charas) and peace (Heb. shalom). Written to believers: the unsaved are never named God’s “beloved.”

Not preaching to the unsaved; teaching the saints:

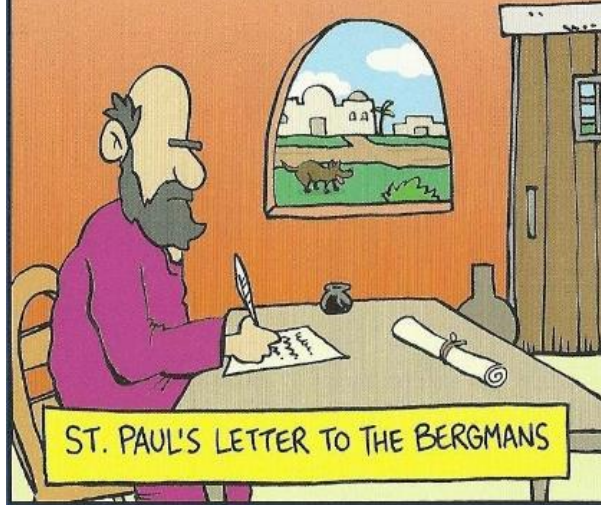
A group of displaced persons, uprooted from their natural home, and on their way to an extraterrestrial destination; not of this planet, neither in roots nor in its ideals. —Barnhouse

same ways and to the same measure, speaks of the unity from which their mode of existence springs.”

Next Session

Read all of Chapter 1.

I, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus,
greet you in the name of the Lord,
and ask you to keep your dog
out of my petunias.



ROMANS CHAPTER ONE

F C S E E R F R U I T N B R N T
R G S E O S A P S W E S E T L L
T I R T R U I P R K O W I E L N
W R B E O V I W O A O E N R A R
I E A P E R A P N P E G E T H F
D S T P I K S N O U T L I L A C
E H U T M W S N T H A O O I I D
G W R S O I T A T W N L T H S I
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M D E U T E R O R R N A N G Y D
A U Q N P H U I A E I I K E E S
L E T S I R A C B N Y N K L S D
R N O U N A E G T E A A L A R S
G G A E A M R S A H H A R D M N
O S Y B I L G S T A C M O P H T

ALWAYS
AMONG
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MUTUAL
NATIONS
POWER
PRAYERS
REQUEST
SAINTS
SERVANT
SPIRIT
SPOKEN
THANK
UNWISE
WHOLE
WISE
WITNESS
WORLD
WRATH