

Introduction to the Book of Romans

- 1) **Author:** Paul, the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ (1:1)
- 2) **Recipients:** “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints” (1:7a)
- 3) **Date:** AD 56-58; written by Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:17)
- 4) **Place of writing:** Corinth (16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14)
- 5) **Divisions:** 1 - Introduction (1:1-17)
 - 2 - Justification by Faith in Christ Jesus (1:18 – 11:36)
 - 3 - Practical Exhortations and Duties for those in Christ (12:1 – 15:13)
 - 4 - Personal Information, Final Salutations and Admonitions (15:14 – 16:27)
- 6) **The book of Romans** is a glorious and challenging portion of inspired Scripture that opens to our understanding the details of God’s great plan of redemption for man to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. A diligent study of this epistle to the Romans will be spiritually rewarding.

ROMANS 1:1-17

I) Introductory Salutation (1:1-7)

- A) Paul introduces himself as the author of this epistle (1:1)
 - 1) A servant of Jesus Christ (Titus 1:1)
 - 2) Called to be an apostle [literally, a “called apostle”] (Acts 9:15; 26:16-18)
 - 3) Separated to the gospel of God (Gal. 1:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:11; Acts 13:2)
- B) Expounds further concerning the “Gospel of God” = good news, divine revelation
 - 1) Promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures (cf. Acts 26:22-23)
 - 2) Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was...
 - a) Born of the seed of David according to the flesh (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 132:11; Acts 2:30)
 - b) Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:32-33)
- C) Paul had received grace and apostleship in order that people of all nations would manifest “obedience to the faith” [gospel] (Rom. 16:26; Eph. 3:1-11; Gal. 1:15-16; Matt. 28:19)
 - 1) “Obedience of faith” (ASV, NASV, ESV) – obedience as a result of one’s faith
 - 2) The Christians at Rome were among those “called of Jesus Christ” (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9)
- D) Epistle addressed to “all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”
 - 1) Paul’s typical greeting of grace and peace from God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ

The apostle Paul begins this epistle with a very formal and detailed introduction even before giving his typical greeting of grace and peace. Central ideas are the gospel, Jesus Christ, and obedience of faith – all themes further expounded upon in this epistle. Compare these beginning comments to his concluding words in 16:25-27.

Since there is no greeting specifically given “to the church at Rome,” it is likely that the brethren in Rome were meeting in separate congregations scattered throughout the city instead of in one congregation in one place (see 16:5, 14-15)

II) Paul’s Desire to Visit the Brethren at Rome (1:8-15)

- A) Paul thanked God for them
 - 1) Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world
- B) Paul made mention of them always in his prayers “without ceasing”
 - 1) Making particular request by the will of God to come to them
 - 2) Longed to see them, to impart some spiritual gift, that they may be established

- 3) Be encouraged [refreshed] together with them through their mutual faith
- C) Paul had often planned to come to them to do spiritual work (but had been hindered)
 - 1) He was a “debtor” to all men [Greeks, barbarians, wise, unwise]
 - 2) He was ready to preach the gospel to them in Rome also

Paul had not yet been to the city of Rome to see the brethren there, but he knew of their faith and wanted to see them to impart some spiritual gift (an apostolic privilege). Spiritual gifts were imparted to establish and enrich brethren in the first century (see 1 Cor. 1:5-7).

Paul explains his plans and purpose in coming to see them in 15:22-24. He declares here that he is ready to preach the gospel to them in Rome and was a debtor to all men to preach the gospel. Notice that the gospel can be preached to Christians. It is a false distinction to say that one can only preach the gospel (to non-Christians) and teach doctrine (to Christians) (see Rom. 6:17; 1 Tim. 1:10-11).

III) **The Just Shall Live by Faith (1:16-17)** [theme of the book of Romans]

- A) Paul was not ashamed of the gospel [of Christ] (instead, he “rejoiced” 5:2, 11)
 - 1) Power of God to salvation – divine force and ability to save through the gospel
 - a) For the Jew first, and also for the Greek [Gentile]
- B) In the gospel the “righteousness of God” is revealed [what God has accomplished for the salvation of sinful man – justification by faith in Christ Jesus – 3:21-26]
 - 1) Revealed “from faith to faith” – **from** what is revealed about God’s work and will in “the faith” [gospel] **to** the producing of faith/belief in man (10:17) unto salvation
 - 2) Quotes **Habakkuk 2:4** – “The just shall live by faith”
 - a) Salvation would be for those who are justified by faith and live by faith – this is witnessed by the law and prophets (3:21)

These two verses state the primary theme of the book of Romans and explains why Paul said it was necessary for him to preach the gospel – the gospel is God’s power to save all who believe, Jew and Gentile, and the righteousness of God is revealed therein from faith to faith, for the just shall live by faith. The sub-themes of gospel, salvation, faith, and the righteousness of God are developed throughout the epistle.

“The Jew first and also for the Greek [Gentile]” is stated three times in Romans (see also 2:9,10) to emphasize that both Jew and Gentile are equally in sin, condemned before God, and called by grace through the gospel unto salvation in Christ. Both the Jew and the Gentile must believe and obey Christ to be saved.

That “the just shall live by faith” is a spiritual reality which has been true from the beginning. Faith is our access to the grace of God that provides the free gift of salvation. If we are to be declared just, we must live by faith. Paul explains next why both Jews and Gentiles are in desperate need of divine salvation.

“I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also...

For I am not ashamed of the gospel

For it is the power of God unto salvation

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness...”