

Romans

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"This epistle is the chief book of the New Testament, the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian, but to be the subject of his meditation day by day, the daily bread of his soul . . . The more time one spends in it, the more precious it becomes and the better it appears." (Martin Luther)

When anyone understands this Epistle, he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scriptures." (Calvin)

I. Author

Paul (Romans 1:1)

Paul dictated to Tertius (Romans 16:22)

Who was Paul?

Acts 7:58 & 8:1—We first encounter him when he was in agreement with the stoning of Stephen.

Acts 8:3, Galatians 1:13-14—He viciously persecuted the church of God.

Acts 9:1-2—He sought permission from the high priest to go to Damascus to capture Christ's disciples, bind them, and forcibly bring them to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:3-6—He acknowledged Jesus Christ as his Lord while on the road to Damascus.

I Timothy 1:12-16--In the past he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and the chief of sinners; he was then saved by God's grace, called to be an apostle, and became a pattern for all members of the Body of Christ.

II. Recipients

The saints in Rome (Romans 1:7).

There were at least three different local churches in Rome (Romans 16:5,10-11,14-15).

Romans was written mostly to Gentiles (Romans 1:13; 11:13; 15:16).

However, there were also Jewish believers among the recipients (Romans 2:17; 16:3 cf. Acts 18:1-3).

Rome was the largest and most important city in the world. Nero was reigning in Rome. He worshiped the Syrian goddess Astarte. Generally, it was a prosperous and peaceful time for those in Rome. The population was about 2,400,000.

III. Where it was written

Romans 15:25-28--Paul will soon be ready to go to Jerusalem. He has a contribution given by the saints in Macedonia and **Achaia** for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Acts 19:21—Paul's plan was to go through Macedonia and **Achaia** on his way to Jerusalem.

I Corinthians 16:3-5—Paul says he will come to **Corinth** to get a contribution to take to

Jerusalem. **Corinth is in Achaia** (Acts 18:1,12; II Corinthians 1:1; 9:2).

Romans 16:23—When he wrote to the Romans he was staying in the house of Gaius. Gaius lived in **Corinth** (I Corinthians 1:14). Paul sends greetings from Erastus. Erastus also lived in **Corinth** (II Timothy 4:20).

Romans 16:1—The letter to the Romans was delivered by Phebe. She attended the church in Cenchrea, which was a port city about 15 miles east of **Corinth**.

Romans 16:21 and Acts 20:4--Sopater and Timothy were with Paul near the time in which Romans was written. He sends greetings from both of them to the Romans.

Conclusion: Paul was in **Corinth** when he wrote to the Romans. He was in Corinth for three months. During this time he a) visited the church in Corinth; b) visited churches in Achaia; c) gathered a collection to take to Jerusalem; d) wrote the epistle to the Romans. Before coming to Corinth, he had been in Macedonia exhorting the churches there.

IV. Date

The year cannot be proven, but it was approximately 57 A.D. As explained above, we know that he wrote Romans during the time of Acts 20:3.

Romans was written near the close of his third journey as an apostle.

Historical Notes:

Ming-Ti, the new emperor of China, introduced Buddhism in 58 A.D.

Nero had his mother Agrippina killed in 59 A.D.

Paul wrote I and II Corinthians about one year before he wrote Romans.

Shortly after writing Romans, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and a few years later was taken to Rome as a prisoner.

Many Jews were expelled from Rome about 6-8 years before Romans was written during the reign of Emperor Claudius. The edict expelling Jews was no longer in effect when Paul wrote Romans.

The world was divided into Jews, Greeks, and Romans (John 19:20).

Rome was noted for government organization and law. They were also known for tyranny and oppression.

V. Purpose

To establish them in the faith (Romans 1:11). The focus in Romans is on doctrine (II Timothy 3:16). The doctrinal focus is the Cross. "Righteousness" is the key word.

The purpose is accomplished by:

- a) Preparing the Romans for his planned visit;
- b) Instructing them in foundational doctrines of justification by faith;
- c) Explaining the relationship between Israel and the Church, the Body of Christ;
- d) Laying the foundation for living by grace;
- e) Correcting the slander that the Romans had heard about Paul (3:8)

VI. Outline

General

Chapters 1-8 Doctrinal—Cross work of Christ
 Chapters 9-11 Dispensational—Status of Israel
 Chapters 12-16 Practical---Application of doctrinal teaching

Specific

1:1-17 Introduction
 1:18-32 Gentiles Under Condemnation
 2:1-3:8 Jews Under Condemnation
 3:9-20 Whole World is Guilty
 3:21-4:25 Justification by Faith
 5:1-8:39 Living by Grace
 9 Israel's Selection in the Past
 10 Israel's Status in the Present
 11 Israel's Salvation in the Future
 12 Grace in Practice
 13 Grace and Authority
 14-15:1-13 Grace and Weak Brethren
 15:14-33 Paul's Faithfulness in the Ministry
 16 Paul's Friends in the Ministry

VII. Miscellaneous

How was the church in Rome founded?

Roman Catholic View It was founded by Peter. This view is contradicted by Galatians 2:9 (Peter ministered to the circumcision, not Gentiles in Rome). Peter is not mentioned at all in the epistle to the Romans. There is no reliable evidence that Peter was ever in Rome.

Acts 2 View This view says that some people from Rome were converted to Christ in Acts chapter 2 on the Day of Pentecost. They returned to Rome and founded the church there. We know from Acts 2:10 that there were Romans present on the Day of Pentecost. However, this view is based on the traditional view that the Body of Christ began in Acts 2. If that were true, the Roman believers would have founded a Jewish church, living under the law, looking for an earthly kingdom, trusting in the Gospel of the Kingdom. As we study Romans, we will see that this was not so.

The Church in Rome was founded by some of Paul's converts. Those in Rome considered Paul to be their spiritual teacher (Acts 28:13-22, Romans 1:5-6,9-13). Paul greets many friends in Rome, but no greetings are sent from Peter to those in Rome. Paul did not build upon Peter's foundation. They were built upon Paul's gospel (Romans 2:16, 16:25). They

were living under grace, not under the law (Romans 6:14).