The Epistle of Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God (1:17)

Author: The Apostle Paul (1:1)

Recipients: The Church in Rome (1:7)

Date of Writing: c. A.D. 57

Place of Writing: Corinth (3rd Missionary Journey)

Bearer of the Letter: Phoebe of Cenchrea (16:1)

Major Emphases:
1. The Power of the Gospel
2. Justification by Faith
3. Universal Sinfulness
4. Redemption in Christ
5. The Sovereignty of God
6. The Future of Israel
7. The Consecrated Life
Paul develops a theological masterpiece in the book of Romans as he expounds the doctrine of salvation in all its fullness. The whole world is guilty of sin and worthy of spiritual death, but God has made provision for salvation through the atoning sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. This salvation will supernaturally mature through sanctification until we are conformed to the image of Christ. Until then, we are to present ourselves to God as daily living sacrifices in His service.
Introduction to Romans

I. Author

Paul the apostle is the author of this letter (Romans 1:1). There is near unanimous support for this view. No voice from the early church was ever raised against it and even modern liberal scholars affirm its authenticity. The letter is Pauline in doctrinal content and literary style, and it contains a number of historical references that are consistent with other known facts of Paul’s life.

Formerly Saul (Hebrew name) of Tarsus and persecutor of the church, he was converted on the road to Damascus by the risen Lord Jesus (Acts 9:1-19) and commissioned to the gospel ministry, especially to the Gentiles. Paul (Greek name meaning “small”) was the name he utilized beginning in Acts 13:9.

II. Date of Writing

This letter was written c. A.D. 57 at the end of the 3rd missionary journey from either Corinth or Cenchrea (Acts 20:1-3; Romans 16:1, 23; 1 Cor. 1:14). Phoebe is the probable deliverer of the letter (16:1) and Tertius the amanuensis or secretary (16:22).

III. Recipients

The Church at Rome was the original recipients (1:7). The church was made up of Jewish and Gentile converts, probably with a Gentile majority. The founding of the church is uncertain. There is little, if any evidence to support the Roman Catholic position that Peter is the founder. Most likely the church was founded either: (1) by Pentecostal converts (Acts 2:10), and/or (2) Pauline converts from the East who had migrated to Rome for various reasons (no apparent synagogue connection in Rome and the number of Pauline acquaintances listed in chapter 16 support this view). Paul had not been to Rome when he penned this epistle (1:11-15).
IV. **Theme**

The righteousness of God which is available to all who are justified by faith in the salvation provided in Jesus Christ (1:16-17, 3:21-26). This summarizes the heart of the letter.

V. **Occasion / Purpose**

Paul writes with several purposes in mind, both theological and practical. Having never been to Rome, he wrote to prepare the way for his proposed coming visit and mission to Spain (1:10-15, 15:22-29). He also presents in a systematic fashion the basic doctrines of the Christian faith as they relate to salvation. This is the most theological and systematic of all the Pauline letters. The plan of God as related to Jew and Gentile also is a concern, and receives extensive treatment in chapters 9–11.

VI. **Key Verse(s)**

Romans 1:16-17

VII. **General Characteristics of the Book**

1. **The most systematic of Paul’s letters.** It reads more like a developed theological essay than a letter.
2. **Emphasis on Christian doctrine.** The number and importance of the theological themes touched upon are impressive: sin, salvation, grace, faith, righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, death, resurrection, eschatology, and divine sovereignty.
3. **Widespread use of OT quotations.** Although Paul regularly quotes from the OT in his letters, in Romans the argument is sometimes carried along by such quotations (see especially 3:9-20; chs. 9–11).
4. **Deep concern for Israel.** Paul writes about her present status, her relationship to the Gentiles, and her final salvation.
VIII. Content

Paul begins by surveying the spiritual condition of all mankind. He finds Jews and Gentiles alike to be sinners and in need of salvation (1:18–3:20). Salvation has been provided by God through Jesus Christ and His redemptive work on the cross. It is a provision, however, that must be received by faith—a principle by which God has always dealt with mankind, as the example of Abraham shows (3:21–5:21). Since salvation is only the beginning of Christian experience, Paul moves on to show how the believer is freed from sin, law, and death—a provision made possible by his union with Christ in both death and resurrection and by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit (6:1–8:39). Paul then shows that Israel, too, though presently in a state of unbelief, has a place in God’s sovereign redemptive plan. Now she consists of only a remnant, allowing for the conversion of the Gentiles, but the time will come when “all Israel will be saved” (9:1–11:36). The letter concludes with an appeal to the readers to work out their Christian faith in practical ways, both in the church and in the world. None of Paul’s other letters states so profoundly the content of the gospel and its implications for both the present and the future (12:1–16:21).

IX. Observations of Interest

1. Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire and therefore the most strategic city for Christian missions. Population: estimated at over 4,000,000.
2. Nero (A.D. 54–68) was reigning as emperor in his early and more sane days.
3. Romans is the longest of Paul’s letters, thus the reason it heads the Pauline corpus in our New Testament.
4. Paul quotes from the OT in this letter more than in all the other Pauline letters together. There are at least 61 direct quotations from 14 different books. Psalms and Isaiah are the most frequently quoted.
5. This book is often called Paul’s magnum opus (major or ultimate work). Martin Luther (1483–1546) called it “the masterpiece of the New Testament.”
An Outline of Romans

**Major Theme:** The Righteousness of God

**Key Text:** “The just shall live by faith” (1:17)

Introduction — 1:1-17

I. SIN — Righteousness Demanded (1:18 – 3:20)
   1. The Gentiles are guilty – 1:18-32
   2. The Jews are guilty – 2:1–3:8
   3. The whole world is guilty – 3:9-20

II. SALVATION—Righteousness Declared (3:21 – 5:21)
    1. Justification is stated – 3:21-31
    2. Justification is illustrated in Abraham – 4
    3. Justification is explained in Adam – 5

III. SANCTIFICATION—Righteousness Developed (6 – 8)
    1. Victory over the flesh – 6
    2. Liberty from the Law – 7

IV. SOVEREIGNTY—Righteousness Declined (9 – 11)
    1. Israel’s past riches – 9
    2. Israel’s present rejection – 10
    3. Israel’s future restoration – 11

V. SERVICE—Righteousness Demonstrated (12:1 – 15:13)
   1. In the church body – 12
   2. In society – 13
   3. Toward the weaker believer – 14:1 – 16:21

Conclusion — 16:22 – 16:27
Biblical Facts Concerning Sodomy, Lesbianism, and Homosexuality
As Taught in Romans 1 and the Whole of Scripture

1. It is sin, not sickness (cf. Gen. 18:20ff; Lev. 18:22, 29; 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32; I Cor. 6:9; I Tim. 1:10; Jude 7)
2. It is the ultimate manifestation of a society turned from God.
3. It is wrong by nature’s standards.
4. It leads to rampant sin in other areas.
5. It is inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle.
6. It can be forgiven and conquered.
7. Saved homosexuals should be accepted.
8. Lost homosexuals should be loved and witnessed to.

Biblical References to Homosexuality

1. Sodomy (Gen. 19:4-10; Deut. 23:17-18; I Kings 14:24, 15:11-12; II Kings 23:7)
2. Abomination (Lev. 18:22; Deut. 22:5)
3. Vile affections (Rom. 1:26-27)
4. Burning with lust (Rom. 1:27)
5. Dishonoring the body (Rom. 1:24)
7. Violating nature (Rom. 1:26)
8. Shameful lust (Rom. 1:27)
9. Lusting for strange flesh (Jude 7)
10. Filthy dreamers (Jude 7-8)
11. Abusers of themselves (I Cor. 6:9)
12. Effeminate (I Cor. 6:9)
13. Defilers of themselves (I Tim. 1:9-10)
14. Inordinate affections (Col. 3:5-6)
15. Reprobate (Rom. 1:28)
The Essentials and Excellence of Christian Salvation

Romans 3:21-31

I. God has given the revelation of His salvation (3:21-23)
   1. The Righteousness of God is Revealed (vs. 21-33)
   2. The Requirement of Faith is Revealed (vs. 22)
   3. The Reality of Sin is Revealed (vs. 23)

II. God has given the reasoning of His salvation (3:24-26)
   1. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Justification (vs. 24)
   2. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Redemption (vs. 24)
   3. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves Satisfaction (vs. 25)
   4. Salvation by Grace through Faith in Christ involves a Demonstration (vs. 25-26)

III. God has given the results of His salvation (3:27-31)
   1. It results in Humility (vs. 27-28)
   2. It results in Unity (vs. 29-30)
   3. It results in Continuity (vs. 31)
“Precious Promises of our Powerful God”
(Romans 8:27-39)

I. We have the promise of His prayers 8:27, 34
   1. The Spirit prays for us 8:27
   2. The Son prays for us 8:34

II. We have the promise of His providence 8:28
   1. It is a certain promise (we know).
   2. It is a comprehensive promise (all things).
   3. It is a comforting promise (work together for good)
   4. It is a Christian promise (those who love God)

III. We have the promise of His perfection 8:29-30
   1. We are predestined to perfection, 8:29
   2. We are called to perfection, 8:30
   3. We are justified for perfection, 8:30
   4. We are glorified for perfection, 8:30

IV. We have the promise of His provisions 8:31-34
   1. He is our helper 8:31
   2. He is our provider 8:32
   3. He is our defender 8:33
   4. He is our mediator 8:34

V. We have the promise of His presence 8:35-39
   1. No problem can separate us from His love 8:35
   2. No persecution can separate us from His love 8:35-37
   3. No power can separate us from His love 8:38-39
   4. No person can separate us from His love 8:38
A Call to Total Commitment:
Living Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

Romans 12:1-2

I. God’s Call is to Consecration or Complete Commitment 12:1
   1. It is spiritual
   2. It is volitional
   3. It is total
   4. It is sacrificial
   5. It is moral
   6. It is worshipful

II. God’s Call Involves Transformation or Complete Change 12:2
    1. You must reject the pressure to conform outwardly
    2. You must accept the power which changes inwardly

III. God’s Call Includes Satisfaction or Complete Contentment 12:2
     1. God’s will is proven
     2. God’s will is pleasing
     3. God’s will is perfect
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<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>No. of Chapters</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Beloved of God in Rome, called to be saints (1:1)</td>
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<td>1 Corinthians</td>
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<td>Solving Divisions and Disorders</td>
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<td>56 – 57</td>
<td>Church of God at Corinth, those sanctified in Christ Jesus (1:2)</td>
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<td>2 Corinthians</td>
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<td>The Ministry of Reconciliation</td>
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<td>Church of God at Corinth with all the saints in Achaia (1:1)</td>
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<td>Galatians</td>
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<td>Antioch (?)</td>
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<td>Churches of Galatia (1:2)</td>
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<td>Ephesians</td>
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<td>The Church: The Body of Christ</td>
<td>Rome</td>
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<td>Philippians</td>
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<td>Joyful Christian Living</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>60 – 63</td>
<td>Saints in Christ Jesus in Philippi with the bishops and deacons (1:1)</td>
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<td>Colossians</td>
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<td>The Cosmic Christ</td>
<td>Rome</td>
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<td>Saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse (1:2)</td>
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<td>Corinth</td>
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<td>Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)</td>
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<td>2 Thessalonians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Day of the Lord</td>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>51 – 52</td>
<td>Church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1)</td>
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<td>1 Timothy</td>
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<td>Pastoral Advice</td>
<td>Macedonia (?)</td>
<td>62 – 66</td>
<td>Timothy, a true son in the faith (1:2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Timothy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A Farewell Word of Encouragement</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>66 – 67</td>
<td>Timothy, a beloved son (1:2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Christian Conduct Manual</td>
<td>Macedonia (?)</td>
<td>63 – 66</td>
<td>Titus, a true son in our common faith (1:4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philemon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Receiving a Slave as a Brother</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>60 – 63</td>
<td>Philemon, our beloved friend and fellow laborer (1:1)</td>
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The Pauline Epistles in Historical Perspective

Acts 13:1-14:28
1st Missionary Journey
Galatia
Acts 15
Jerusalem Council
Acts 15:36-18:22
2nd Missionary Journey
Macedonia Achaia Greece
Acts 18:23-21:17
3rd Missionary Journey
Asia
Acts 28:30-31
1st Roman Imprisonment
Rome 60 – 63
Trials
60 – 63
Rome
63 – 67
Rome
67 – 68
A.D. 70 Destruction of Jerusalem; continue scattering and growth of the church

1 Thessalonians
Place: Corinth
Date: 48 – 49(?)
1 Corinthians
Place: Ephesus
Date: 51 – 52
2 Corinthians
Place: Macedonia
Date: 56 – 57
Galatians
Place: Antioch
Date: 55 – 57
Romans
Place: Corinth
Date: 57(?)
1 Timothy
Place: Macedonia
Date: 62 – 66
2 Timothy
Place: Rome
Date: 66 – 67
1st Roman Imprisonment and Martyrdom
67 – 68

(End of Acts)