

Introduction to Romans

Begun January 8, 2012

1. Title
 - a. Epistle (“letter”) of Paul to the Saints in Rome
 - b. The origin of the church in Rome is uncertain though Jews from Rome heard the Gospel at Pentecost (Acts 2:10)
2. Author
 - a. Name
 - i. “Saul” = Hebrew version; named for the king
 - ii. “Paul” = Greek version; used after officially becoming the apostle to the Gentiles
 - b. No serious objection has ever been raised to Paul’s authorship
 - i. Internal evidence
 - (1) 1:1 “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle....”
 - (2) Biographical details in chapters 1, 15 and 16
 - (a) Apostle
 - (b) Traveling, itinerant missionary
 - (c) Preparing to bring a gift to the Jerusalem church (15:25-27; Acts 24:17)
 - ii. External evidence
 - (1) Was listed in the works of Paul by the second century
3. Date and location of authorship
 - a. Written shortly before his visit to Jerusalem with the financial gift for the church there (15:25-27; Acts 24:17) at the end of his third missionary journey
 - b. Was living in Corinth at the time: Phoebe—to whom Paul entrusted Romans for delivery to the church—lived at the port of Corinth (16: 1-2); Gaius was his host (16:23; I Cor. 1:14); Erastus was city treasurer in Corinth (16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20)
 - c. Earliest possible: end of A.D. 54
 - d. Better fit: sometime between late A.D. 55 and early A.D. 57
4. History of the church at Rome
 - a. No evidence of direct apostolic involvement in its founding
 - i. Paul did not found the church, nor had he visited it at the time of the writing of Romans (1:8-13)
 - ii. Peter did not found the church. No mention of him in the epistle.
 - iii. No mention of any other Apostle
 - b. It was likely founded by Jewish Christians who were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10-11)
 - i. Roman historian Suetonius noted that Claudius expelled the Jews in A.D. 49 for rioting “at the instigation of Chrestus” probably a reference to Christ
 - c. It was a mix of Jews and Gentiles
 - i. It seems the majority of the congregants were Gentiles (1:13; 11:13-24)
 - ii. Paul places a lot of stress on the unity of Jew and Gentile (ch. 2 and 14)
 - iii. He also makes much of the Gentile gift to the largely Jewish church in Jerusalem
 - d. Today it survives as the Roman Catholic Church. Talk about a historical irony!
5. Importance of Romans in church history
 - a. Augustine (significant 2nd century theologian) came to faith through Romans
 - b. John Chrysostom (5th century preacher) had Romans read aloud to him once a week
 - c. Martin Luther came to an understanding of justification by faith alone largely through his study in Romans
 - d. Probably more than any other single NT book, Romans served as the hinge on which the door of the Reformation turned

6. Message - the physics and engineering of the Gospel, God's plan of reconciliation for sinful mankind

a. Source

- i. Paul was not taught this by any man, but received it directly from the Lord Jesus Himself (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 11:23)
- ii. He was personally disciplined by Jesus for three years in Nabatean Arabia, south and east of the Dead Sea (Gal. 1:17-18)

b. Content

i. Doctrine (chapters 1-11)

(1) Introduction

- (a) 1:1-15 Greetings
- (b) 1:16-17 Thesis statement

(2) The bad news: God's wrath toward sinful mankind

- (a) 1:18-32 God's temporal wrath displayed in the hedonist
- (b) 2:1-29 God's eternal wrath preserved for the moralist
- (c) 3:1-8 God's faithfulness to judge the world
- (d) 3:9-20 Summary of sinful man's condition, both hedonist and moralist

(3) The good news: God has provided a righteousness by faith in Christ for all who believe

(a) Salvation by grace through faith explained and illustrated

- (i) 3:21-24 The Gospel is for sinners who believe
- (ii) 3:25-31 Introduction of God's plan in history
- (iii) 4:1-25 Salvation by faith is in the OT as illustrated by Abraham and quoted by David

(b) Temporal condition of those who are being saved

- (i) 5:1-11 Temporal blessings for God's former enemies
- (ii) 5:12-7:6 Stop serving the flesh in the old way of the law, start serving God in the new way of the Spirit
 - 1) 5:12-21 Sin and death through the first Adam contrasted with God's gift of eternal life through the second Adam
 - 2) 6:1-23 Vicarious association with Christ's death and life means we are no longer slaves to sin
 - 3) 7:1-6 Illustration of marriage to show freedom from the law of sin and death
- (iii) 7:7-25 Paul's personal struggle with the desires of the flesh and the desires of the renewed mind
- (iv) 8:1-17 Life in the Spirit is pleasing to God and contrary to living to please the flesh
- (v) 8:18-27 Groaning of creation, of believers and of the Spirit in the hope of future redemption

"Behind the debris of these solemn supermen and self-styled Imperial diplomatists stands the gigantic figure of one person because of whom, by whom, in whom, and through whom alone mankind may still have hope: the person of Jesus Christ. **The more I look at the saviours of men, the more beautiful the Lamb of God looks to me.**"

- Malcolm Muggeridge

- (vi) 8:28-39 God's sovereign love has appointed us to exceedingly conquer any and all temporal conditions
- (4) God's plan for Israel
 - (a) 9:1-29 "Israel" is God's elect, and not necessarily those descended from Abraham. God will show mercy as He chooses.
 - (b) 9:30-10:21 The Israelites stumbled over the Stumbling Stone, namely, that Christ is the end of the law for all who call upon the Name of the Lord
 - (c) 11:1-10 God always preserves a remnant who believe
 - (d) 11:11-24 Illustration of olive branches: Warning to Gentiles not to become conceited
 - (e) 11:25-32 God has bound all men to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all
- (5) 11:33-36 Paul's burst of praise to God
- ii. Application (chapters 12-16)
 - (1) Our response to God's mercy
 - (a) 12:1-2 Stop thinking like the world, start having your mind renewed
 - (b) 12:3-8 Use your gifts in the church for God's glory
 - (c) 12:9-21 Live in love, leave the wrath to God
 - (d) 13:1-7 All earthly authority is from God. To resist it is to resist God.
 - (e) 13:8-14 As the day of salvation draws ever nearer, live decently in love as those of the day, and not as those of the night.
 - (f) 14:1-15:13 Unity in the church: Nothing glorifies God more in the eyes of the watching world than unity among people who otherwise should not get along.
 - (2) Paul's concluding thoughts
 - (a) 15:14-22 Paul's ambition to preach to the Gentiles who've never heard the gospel
 - (b) 15:23-33 Paul's plan to visit the church in Rome after bringing the Gentile gift to the church in Jerusalem
 - (c) 16:1-16 Paul's personal greetings to various people by name
 - (d) 16:17-20 Paul's warning to watch out for those who cause divisions
 - (e) 16:21-24 Greetings from Paul's ministry team
 - (f) 16:25-27 Benediction