

#8. THE BOOK OF ROMANS

1. **PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS** is considered the preeminent doctrinal letter of the New Testament. Paul deals with profoundly deep themes, and sets a framework for our proper understanding of the remaining epistles.
 - **Author** - Paul, also known as Saul, was from the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5) and was named for Israel's first king. Saul is the Hebrew form of the name; Paul is the Greek form. We know that he was a Roman citizen, claiming Tarsus of Cilicia (modern Turkey) as his hometown (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 16:37; 22:25). He spent a great deal of his life in Jerusalem as a student of Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and was a member of the order of Pharisees, the strictest of the Jewish religious groups (Philippians 3:5).
 - Paul's Conversion is recorded in Acts 9:23-25 and occurred in about 33-34AD.
 - According to church tradition, Paul was martyred just outside Rome on the Ostian Way during Nero's reign (54-68AD).

2. **Paul's emphasis** is basic Christianity from the standpoint of a soteriological treatise. The epistle may be his introduction of himself to them. His audience is the Christian community in Rome. He had apparently finished his mission activity in the eastern part of the Empire, and wanted to visit Rome on his way to Spain after first bringing an offering to Jerusalem for the needy Christians in that city (Romans 15:23-28). Apparently the Roman congregation was primarily Jewish, but also contained a significant number of Gentiles.
 - Paul introduces himself, summarizes the Gospel message, and declares his alliance with it (1:3-17).
 - He explains the depravity of man and explains the necessity for God's intervention on man's behalf (1:18-3:20).
 - God's remedy for us is to be saved by grace, through faith in the finished work of Messiah. We are then justified before God because of Jesus (3:21-5:21).
 - He then discusses Spiritual Freedom, which includes freedom from sin (chapter 6), freedom from the condemning power of the Law (chapter 7), and freedom to discover and embrace the love of the Father (chapter 8).

- He then expresses his love for Israel and explains their ultimate role in God's plan (chapters 9-11:12). When God's plan is complete, they will be fully united with Gentile Believers (11:13-36).
- Paul spends considerable time explaining the necessity of loving service to others, unity within the body, especially between Jewish and Gentile Christians (12:1-15:13).
- In 15:22-16:27, the Apostles relates personal greetings from himself and his companions and sends news of his planned itinerary.

3. **The Date of writing** is about 57AD from Corinth (Romans 15:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-7).

4. Key Chapters

- Chapters 1-11 centers on some core spiritual beliefs about orthodox Christianity.
- Chapters 12-16 reminds the Roman Christians about the importance of spiritual behavior.

5. Key Verses

- **There are so many magnificent verses in Romans that space doesn't allow us to cite them all. Here is the central verse, and a chapter that is arguably one of the greatest in the entire Bible.**
- **Romans 5:1 NASB** "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- **Romans 8:1-39 KJV** "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁵For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be ⁸So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of

God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ¹⁰And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. ¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ¹⁸For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, ²¹Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. ³¹What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ³²He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Key People

- **Paul the Apostle** - Though we are introduced to Paul in Acts and become acquainted with his ministry style and objectives, Romans is the first of the Pauline Epistles that give us a deeper look into the heart of this great Man of God.

- **Phoebe** - probably delivered the letter from Corinth to the Romans (16:1, 2).

7. Key Places

- **Rome** - the location of the church to which Paul was writing. Rome was the capital of the empire and the center of culture and politics. A city of nearly a million inhabitants, it has been said that if Rome held the percentage of the world's population today that it held in 60AD, the modern city would boast over 100,000,000 residents.
- **Corinth** - a prominent city in Greece of perhaps 250,000 citizens. This was the city from which Paul wrote to the Romans.
- **Jerusalem** - is a scheduled stop by Paul on his way to Rome.
- **Spain** - is the ultimate destination of Paul on this lengthy trip that included a stop in Rome.

8. Key Themes

- **The depravity of mankind** - Paul explains the depth of man's sinful depravity, and points out the only remedy is the atoning work of Christ Jesus. This sacrifice is effective only if man is willing to embrace it. It is important to note that Paul's emphasis on depravity doesn't imply that men in particular or mankind in general is necessarily *as bad as we can be*, but rather that we are *as bad off as we can be*. There is absolutely not one shred of goodness we can rely on to gain the favor of God (Romans 1-3).
- **The Work of Salvation** - begins and ends with the initiative of God. The salvation of man will be completed by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8).
- **The Work of The Holy Spirit** - He is the key element in God's work of sanctification in our lives. Romans 8 details the dynamics of His presence within us.
- **Soteriology** - is defined as the study of the doctrine of salvation. Key concepts in Romans include:
 - **Election and Predestination** - (Romans 9:10-13) God has chosen those who receive eternal life to be conformed to the image of Christ. Calvinists believe this decree is a matter decided by God alone. Arminians believe this divine choosing by God is a decision based on His foreknowledge of our acceptance or rejection of Christ.

- **Justification** - (Romans 4:25; 5:18) - Through the ministry of the Messiah, God declares us *not guilty*; we stand in Christ's perfect righteousness before the Father.
- **Atonement** - (Romans 3:25) - We no longer face punishment for our sin because the sacrifice of Christ is the full satisfaction (aka *propitiation* - see 1 John 2:1, 2, KJV) for our sinful behavior. The debt has been satisfied.
- **Redemption** - (Romans 3:24; 8:23) - We are free from the penalty and power of sin because Christ has paid the debt for our transgression.
- **Sanctification** - (Romans 5:2; 15:16) - We are not only positional 'in Christ', we are also being changed into His likeness as we grow in grace.
- **Glorification** - (Romans 8:18, 19, 30) - My ultimate state will be perfection in Christ, *spirit, soul, and body* (1 John 3:2).

9. The Contents of Romans

- **The Introduction - 1:1-15**
- **The Theme: The Gospel of Christ Jesus (1:16, 17)**
- **Mankind stands condemned (1:18-3:20).**
 - Gentiles are *Lost* (1:18-32).
 - Jews are *Lost* (2:1-47).
 - All men are *Lost* (3:9-20).
- **Justification is provided only through Jesus Christ - (3:21-5:21).**
 - The source of righteousness is faith in Jesus Christ (3:21-31).
 - The example of righteousness is Abraham (4:1-25).
 - The blessing of righteousness is peace with God (5:1-11).

- The gift of righteousness is eternal life (5:12-21).
- **Sanctification is the result of the Holy Spirit's work (6:1-8:39).**
- **The Restoration of Israel (9:1-11:36)**
- **Believers are encouraged to live holy lives (12:1-15:13).**
- **Greetings, Blessings, and Conclusion (15:14-16:27)**

Worth noting

- Romans contains the famous ***Roman's Road*** plan of salvation used by soul-winners for hundreds of years.
 - Romans 3:23 - "All have sinned".
 - Romans 6:23 - "The penalty for sin is death."
 - Romans 5:8 - "Jesus died in our place."
 - Romans 10:8-10 – "To be saved, we must believe in Jesus and agree with Him about our sin."
- Remember the ***Tenses of Salvation***.
 - We were saved immediately from sins penalty - this is called *Justification*.
 - We are being saved progressively from sin's power - this is called *Sanctification*.
 - We shall be saved ultimately from sin's presence - this is called *Glorification*.

When reading Romans:

- Take note of our improved standing as *Children of God!*

- As sinners, we are:
 - hopelessly lost (5:9).
 - slaves to sin (5:12, 15, 21).
 - spiritually dead in our sins ((5:12, 16, 21).
 - trapped by the Law (5:20).

- As God's children, we are:
 - found and rescued (5:8).
 - righteous servants of God (5:18).
 - we have eternal life (5:17, 21).
 - we live by Grace (5:20).

- Remember that Romans is arguably one of the most influential books of the New Testament. Martin Luther and John Wesley each give this epistle credit for the great work of God in their lives.

- Look for Paul to make use of a style of writing called a *diatribe*. In this literary form, the teacher attempts to convince the student of a truth by an imaginary conversation. In this form we find rhetorical questions, corrected conclusions, and objections, as well as affirmations.