



The Epistle to the Romans

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Introduction

In this study, we begin our journey into the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Before we enter into a verse-by-verse and systematic study, it is needful that we first gain a high-level understanding of this sacred letter: its author, its setting, its purpose, and its everlasting message for the Church of Christ.

1. The Author

The Epistle to the Romans was written by the Apostle Paul. Romans 1:1 declares: *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.”*

Paul was formerly Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of the Church, but converted by the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3–6):

“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”

Thus Paul, once the enemy of the Gospel, became its chief herald among the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7–8).

2. The Setting and Date

Romans was written from Corinth, during Paul’s third missionary journey, around **A.D. 57**. Romans 16:27 confirms “... written to the Romans from Corinthus....” In Romans 15:23–25, Paul states his intention to visit Rome after travelling

to Jerusalem: *“But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.”*

This places the letter near the end of his ministry in Greece.

3. The Audience

The recipients were the Christians in Rome, a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Paul longed to visit them (Romans 1:11): *“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.”*

These believers lived in the heart of the Roman Empire, surrounded by idolatry, immorality, and persecution. Paul wrote to strengthen their faith and unify them in the Gospel.

4. The Purpose of the Letter

The Epistle was written to:

- **Explain the Gospel fully:** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)
- **Unite Jews and Gentiles** in one faith: “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” (Romans 3:22)
- **Prepare for Paul’s future visit** and gain their support for his mission to Spain.



5. The Time Period Covered

The content of Romans is not restricted to a specific time period as such, but spans from **the fall of mankind in Adam** (Romans 5:12) to the glorious hope of the resurrection and eternal life in Christ (Romans 8:11)::

- *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).*
- *“But 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” (Romans 8:11).*

6. The Key Messages of Romans

(a) The Universality of Sin

Romans 3:23: *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

(b) Justification by Faith Alone

Romans 5:1: *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

(c) Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:1–2: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

(d) God’s Sovereignty in Salvation

Romans 9:15: *“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”*

(e) The Call to Holy Living

Romans 12:1: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

7. Application for Today’s Christian

- We are reminded of the seriousness of sin:
 - *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23)*
- We are assured of God’s love:
 - *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor 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” (Romans 8:38-39).*
- We are called to unity in the Church:
 - *“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).*

8. Impact Through Church History

- **Augustine** was converted through Romans 13:13–14: *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*
- **Martin Luther** found in Romans 1:17 the spark of the Reformation: *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*
- **John Wesley** felt his “heart strangely warmed” upon hearing Luther’s Preface to Romans.

Thus, Romans has been a wellspring of revival, doctrine, and reform throughout the centuries.

Conclusion

The Book of Romans is the crown jewel of Paul’s epistles. It reveals man’s ruin through sin, God’s remedy through Christ, and the believer’s responsibility to live in holiness. As we now prepare to study it in detail, may we echo the words of Romans 11:36:

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”