

# Paul's Letter to the Romans



## Bible Study Technique

**Print out or download a passage without paragraph divisions**—Chapter and verse numbers were not an original part of the text. The Bible was written as literature—historical accounts, records of law, poetry and proverbs, letters and prophecy. Reading the passage as it was written helps us to get a sense of the flow of the text. Also, this can help you to focus on the text alone instead of the many study tools included in your Bible.



## Bible Study Technique

**Pre-Reading and Preparation**—Reading the passage you are studying several times before you actually begin detailed study can help you get an initial impression of the passage. Don't get lost in the details; this is a broad overview. You may want to take note of words or phrases that you see frequently repeated. Taking note of an important verse and giving your own title for the chapter or section is also a good start. (Don't use the titles you may find in your Bible)

**Homework:** Read through Romans 1 each day. Circle any words or phrases that you see frequently repeated. Mark what you think is the most important/key verse in Romans 1. Create a title for the chapter (below). Write down any questions you might have.

## Romans 1

(ESV)

Chapter Title

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you

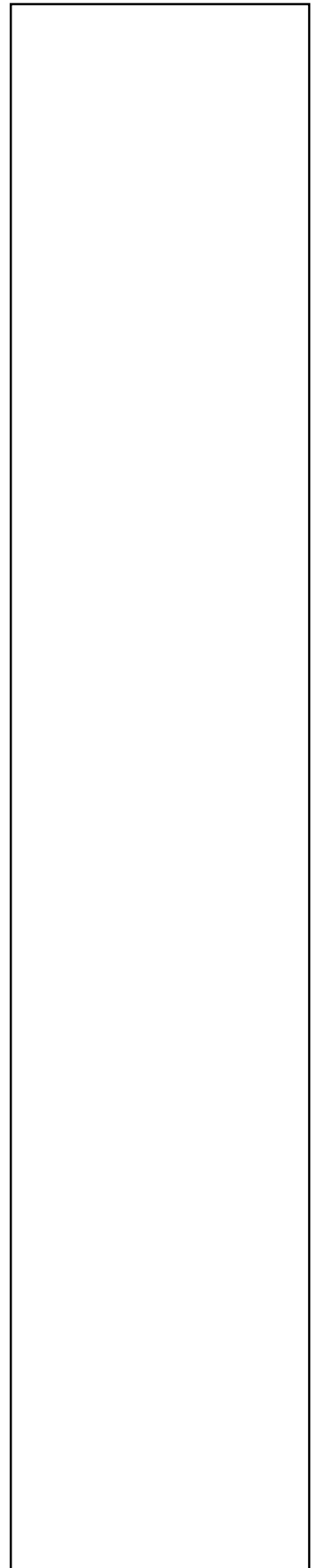
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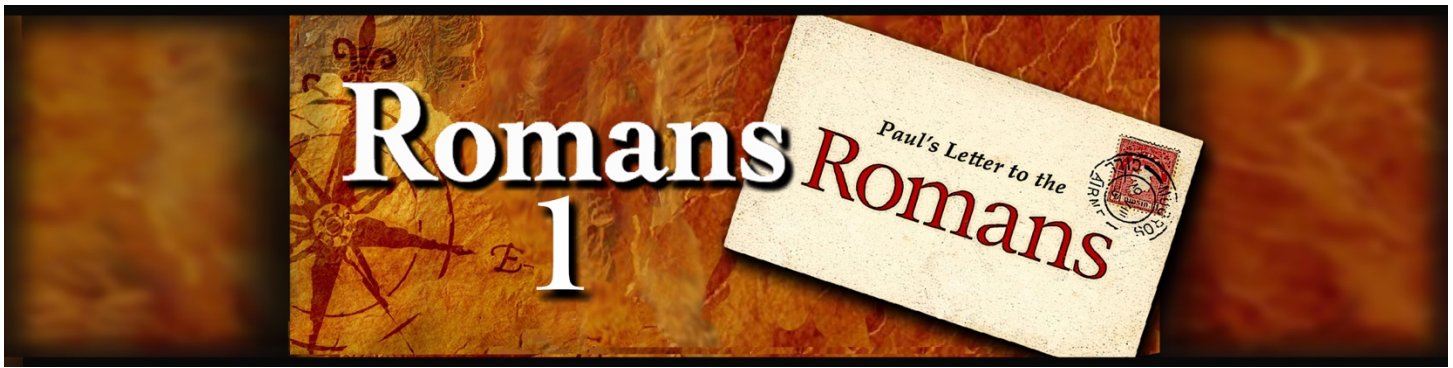
and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. <sup>9</sup> For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you <sup>10</sup> always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. <sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— <sup>12</sup> that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup> So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." <sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,

who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

<sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due

penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.





## Introduction to the Letter to the Romans

### Bible Study Technique



**Author/Audience/Purpose Information**—It is helpful when beginning a study to make note of who wrote the passage, who the intended receivers of the written passage were, and the purpose for which it was written. In many cases, that information is written directly in the passage at the beginning of the book. If it is not available, many Bibles will have an introduction before the scripture passage.

The Letter to the Romans was sent to the church/believers in Rome. The probable date of writing was A.D. 57 or 58. History indicates Christianity seemed to have been introduced in Rome before A.D. 49.

### Read Romans 1:1-7

1. Who is the writer of this letter/book? (1:1)
2. How do we know who the writer was?
3. What words does Paul use to introduce himself?
4. What does he say that his purpose in life is? (1:1, 5)
5. Specifically, to whom is the letter written, and what does he tell us about them? (1:6-7)

### **PURPOSE/THEME**

The Letter to the Romans is considered to be the first great work of Christian theology, and could be called “The Gospel to the Romans” or even “The Gospel According to Paul” because all of the essentials of the Gospel are found in it.

6. In your own words, what is the Gospel?

The **Gospel** is the good news/message of the kingdom of God and of Jesus the Messiah; God’s plan of salvation and righteousness for all peoples, Jew and Gentile alike. After the death of Christ, the term contains the preaching of Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross to purchase eternal salvation for the people of the kingdom of God.

Romans is the longest and most logical of Paul’s letters. As a word of encouragement, whenever we study God’s Word, we should attempt to “dig” up the meaning from the text. Romans is not an easy book to read and understand, and it is impossible to comprehend the full meaning of every part, and some parts are hard to understand, but don’t let that stop you or intimidate you. **Don’t focus on the**

things that you **DON'T** understand; focus on the things that you **DO** understand. The meaning and importance of this letter were not just for 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians; Paul's message is very applicable for us today.



### **Bible Study Technique**

**Shifting Audience Information**—It is wise as we read God's Word, to pay attention *to whom* the words are directed and what words are used to address them. For instance, many of the promises in the Old Testament were given to the Jews and may or may not apply to Christians today. Sometimes the 'audience' or people being addressed changes without warning; This can be especially true in a letter addressed to a group of people. Some words may refer to a group of people or an individual, then another group or individual. Instructions or comments may even refer to someone outside of the recipients of the letter.

### **Read Romans 1:8-17**

In these verses in Romans 1, Paul continues to address **the brothers and sisters in Rome**. Notice that he refers to them as **"you" (plural)** throughout these verses. Make note of this in the text or note area of Romans 1. We will encounter other pronouns as we progress through Romans.

Paul had more than one purpose for writing the letter.

**7.** In Rom. 1:8-14 and 15:23-24, what does Paul say is one of his purposes for writing?

**8.** What does Paul hope to do when he visits Rome? (1:11-13)

However, he had an even greater purpose in writing the letter.

**9.** What is the theme that Paul announces in 1:16-17?

**10.** How does Paul define the Gospel? What is revealed in the Gospel? (1:16-17)

In verses 16-17, Paul speaks in a more general way to all people, Jews and Gentiles, notice there is no **"you"** or **"they/them."** Make note of this in the text or note area.



### **Bible Study Technique**

**Definitions**— Pay attention to key words, especially "Christianese," words you may not understand. You can check the meaning of these words in commentaries, The Literal Word app or a Bible Dictionary. These can be found on many apps on your phone and tablet, or computer websites. Online resources to check out:

Bible Gateway – <https://www.biblegateway.com>

Blue Letter Bible – <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

Many other resources are available by searching online.

Paul proposes to give a complete view of his position of **how God makes a person righteous**.

**Righteous** means just, innocent, faultless, guiltless; it is used to describe a person whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no improvement in the heart or life. (The word "righteous" can be simply defined as *"right standing with*

God.” God puts people in right standing, right relationship, with Himself through their faith in Him. Paul says it is faith from beginning to end. Not only are we saved by faith, we must also live by faith.)

11. Who does Paul say he is obligated to? Why? (1:14)

### Read Romans 1:18-23

12. What is being revealed in 1:18? Why?

In Romans 1:18-22, Paul begins to confront **the guilt of the Gentiles**—all people who were not Jews—notice he is addressing “*they/their/them.*” (plural, but not the brothers and sisters in Rome) Make note of this in the text or note area of Romans 1.

13. How do we know that Paul is NOT addressing the brothers and sisters in 1:18-22?

14. Can people who have never read the Bible or heard about Jesus know about God? (1:19-20) How?

15. What happens to people who claim there is no God?

“All, more or less, do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be right, so that the plea of ignorance cannot be allowed from any. Our Creator’s invisible power and Godhead are so clearly shown in the works he has made, that even idolaters and wicked Gentiles are left without excuse. They wandered from God, till all traces of true religion must have been lost....”

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary) (MHC)

#### Bible Study Technique

**Cross References**—Cross references are links to other verses in the Bible which give us better understanding, further explanation, alternate phrasing, examples, or evidence for a point. These can often be found in your Bible, Study Bible, or online resources such as Bible Gateway, Blue Letter Bible, or Open Bible (<https://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references/>).



16. Examine [Psalm 19:1](#), [Acts 14:17](#), [Ephesians 4:18-19](#) and [Romans 3:9–12](#). What additional information did you find here?

### Read Romans 1:24-28

17. What did God do to the people who rejected/refused to acknowledge Him? And what did people do as a result of God’s actions? (1:24, 26, 28)

A.

B.

C.

As a result of the total rejection of God and the corruption of their hearts and minds, **God gave them over** (to surrender someone to another/an authority; this is not a passive action by God; it is an act of **judgment** that intensifies the judgment they deserve). He **gave them over** 3 separate times, each progressively worse, based on the increased depravity from the previous sins—[therefore, because, furthermore]

Observation— With each judgment, people abandoned something **TRUE** and **MORAL** that God had given, and **exchanged** those things for something false (**COUNTERFEIT**) and immoral (**PERVERTED**).

<u>TRUE &amp; MORAL</u>	<u>COUNTERFEIT &amp; PERVERTED</u>
1. The _____ of the immortal God (23)	.....▶ Images made to look like _____ and _____
2. The _____ of God (25)	.....▶ A _____, they worshipped/served _____.
3. _____ relations between men and women (26-27)	.....▶ Their own sinful, perverted _____
4. The knowledge of God (28)	.....▶ _____ to do what ought not to be done.

“The consequence of God giving them over is **degradation** of the body (v. 24), **domination** by lust, the **disintegration** of what is truly “natural” (i.e., in accordance with human nature as created by God; v. 26), and **bondage** to uncontrollable passions (v. 27).”  
*(The Reformation Study Bible) (RSB)*

It is a downward spiral of depravity that is impossible to come back from because God has given them over; they cannot be saved! The **result** of this spiral of depravity will be clearly seen in the next section.

**Read Romans 1:29-31**

- 18. What are these depraved people FULL of? (29)
- 19. What type of people are they? (29-31)
- 20. What do they DO? (29b-31)

*The New International Version* translates it this way:

<sup>29</sup> They have become **filled** with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are **full** of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup> they have **no** understanding, **no** fidelity, **no** love, **no** mercy.

**Because they are FILLED with all of those evil things, there is NO place for the good things.**





## Read Romans 1:32

21. Are these people innocent? Why or why not?
22. What do these people deserve?
23. Beyond practicing these things, what else do they do?

You may or may not have noticed that there is **one key word** missing from the text of Romans 1, yet it is one of the main topics of Romans, and it is the cause for all of our problems. It finally appears near the middle of chapter 2! What is that missing word?

In Romans 1, Paul lays the background for the teaching of **how God makes a person righteous**. He paints a graphic picture of a person in sin. **The road to righteousness begins with the recognition of sin**. Sin is what keeps people from a right standing with God. ([Isaiah 59:2](#))

### Key Doctrine in Romans

**Mankind's Sinfulness**—Sin separates every human from God; only Jesus Christ can reconcile God and man.  
(*The MacArthur Quick Reference Guide to the Bible*) (JM)

There is a difference between **SIN** and **SINS**.

- Sin is the root; sins are the fruit.
- Sin is the disease; sins are the symptoms.
- Sin is unbelief; sins are the marks of unbelief.

### Characteristics Of Sin

1. Sin has the nature of a parasite; it feeds off its host in a manner that is damaging to the host. ([Romans 7:23](#))
2. Sin is self-centered. ([James 3:16](#))
3. Sin is destructive. ([Galatians 6:7-8](#))
4. Sin's presence gives no immediate pain, causing a person to believe nothing is wrong. ([Jeremiah 5:21](#))
5. Sin's power lies in the force of delusion. ([2 Thessalonians 2:11](#))
6. Sin desensitizes as it grows. ([2 Timothy 3:1-7](#))
7. Sin causes people to suppress the truth about God. ([Romans 1:18-23](#))
8. Sin causes a person to cast off all restraint. ([Romans 6:19](#))
9. Sin will cause a person to become blind to evil. ([2 Thessalonians 2:10-12](#))

24. What did you select as the Key Verse(s) in Romans 1? Why?

**25.** Summarize the essence of Romans 1.

**References:**

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*English Standard Version with Strong's Numbers*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008.

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