

# Introduction to Romans

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Romans is a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Rome. A church that he did not plant, himself, but most definitely arose out of his ministry and his gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

From what I gather from studying it was on his 3rd missionary journey Paul was planning on heading to the church that had been planted in Rome when the Holy Spirit led him in another direction, Not Northwest to Rome but rather Southeast to Jerusalem. And as Paul always did, he obediently heeded that still small voice.

Paul did however first draft a detailed letter to the church at Rome. Both the church at Rome and the church at Corinth were located in a heavily pagan area. Rome the government headquarters for the dominating Roman Empire (like our Washington), and Corinth in the busiest commercial trade harbor on the Mediterranean Sea.

The church at Rome was definitely on the right track. Paul builds up the brothers and sisters in Christ and, having never met them, he even miraculously, praises them by using their name. (I say miraculously but it is probably just the Holy Spirit giving Paul this insight).

Paul indeed would several years later visit Rome but he would do so as a prisoner in chains. Also on trumped up charges of insurrection. (Kind of odd how the God haters always use "insurrection" as a charge when they can't find anything else to stick).

The book of Romans can easily be divided into two parts: Romans 1-11 show how God has revealed His righteousness in the world and Chapters 12-16 give them, and us, directions on how we are to respond, demonstrate, to God's righteousness in our daily lives!

The book also builds up on the "grace through faith" theme (Ephesians 2:8). The word "faith" shows up 55 times in Romans (and of course one can not fully understand

the importance of "faith" in God's eyes unless someone <sup>②</sup> looks at Hebrews chapter 11. (Don't worry in our Bible Study when we hit one of the "faith" verses we will take a detour to Hebrews chapter 11 to drive it home!).

No where else can so much be found about the "Fatherhood of God" and His calling us out as "His children" as in the book of Romans.

Romans also solidifies the truth that since Israel had rejected the Messiah (at His first coming) God had grafted in the "Gentiles" to His tree of life. As we saw in our last Bible Study this grafting in is what we know as the "Age of Grace".

The Book of Romans gives modern day believers of the finished work of the Cross and instruction on how we are to, while being strongly outnumbered, walk righteously in an unrighteous world. NEVER CONFORMING! Yes, Paul tells us to obey earthly governments but never at the price of compromising God's truth.

In the first chapter of Galatians we get a hint that everything Paul writes (by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit bringing to remembrance Jesus' teachings) comes directly from the mouth of the resurrected Jesus Christ. And everyone of His Epistles: Romans, 1+2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1+2 Thessalonians, 1+2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, (except possibly Hebrews if he wrote it) explicitly declare that his gospel (good news) comes directly from Jesus Christ. Possibly over a 3 year discipleship. One on one.

So since Paul has been chosen by God to instruct, teach, prophesy God's plan for us, as His children, in this present church age, we are to listen even more intensively. All scripture (Old and New) are for our learning, but not all scripture is specifically written to us to heed (example: the Levitical law and Israel's ordinances, just to name two).

Romans 1:1-4 Paul is very good at making sentences that are 100 words long. Every one is like a fireworks show that keeps on getting bigger and better and more amazing as it goes on. This one is a perfect example of this: "Paul, a bondservant (sealed) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle (chosen by Jesus), separated (a new) to the gospel of God which He promised before (Genesis 3:15) through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ (the Redeemer, Savior, Christ, Messiah) our Lord (by our faith we can claim Him as ours), who was born of the seed of David (from the lineage/descendancy of David according to the flesh (the Messiah had to be of the human lineage of David - (2 Samuel 7:12 + Isaiah 9:7, 11:1), and declared to be the Son of God (through the Holy Spirit "covering" Mary - Luke 1:34+35 Jesus became the "Seed" so, both 100% Holy and 100% human) with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (the deal was sealed and sin debt paid the moment the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead (Jump to Romans 6:10-11)).

This one sentence is basically the whole Bible truth! Read it again.

I will try not to butcher it by paraphrasing: Paul was ordained by Jesus Himself, sent out with the gospel of grace to let the world know that what God had promised and His prophets had prophesied was fulfilled by Jesus. Jesus who met the criteria of being a descendant of David through His step father Joseph's lineage and also the Son of God through the Holy Spirit paid mankind's sin debt, in full, by the shedding of His pure and Holy blood and removed the curse of sin, for all who would believe, when the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead.

Romans 15-6 Because of our "faith" (heart, mind and soul faith) in the finished work of the cross and our commitment to tell the whole world about Jesus. God's grace counts us as righteous.

Romans 1:7 Paul greets the Roman church from, on behalf of, God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:8 - (paraphrasing) - "God is proud of you for standing firm in the truth of God. (probably much like the church of Smyrna - Revelation 2:8-11 and the church of Philadelphia of Revelation 3:7-13).

Romans 1:9+10 - The church at Rome is "solid" and Paul prays often for it and longs to visit it. Maybe because it would be a breath of fresh air, a retreat even. Little does he know that God will fulfill his request but he will be as a shackled prisoner.

Romans 1:11+12 Paul expands the afore mentioned thought by stating that it will be a time of mutual encouragement.

→ Isn't that the truth! Fellowship with other believers ALWAYS leads to a time of relaxing in the Lord and forgetting the cares of the world. That is why, for our own good, God tells us not to forsake the gathering of ourselves (Hebrews 10:25). That's why satan uses pandemic kind of scenarios to close "non-essential" gathering places like churches but leave open "essential" gathering places like liquor stores and pot shops.

Disclaimer: I can understand churches closing for an initial 2-3 week period to help minimize the mass infection of a possibly deadly disease but the moment the Holy Spirit reminds us that it is just an evil ploy we need to once again assemble. If necessary with precautions. Fortunately some churches resort to asking God how to proceed and let Him deal with the consequences.

Romans 1:13-16: Paul's on fire! He's longing to do a Billy Graham crusade at a packed Roman Coliseum! And shout on the gospel of grace which is "the power of God to salvation", For all (Jew + Gentile/Jew + Non Jew).

Romans 1:17: WOW! From "faith to faith", the just (justified in God's eyes) shall live by faith. We can't earn God's love by works, but we can own God's love by faith. The more we show our faith (taking God at His word) the more faith He imparts on us!

### Romans 1:17 (con't)

From "faith to faith" almost seems too good to be true; what that means is the more we show our faith (take God at His word/trust in and on Him) the more He showers us with more faith! The more He grows our faith! We need to just take the first step and have some faith. He takes it from there till one day we can't even remember what it was like when we didn't have faith. That's from faith to faith.

### This is where we get our first sidetracking in the study of Romans:

Once we accept Jesus Christ as Savior and truly believe in our hearts He died for our sins and fully trust in the Holy Spirit having raised Him from the dead WE ARE IMMEDIATELY SEALED WITH THAT SAME HOLY SPIRIT, who will also raise us from death to eternal life with God, and so we are saved but by no means yet useful to God. We are a bunch of "newbies" walking around saying, "I believe, help my unbelief." We have indeed won the lottery but it seems like our checking account is empty. But that's o.k.! After all what kind of a testimony can we give others about what Christ has done for us if we can't detail the bumps and bruises we endured on the journey and how the Lord picked us up and dusted us off each and everytime?

### OK, we are going even deeper now! :

When we believe in God, trust in the Lord and have faith we have been planted. <sup>very</sup> Soon our shell of our old life will crack open because it can no longer contain the Holy Spirit that dwells with in it. Our "little" faith asks, seeks, and knocks for more faith. And as God pours out, answers and gives us more faith these roots descend deeper and deeper in God's rich soil. This causes the Holy Spirit to break the surface of this world and to start to reach for the Light in the sky. Wind, rain, and storms pummel our stalk only causing it to grow

Stronger, thicker and taller. All the while our roots in Christ grow deeper, stronger and thicker as they anchor our faith. This is Exactly how a little faith (like that of a mustard seed) can grow into the largest of plants. (6)

In Abraham's case, he was "counted as righteous" because of his faith to just pack up his stuff and go to a land that God had not yet showed him. That is all the "faith" that was needed! God took it from there!

Paul's message in Romans is how our faith will count as us being righteous in God's eyes. So let's read what "faith" is:

Hebrews 11:1-39: Yup, all of Hebrews chapter 11 because it is the only way to "please" God. (My definition of faith: taking God at His Word): (me paraphrasing) (1) Faith is positively knowing something is true without any proof except God's saying it is. (2) All the Old Testament saints were counted as righteous because they had faith. (3) Our faith lets us know that God created everything. (4) Abel did as God said, Cain didn't. (5) Enoch's faith was so powerful he hasn't yet experienced death (maybe one of the two witnesses in the tribulation???) (6) Without faith it is impossible to please God! (7) Noah was counted as righteous because he built an ark in the middle of the Desert even though it had never rained on the planet before. (8) Abraham was saved the moment he packed up his stuff and followed God without knowing where he was going to end up. (9) Sarah's faith (later on) let her become a mother at 90 years old. (10) All of the above mentioned died (except Enoch) without having seen the Messiah or having experienced their legacy come to fruition. BUT HAVING FAITH THAT IT WOULD SOMEDAY COME TO PASS!!! (we seldomly see the fruition that our walk in Christ has brought about in another person's life. But God does!).

I just realized that in verse 12 we see God pointing to the two gospels that we concluded our last Bible study on. The gospel of the Kingdom - Israel and the gospel of Grace - the church. One is heavenly (Grace) and is depicted by the word "stars". And the other is earthly (Kingdom) and is depicted by the word "sand". Both stem from Abraham!