



When it comes to revolutionary ideas, Paul's Epistle to the Romans has been more instrumental than almost any other book in history in terms of changing people's lives and ways of thinking. Here in chapter one Paul talks about himself, his friends in Rome, and his mission in life.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Romans 1:1-17

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God -- ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ⁹ God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

¹¹ I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong -- ¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

¹⁴ I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

¹⁵ That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Using a Bible dictionary or handbook, find out where Paul was when he wrote this letter and about what year it was.

When was Paul "called to be an apostle" (verse 1) "to...the Gentiles" (verse 5)? *Hint*: see the book of Acts.

Where in the Old Testament was the Messiah said to be a descendant of David?

How many persons of the Trinity are mentioned in the first four verses?

The Bible does not tell us exactly how the message of Christianity first got to Rome, but how would you guess it did?

Many first-century non-Christian people started their letters with the words "grace" and "peace". Why do those terms have special meaning to Christians?

Using three different adjectives, describe Paul's relationship with the Romans:

Summarize what Paul is saying in verses 8-13:

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Righteousness

Define "**righteousness**" by looking it up in a dictionary, Bible dictionary, or Bible wordbook. What would be a more commonly used synonym today?

How many times does "*righteous*" or "*righteousness*" occur in the book of Romans? (Use a concordance.)

What does Paul mean when he says "first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (verse 16)?

"I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the righteousness of God", because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous. Night and day I pondered until I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "righteousness of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven."

Martin Luther, c. 1520

Read **Acts 28:14-31**. What light does it shed on Paul's mission to the Gentiles?

Have you ever had an experience similar to the one Martin Luther writes about (see quote above)?

Paul seems to have a real handle on his mission in life. Do you? Could you put it into one sentence?

The phrase “*the righteous will live by faith*” (verse 17) is one of the most important concepts in the whole Bible. It occurs in three other places (once in the Old Testament, twice in the New); what is the **context** of those passages?

📖 *Habakkuk 2:4*

📖 *Galatians 3:11*

📖 *Hebrews 10:38*

What do you think that phrase means?

Summarize Paul’s main point in this first section of Romans:

“When this letter arrived in Rome, hardly anyone read it, certainly no one of influence. There was much to read in Rome - imperial decrees, exquisite poetry, finely crafted moral philosophy - and much of it was world-class. And yet in no time, as such things go, this letter left all those other writings in the dust. Paul’s letter to the Romans has had a far larger impact on its readers than the volumes of all those Roman writers put together.”

Eugene Peterson,
The Message