

Romans: Overview of the Epistle

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Authorship, Place & Time of Writing:

Written by the apostle Paul (ch1v1); most likely from the city of Corinth (ch16v1,23), on his 3rd missionary journey, his 2nd visit to the city of Corinth, just as he was about to leave Greece, to go to Jerusalem with the gifts collected for the poor saints (ch15v25).

Paul writes of his long held desire to bring the gospel to Rome (ch15v23, Acts 19v21).

Recipients of the Epistle:

Written to all the saints ***“that be in Rome”*** (ch1v7), likely mostly Gentiles called out from among the nations (ch1v13) and some converts from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2v10).

There was probably > 1 distinct company of believers at Rome (see ch16).

One of the churches at Rome gathered in the house of Aquila & Priscilla (ch16v5).

Subject of the Epistle:

“The gospel of God” (ch1v1,15v16), ***“the gospel of His Son”*** (ch1v9), ***“the gospel of Christ”*** (ch1v16,15v19,v29); ***“my gospel”*** (ch2v16, 16v25), ***“the gospel of peace”*** (ch10v15) and in 4 other verses referred to as ***“the gospel”***. ***“The righteousness of God”*** (ch1v17, 3v5,21,22, 10v3)

The ***“gospel of God”*** declares & reveals the absolute ***“righteousness of God”***.

Romans expounds Is 45v21 ***“there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me”***,

Romans is the gateway epistle to all the NT epistles, as it logically presents the doctrine of the gospel.

A. Ch1-8: The Doctrinal Truth of the Gospel – as it relates to all of humanity.

B. Ch9-11: The Dispensational Truth of the Gospel – as it relates to Jew & Gentile.

C. Ch12-16: The Displayed Truth of the Gospel – the practical demands it makes upon believers.

A. Ch1-8: The Doctrinal Truth of the Gospel

Ch1v1-17: Paul’s Introduction

Paul’s personal feelings concerning the gospel - ***righteousness revealed*** (v17)

Ch1v18 - 3v20: Man’s Ruin - CONDEMNATION - ***righteousness required*** (ch3v10)

- **Ch1v18-32:** The heathen / pagan man condemned before God on the grounds of **creation** (ch1v20). We read 3x ***“God also gave them up / over”*** (v24,26,28), man guilty of gross immorality.
- **Ch2v1-16:** The apparently moral / civilised / enlightened man stands in judgment on others, but condemned before God on the ground of **conscience**, guilty of practicing in secret what the heathen / pagan man practices in public (ch2v3,15,16).
- **Ch2v17-3v8:** The privileged Jew, entrusted with God’s law, but condemned before God on the ground of the **covenant** (ch2v17,21,23).
*Note 4 mentions each of **divine wrath** (ch1v18, 2v5,8, 3v5) & the **judgment of God** (ch1v32, 2v2,3,5).
- **Ch3v9-20:** Summation of man’s ruin, a scene of universal depravity & guilt, with absolutely no exceptions among humanity (v9,10,11,12,19 ***“all the world ... guilty before God”***).

Ch3v21 – 5v11: JUSTIFICATION - Job 25v4 *“How then can man be justified with God?”*

Ch3v21-31: God’s Remedy - PROPITIATION - righteousness manifested (v21-22)

God’s righteousness is manifested in justifying those that believe in His Son; v22 *“unto all* (availability, unlimited) *and* (efficacious) *upon all them that believe”*.

This required the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary (v24-25).

The righteous claims of God’s holiness have been met by the precious blood of Christ.

A just God can now, because of Calvary’s mercy seat, extend mercy & forgiveness & salvation to repentant sinners who exercise faith in the accepted work & precious blood of Christ.

Calvary has both a retrospective (v25) & prospective aspect for the present day of grace (v21,26).

Ch4: Man’s Responsibility - FAITH - righteousness imputed (v3-6)

The means of man’s justification is by the exercising his faith (v4-5), altogether apart from the works of the law, illustrated in the faith of Abraham and of David.

Abraham, in uncircumcision, put his faith in divine promise (v3,20).

David, after there was circumcision, trusted in divine mercy (v7-8).

There is no contradiction with James 2; in Romans, faith alone saves & justifies, but in James the faith that justifies is never alone, there must always be works that are the evidence of the reality of faith.

The blessing of salvation is for all who believe in the divine work of salvation accomplished by the sacrifice & death & resurrection of Christ (v24-25), i.e. faith in a risen Man.

Ch5v1-11: Blessings of Justification - righteousness enjoyed (v1-2)

The justified believer, through faith in Christ:

- enjoys peace with God (v1).
- has a present standing in divine grace (v2).
- has the anticipation & future hope of sharing divine glory (v2).
- need never fear the wrath of a holy God against man’s sin (v9).
- can now joy in God, having been reconciled to Him (v11).

Ch5v12 – 8v39: The Glorious Results of the Gospel – SANCTIFICATION - righteousness reigning (ch5v21)

The sanctification of a believer’s life is found in Christ alone.

Ch5v12-21: Two Heads: Headship of Adam versus Christ

In Adam there is death & judgement & condemnation, due to that 1 act of disobedience by Adam (v19).

In Christ, under His federal Headship, there is life & righteousness & justification, depended upon His one act of obedience at Calvary in laying down His life (v19).

Ch6 – Two Masters: Dead to Sin, Alive unto God

The believer can know freedom from the dominating principle of sin, which is viewed as a master & reigning monarch; the doctrinal truth of identification with Christ in His death (v5,11,12).

Ch7 – Two Husbands: Dead to the Law, Married to Christ

The believer can know freedom from the bondage of law-keeping, through our link with the risen Christ (v4).

There is still the indwelling flesh (v18), but we can know deliverance in the risen Christ (v24-25).

Ch8v1-27: The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus - *righteousness fulfilled* (v4)

Deliverance made good to the believer through the ministry & power & leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God (v2); v4 “*the righteousness* (righteous requirements) *of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*”.

There is the enjoyment of **SONSHIP**, being a son of God the Father (v14-15).

There is the enjoyment of being a child of God with a corresponding inheritance (v16-17).

There is the prospect of **GLORIFICATION** with Christ (v17-18).

Ch8v28-39: The Triumph of the Gospel

There is the certain assurance of eternally being conformed to the image of God’s Son (v28-30).

God has given to us all things, it matters not who may be against us, God has justified us, none can condemn us, none can “*separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (v39).

B. Ch9-11: The Dispensational Truth of the Gospel - *righteousness defended* (ch9v14)

EXPLANATION of God’s dispensational dealings with the Jew & the Gentile.

Ch9 – Jew in the Past

Their privileges are listed (v4-5), but they sadly failed in the matter of faith (v32).

Christ was to them “*a stumblingstone and rock of offence*” (v33).

Ch10 – Jew & Gentile in the Present

How is God dealing with men today? Not on the basis of Jew vs Gentile; His salvation is available to the “*whosoever*”, there is no difference as to the scope of God’s salvation (v11-13).

Ch11 – Jew in the Future

God has not irrevocably set aside the nation of Israel. Their present setting aside nationally is only “*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*” (v25), but they will be brought to “*their fullness*” (v12), it will be like “*life from the dead*” (v15), Israel “*shall be saved*” (v26), God’s mercy will be extended to them, His covenant promises to that nation will be fulfilled, this all being the sovereign purpose of God.

C. Ch12-16: The Displayed Truth of the Gospel - *righteousness reproduced* (ch12v1)

Ch12 – CONSECRATION

- v1-2: Consecration in relation to God; we are to present our bodies to God & renew our minds.
- v3-13: Consecration in relation to my fellow believer; in the exercise of spiritual gift (v4-6).
- v14-21: Consecration in relation to the world; we are to be gracious & peaceable (v14,18,21).

Ch13 – SUBORDINATION

We are to be “*subject unto the higher powers*” that are “*ordained of God*” (v1).

Ch14 – CONSIDERATION - The stronger brother is to show consideration to the weaker brother, “*for whom Christ died*” (v15), i.e. in matters of conscience.

Ch15 – EVANGELISATION - Paul’s great desire to be “*ministering the gospel of God*” (v16), specifically in places “*where Christ was not named*” (v20).

Ch16 – SALUTATION & COMMENDATION

Paul commends Phebe to their care & gives his salutations & greetings to the saints at Rome.