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*Studies in*  
**ROMANS**



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Scripture cited is taken from the Authorized (King James) Version

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# Suggested Study Resources

## Primary

Herman Hoeksema, *Righteous by Faith Alone* (Reformed Free Publishing Association)

William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Romans* (Baker Book House)

John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*

Stuart Olyott, *The Gospel as It Really Is: Romans* (Evangelical Press)

David Steel and Curtis Thomas, *Romans: An Interpretive Outline* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company)

## Secondary

Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Kregel Publications)

R. C. Sproul, *The Righteous Shall Live by Faith* (Crossway Books)

F. F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Romans)* (Inter-Varsity Press)

John Murray and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company)

Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Banner of Truth)

William G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Klock and Klock)

Some of these books can be obtained either online or from a used book store. A good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia will also be helpful.

# Introduction

## **The Importance of Romans**

No other book of the Bible so completely and systematically defines and explains the doctrines of the Christian faith and their application to living the Christian life as does Romans. Paul mentions and explains in varying degrees the truths of the faith: sin, law, judgment, faith, works, grace, justification, sanctification, hope, the church, the place of Jews and Gentiles in God's purpose, sovereign double predestination, the meaning of the Old Testament, citizenship in a wicked world, and the principles of piety and ethics (Steele and Thomas, *An Interpretive Outline*).

## **The Writer of Romans**

The author of Romans is the Holy Spirit; Romans is divinely inspired and belongs to the canon of scripture. The writer is the apostle Paul. Paul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia and was a Roman citizen. He was educated in the Jewish tradition in the strict sect of the Pharisees, and he studied under the noted rabbi Gamaliel; he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. In the earliest days of the church he was a leader in persecuting the Christians until his conversion on the Damascus road. He was called by Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles. He went on three missionary journeys, preaching the gospel of Christ and establishing churches in many locations. Subsequently he wrote letters to many of these churches, which are preserved for us in the New Testament. Later in life he was sent to Rome to stand trial before Caesar. He was imprisoned there for a time, released for a time, and then imprisoned once again before being killed at Rome.

## **The Occasion for Romans**

Paul wrote the letter to the Romans from Corinth while on his third missionary journey. The likely date of this writing was AD 57 or 58. Paul wanted to visit the church at Rome, but was unable to do so. The letter was probably written to prepare the way for a future possible visit. There were apparently no significant problems in the Roman church. Paul's letter is therefore instructional and preventive, not corrective. He writes to the Romans as Christian friends, even though most of them he does not know personally.

## **The Church in Rome**

Scripture does not tell us much about the church at Rome. We do not know exactly how the Roman church came into existence. Certain it is that Peter was not the founder of the church, as the Roman Catholics allege in order to promote their contention that Peter was the first pope. We know that Peter was there later, but not at this time. The most likely explanation for the origin of the church at Rome is that it was founded by Jews of the dispersion and proselytes (converts) to the faith who had made their homes in Rome. We read in Acts 2:10 that visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, were among those present at Pentecost, and were numbered among the believers. The obvious conclusion is that when they returned to Rome, they brought the gospel of Christ with them; no doubt they proclaimed that gospel to the Gentile Romans among whom they lived, and the church came into being.

We do not know the size of the church at Rome. We do know the names of some of the members (ch. 16), although we know little or nothing about most of them. We do know from the language and topics dealt with in the epistle that the Roman church was a mix of Jews and Gentiles.

## **The Purpose of Romans**

It is difficult to specify a single purpose that Paul expresses in the book. Rather, there are several related purposes to which

we can point. Although he had never been to Rome, Paul was concerned with the welfare of the church there.

His purpose was to set forth in a clear and logical manner the Christian doctrines and in this way to forestall any false teachings that might arise. There are hints in his epistle that point to possible problems looming on the horizon, specifically the opposition of Judaizers and the error of antinomianism. Thus the apostle wants the church to be knowledgeable and well-grounded in the faith of Christ.

His purpose was also to strengthen the church in its hope. The word *hope* is used far more frequently in Romans than in any other book of the Bible, indicating that hope is a very important aspect of the Christian life.

His purpose was to instruct the mixed Jew and Gentile church concerning the rejection of the Jews as a nation and the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church.

His purpose was to exhort and admonish the church concerning the Christian life, something that is always necessary for the church.

### **Theme and Division of Romans**

There is no single theme in the epistle from which the apostle deviates. Yet we can say that the main idea of Romans is justification by grace through faith (Rom. 3:24, 3:28, 5:1).

The book is best divided into three parts:

1. Justification by faith and its implications (chapters 1–8).
2. The rejection of the Jews and the inclusion of the Gentiles (chapters 9–11).
3. Practical exhortations and personal matters (chapters 12–16).

### **Methodology**

The question format of this study guide is intended to help God's people define and understand Paul's concepts and terms, as well as their relationships to one another. As much as possible the questions are intentionally leading, with the

goal of fostering discussion and assisting in the understanding of Romans, whether in Bible study societies or on a personal level. To the extent that the questions are accurately answered, the student of Romans will gain an understanding of the epistle.

Mark H. Hoeksema



# Romans 1

## Romans 1:1–7

Paul introduces himself and greets the church of Rome.

1. Paul calls himself a servant (literally, “slave”) of Christ (v. 1). What does this term imply?
2. He also calls himself an apostle (v. 1). What was an apostle?
3. Why does Paul refer to the Old Testament in verses 2–3?
4. What does it mean that Christ is declared (appointed) to be the Son in power and according to the Spirit of holiness (v. 4)?
5. What does the resurrection of Christ prove (v. 4)?
6. Who are the “we” who have received grace and apostleship (v. 5)?

7. How is “for obedience to the faith among all nations” related to receiving grace and apostleship (v. 5)?
8. In what two ways does Paul describe the church of Rome? What do these terms mean (v. 7)?
9. What do “grace” and “peace” mean?

### **Romans 1:8–14**

Paul expresses his desire to visit the church at Rome.

1. Why is Paul thankful for “all” the saints (v. 8)?
2. Why is he thankful to God (v. 8)?
3. How often does he pray for the saints (v. 9)? What do we learn from this?
4. What is intercessory prayer? Why is such prayer necessary?
5. For what is Paul thankful (v. 8)?

6. What is Paul's primary desire (v. 10)?
7. What three reasons does Paul give for wanting to visit the Roman church (vv. 11–13)?
8. What is the comfort of “mutual faith” (v. 12)?
9. Who are the Greeks and the barbarians (v. 14)?
10. What does it mean that he is a debtor to both?

### **Romans 1:15–17**

Paul defines the gospel.

1. Why is Paul so eager to preach the gospel to the Roman church (vv. 14–15)?
2. What is the gospel of Christ—the Bible, the preaching, the message (v. 15)?
3. How is the gospel the power unto salvation (v. 16)?

4. Is the gospel an offer or a command? Compare the Arminian and Calvinistic views.
5. Is faith a condition to salvation (v. 16)?
6. What is the content of the gospel (v. 17)?
7. What is the “righteousness of God” (v. 17)?
8. What does it mean that righteousness is revealed “from faith to faith?”
9. What is the relation between faith and being just (v. 17)?
10. Why does the gospel come to the Jew first and then to the Greek (v. 16)?
11. What is the twofold effect of the gospel?
12. Why might one be ashamed of the gospel?

13. How do these verses encourage us not to be ashamed of the gospel?

### **Romans 1:18–32**

Paul describes the wrath of God against the natural man. This passage shows the necessity of justification.

1. About whom is Paul writing—Jews, Gentiles, or unregenerate man in general (v. 18)?
2. What is the relation between this passage and the preceding (“For,” v. 18)?
3. What is the wrath of God?
4. Against what is it revealed (v. 18)?
5. Can men know that God’s wrath is revealed against them? How (v. 19)?
6. What does holding the truth in unrighteousness mean (v. 18)?

7. How is verse 19 a reason (“Because”) for the revelation of God’s wrath (v. 18)?
  
8. What two things can men know about God apart from the gospel (v. 20)?
  
9. How do they know these (v. 20)?
  
10. Is this knowledge sufficient to condemn them (v. 20)?  
Apart from the gospel, how is this possible?
  
11. Is their knowledge sufficient for them to be saved?
  
12. What do men do with their knowledge (v. 21)?
  
13. What is the connection between verse 21 and being wise and being fools (v. 22)?
  
14. Instead of serving God, what do they do (vv. 23, 25)?
  
15. What is God’s reaction to this (v. 24, vv. 26–28)?

16. What does it mean that God “gave them up” (v. 24) to their immorality?
17. To what sin do verses 26–27 refer?
18. Is it correct to say that this is the ultimate manifestation of sin?
19. Why does scripture severely condemn homosexuality?
20. What should be our attitude toward the homosexual and his sin?
21. The twenty-two terms in verses 29–31 can be divided as follows:
  - The first five describe categories of sins.
  - The next five describe specific sins.
  - The last twelve describe those who commit these sins.
22. What does each of the above terms mean?
23. How does verse 32 show the deliberate nature of sin?
24. How can we be guilty of taking pleasure in the sins of others (v. 32)?

# Romans 2

## Romans 2:1–16

Paul speaks of God’s judgment on the sinners described in chapter 1:18–32.

1. How does “Therefore” connect chapter 1 and chapter 2?
2. What is the difference in viewpoint between chapter 1 and chapter 2?
3. To whom does Paul write (vv. 1, 3)?
4. Who is the “we” of verse 2?
5. What is the biblical idea of judging (vv. 1–3)?
6. Is it right or wrong to pass judgment on others? Why or why not?



7. What point does Paul make in verses 1–3 (see Matt. 7:1–4)?
8. What attitude does Paul address in verses 4–5?
9. What are the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God (v. 4)?
10. What is it to despise these virtues of God (v. 4)?
11. What does it mean that the goodness of God leads to repentance (v. 4)? Is this always true?
12. What are the day of wrath and the revelation of God's righteous judgment (v. 5)?
13. What does it mean that God will judge every man "according to his deeds" (v. 6)?
14. What does it mean to treasure up wrath (v. 5)?
15. What is God's positive judgment (vv. 7, 10) according to the principle of verse 6?

16. What is God's negative judgment (vv. 8–9)?
  
17. Why do both judgments come upon the Jews first and then the Gentiles (vv. 9–10)?
  
18. What is “respect of persons” (v. 11)?
  
19. Why is there no respect of persons with God?
  
20. What does it mean to sin and to “perish without law” (v. 12)? Of whom is this true?
  
21. What does it mean to sin in the law and to be judged by the law (v. 12)? Of whom is this true?
  
22. How is the judgment of those in the law different from those without the law (v. 12)?
  
23. Why are not the hearers but the doers of the law justified (v. 13)?
  
24. Does Paul teach that it is possible to be justified by the deeds of the law (v. 13)?

25. What are the things contained in the law (v. 14)?
  
26. How are the Gentiles a law unto themselves?
  
27. What is the work of the law in distinction from the law itself (v. 15)?
  
28. How is this work written in their hearts (v. 15)?
  
29. What is man's conscience (v. 15)?
  
30. How do the Gentiles either accuse or excuse themselves (v. 15)?
  
31. How can the Gentiles be condemned if they are without the law (vv. 14–15)?
  
32. All of this happens in the day of judgment. How does this happen according to Paul's gospel (v. 16)?

## **Romans 2:17–29**

Paul describes Jewish self-exaltation and hypocrisy.

1. What does it mean that the Jews rested in the law and made their boast in God (v. 17)?
  
2. Verses 18–20 describe characteristics of the Jews:
  - a. They know God’s will and approve the more excellent things. What do these clauses mean?
  
  - b. They are confident that they are guides of the blind and a light to those in darkness. Who are the blind and those in darkness?
  
  - c. They are instructors of the foolish and teachers of babes. Who are the foolish and the babes?
  
3. What is the form of knowledge and of truth in the law (v. 20)?
  
4. What is the point of Paul’s questions in verses 21–23?
  
5. What is the consequence of hypocrisy for the church (v. 24)?

6. How does circumcision profit if the law is kept (v. 25)? Is this possible?
7. How can circumcision become uncircumcision (v. 25)?
8. Of whom could Paul be thinking in verses 25–26? For what were they known?
9. What is uncircumcision which is by nature (v. 27)? How can it judge?
10. What contrast does Paul draw in verses 28–29? Who is a true Jew and what is true circumcision?
11. How does this contrast apply to us?

# Romans 3

## Romans 3:1–8

Paul answers three objections against God's righteousness.

1. What is the objection of verse 1?
2. What is Paul's answer in verse 2?
3. What are the oracles of God?
4. What is the objection raised in verse 3?
5. What is Paul's answer in verse 4?
6. How does the quotation from Psalm 51:4 prove Paul's point?
7. What objection is raised in verse 5?

8. How does Paul answer this objection?
9. Who are those who raise this objection (v. 8)?
10. Why is their condemnation just?

### **Romans 3:9–18**

Paul proves universal depravity to demonstrate the necessity of justification.

1. To what conclusion (“What then?”) does Paul lead in verse 9?
2. Who are the “we” in verse 9?
3. When Paul asks (v. 9), “Are we better than they,” of whom is he speaking?
4. How has Paul previously proved that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin (v. 9)?
5. What scripture passages does Paul quote in verses 10–18?

6. Why does Paul quote from the Old Testament?
7. Who are described in verses 10–18?
8. What point does Paul make in verses 10–12?
9. Why does Paul single out sins of the tongue (vv. 13–14)?
10. To what expressions of man’s sinfulness do verses 15–17 refer?
11. What is the basic reason for man’s sinfulness and depravity (v. 18)?

### **Romans 3:19–31**

Paul describes the righteousness of God in contrast to man’s wickedness.

1. To what does “the law” refer (v. 19)?
2. Who are those who are under the law (v. 19)?



3. What is the purpose of the law (v. 19)?
4. What conclusion (“Therefore”) does Paul draw from man’s depravity (v. 20)?
5. What are the deeds of the law (v. 20)?
6. Why cannot anyone be justified by the deeds of the law (v. 20)?
7. In contrast, the righteousness of God is manifested. What does it mean that this righteousness is without the law (v. 21)?
8. Does God ignore the law in this righteousness?
9. What is the only way to be righteous before God (v. 22)?
10. What does “there is no difference” (v. 22) mean?
11. Why is there no difference (v. 23)?

12. What is the meaning of justification (v. 24)?
13. What does it mean to be justified “freely by grace” (v. 24)?
14. What is the meaning of “redemption” (v. 24)?
15. What words in verse 25 point to the truth of sovereign predestination?
16. What is a propitiation (v. 25)?
17. What are “sins that are past” (v. 25)?
18. What is the forbearance of God? How is it related to the remission of sins (v. 25)?
19. How is God the justifier of those who believe (v. 26)?
20. What is the boasting of which Paul speaks (v. 27)?
21. Why is boasting excluded (v. 27)?

22. What is the law of faith (v. 27)?
  
23. What is Paul's conclusion (vv. 28–29)?
  
24. What does it mean that God justifies the circumcision *by* faith and uncircumcision *through* faith (v. 30)?
  
25. To whom do these groups refer?
  
26. How do we establish the law rather than making it void (v. 31)?