

ROMANS

Opening Eyes
to the Truth of the Gospel

Writing of the Book

- Rome was the greatest city of classical antiquity in the West, the capital of the vast Roman Empire.
- In Jesus' day it is estimated that about 100 million people lived in the empire, extending from Great Britain in the west to Germany in the north to Iran in the east and Egypt in the south.
- Christianity most likely came to Rome first with Jews who heard Peter's preaching at Pentecost, sharing the gospel at synagogues.

Writing of the Book

- Paul wrote Romans during his three month stay in Greece in 57, near the completion of his third missionary journey and on the eve of his departure for his last known visit to Jerusalem.
- This is confirmed by Paul's commendation of Phoebe as the person who carried the letter from Corinth to Rome, as her home church was in Cenchreae, a small town eight miles from Corinth.

Purpose and Message

- Paul writes Romans in part to rally support for the upcoming mission to Spain he hopes to take.
- Paul was also concerned about the health of the Roman church.
- Primarily, however, the main purpose of Romans is theological: to teach life-changing truth about God, humanity, redemption, and Christ's kingdom, or to expound the gospel.

Outline of Acts

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. The Need for Salvation (1:18-3:20)
- III. **Justification:** The Imputation of Righteousness (3:21-5:21)
- IV. **Sanctification:** The Impartation of Righteousness (6:1-8:39)

V. God's Righteousness Vindicated with Israel (9:1-11:36)

VI. Our Spiritual Service: The Practice of Righteousness
(12:1-15:3)

VII. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

Major Themes Sin

- The gospel is good news, it is the righteousness of God, it is available by faith, it is the greatest thing that people could ever experience.
- Romans 1:18-23 describes the **typical people** of his day, who have an idea of God because they see the beauty and grandeur of the world all around them, but **instead of worshipping God who created the world, they worship nature itself.**

Major Themes

Sin *(continued)*

- Instead of worshipping **the one who frees people from their bondage to evil and vice**, people embrace those evils and vices, with their minds becoming warped around them.
- He goes on in chapters two and three to demonstrate **how all people are sinners, accountable to God, without hope, because all are sinners, and justly deserve divine wrath for their sin.**

Major Themes

Justification

- And yet there is **hope for sinners** because of Jesus Christ.
- This is the main message of Romans.
- Jesus opens the way to receiving God's righteousness rather than wrath.
- “**Justified**” implies that God gives sinners a **new status** before him.

Major Themes

Justification *(continued)*

- All of this made possible by Christ's atonement, where in our place he bore the divine wrath our sin deserved.
- We experience all of this **through faith**, we lay hold of the salvation Christ has accomplished for us **through faith**.
- Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.
- We can do nothing to merit God's acceptance, we can only receive it as a **gift by faith**.

Major Themes

Sanctification

- Salvation by grace alone through faith alone can be distorted, however.
- In Christ we are not only justified, but we are also sanctified which means that we become increasingly holy in Christ, we increasingly obey and grow in faith as his followers.
- **Grace never means that sin is now permissible just because the penalty for sin has been lifted in Christ.**

Major Themes

Sanctification *(continued)*

- Rather, the opposite is the case.
- We are no longer subject to our natural human spirits, **we have God's own Spirit, who overrides and transforms our sinful tendencies and deeds.**
- God will deliver his people, he will bring redemption to the cosmos, he will reverse all sin and suffering and bring his good purposes to bear across time and space.

Major Themes

Purpose for Israel

- The gospel's good news for the entire universe is also good news for God's people Israel, as his promises to Abraham's descendants will not fail.
- Paul explains in Romans 9-11 that God is true to his promises, that no human action or inaction can derail his good purposes, and that God will never reject his people whom he awakens to faith, and that one day all Israel (the remnant) will be saved in the sense that there will be a massive turning to Christ among the Jewish people before the kingdom comes.

Major Themes

A Lived Gospel

- Romans is not only theological, however, but practical (good theology is always practical).
- Paul explains in chapters 12-15 how believers should live in light of the gospel.
 - Lives should reflect the truth they have embraced
 - Place capacities & gifts at God's disposal
 - Devote oneself to Christ over everything else
 - Allow freedom of the Holy Spirit to guide believers
 - Sometimes freedom means self-restraint for the sake of God's honor & the gospel
 - Put others ahead of oneself