

ROMANS – INTRODUCTION

The Book of Romans is a profound book: “No composition in human language authored by man or the Holy Spirit surpasses the scope, depth, and grandeur of thought communicated in this letter” (Bryan Vinson, Sr. –Paul’s Letter to the Saints at Rome, p.9).

William Tyndale , who was burned at the stake in 1536 for translating the New Testament into English, exhorts readers to be careful readers of Romans: “First we must mark diligently the manner of speaking of the apostle, and above all things know what Paul meaneth by these words – the Law, Sin, Grace, Faith, Righteousness, Flesh, Spirit and such like – or else, read thou it never so often, thou shalt but lose thy labour.”

I. AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

- A. Paul, a servant and apostle of Christ (1:1).
 - 1. “Apostle of Gentiles” (11:13).
 - 2. “minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles” (15:16).
 - 3. Preacher to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47,48; 15:12; 18:6,7; 22:21; 26:17; Gal. 2:2,8; Eph. 3:8; I Tim. 2:7).
- B. Paul’s scribe, Tertius, penned the letter (16:22).

II. THE APOSTLE PAUL

- A. A Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 21:39; 22:3) and therefore, a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28).
- B. He was instructed under the tutelage of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
 - 1. Gamaliel was a Pharisee and well-known doctor of the law
 - 2. Gamaliel “held in honor of all the people” (Acts 5:34).
 - 3. Coupled with parental training, Paul had a great knowledge of the law – Paul was proud of his Jewish lineage (2 Cor. 11:22; Acts 22:13; 26:4; Phil. 3:4-6).
 - 4. Paul more advanced than others in Judaism.
- C. He became a leader in persecuting the saints (Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2).
- D. The Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6).
- E. Paul becomes a Christian in Damascus (Acts 9:18, 22:16).
- F. He immediately began to preach Christ (Acts 9:20).
- G. He spent some time in Arabia, returning to Damascus briefly (Gal. 1:17).
- H. After a visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:18; Acts 9:26-29), he then went to Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21).
- I. Barnabas found him at Tarsus and brought him to Antioch in Syria where the labored together in the church there for a whole year (Acts 11:25,26).
- J. Barnabas and Paul separated by the Holy Spirit for the work of God (Acts 13:1-3), went to Cyprus and Asia Minor (Acts 13:4-14:28).
- K. When they returned to Antioch, they rehearsed all the things God had done for them (Acts 13:27).
- L. Due to a controversy arising concerning circumcision, Paul and Baranbas were sent to Jerusalem about the matter (Acts 15:1-35).

- M. Paul and Silas make the second preaching journey, including Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece (Acts 15:36-18:23).
- N. Paul goes on third journey to the same regions (Acts 18:23-21:16).
- O. Paul arrested in Jerusalem and tried by Sanhedrin (Acts 21:27-23:30).
- P. Paul sent to Caesarea, and imprisoned for two years (Acts 23:31-26:32).
- Q. Paul embarks on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27).
 - 1. The shipwreck (27:9-44).
 - 2. The escape to Melitia (28:1-10).
 - 3. The journey resumed (28:11-15).
 - 4. The arrival in Rome (28:16).
 - 5. Paul preaches for two years in Rome (28:17-31).
- R. Paul probably was released for a while and revisited places of his former labor (cf. I Tim., Titus).
- S. Second imprisonment and death in Rome (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

III. TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING

- A. From Corinth, during his three months stay in Greece , A.D. 58 (Acts 20:2,3).
 - 1. Written after the Corinthian letters (Rom. 15:25-26; I Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 8,9).
- B. Phoebe, a devoted woman and servant of the church in Cenchrea, port city of Corinth – 9 miles from Corinth (Rom. 16:1, Acts 18:18).
 - 1. She was about to leave for Rome, and Paul commended her to the brethren.
- C. Salutations sent from Gaius – who was baptized in Corinth (Rom. 16:23, I Cor. 1:14).
- D. Salutations from Erastus, chamberlain of “the city” – Corinth (Rom. 16:23).

IV. THOSE ADDRESSED

- A. “Saints” - “in Rome” (Rom. 1:7).
- B. Some Gentiles (1:13; 11:13, 30).
- C. Some Jews (2:17, 24; 4:1)
- D. Origin of the church in Rome:
 - 1. Paul had not been in Rome (Rom. 1:10-11, 15:24, 28).
 - 2. There were people from Rome in Jerusalem when the gospel began to be preached (Acts 2:10) – They may have gone home to preach and teach.
 - 3. Some of Paul’s acquaintances and converts of Paul may have established the church through their teaching . List of names in chapter 16 mentions many of Paul’s acquaintances.
 - 4. Gospel could have spread there after persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4).

5. There is no evidence that Peter or other of the apostles planted the church in Rome.

V. PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

- A. To contrast : Justification by faith vs. Works of law.
 1. Paul establishes that justification – “free of guilt” – from our sins is based upon our trust in Christ – His death and resurrection (Rom. 3:24-26, Chapter 4:3).
 2. Paul refutes the teaching of the Jews that justification is of the Law – system of works (Rom. 3:28,29, Chapter 4:4, 13-16).
- B. Theme of the Book : The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe or trust in Christ (Rom. 1:16-17).
 1. All have sinned (Gentile and Jew) (Rom. 3:9,10,23).
 2. Gospel revealed as means of saving mankind from sins (Rom. 1:16-17, Mark 16:15-16, 2 Thess. 1:7-8).
 3. Same conditions and promises are made to Jews and Gentiles alike (Rom. 10:12, 11:16-24).
- C. The book logically follows the book of Acts. Acts offers the history of the conversions showing people being justified from their past sins. Romans deals in particular with justification, emphasizing the need and how to obtain it.

VI. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

INTRODUCTION (1:1-17) – salutation, personal matters, the theme of the epistle.

- A. The Problem: All sin, and are justly condemned (1:18-3:18).
- B. The Remedy for Sin: The Gospel of Christ (3:19-5:21).
- C. Development of the New Life in Christ (Chapters 6-8).
- D. The Gospel as it relates to Israel (Chapters 9-11).
- E. Practical application of the Law of Christ (12:1-15:7).
- F. Christ, a minister to Both Jew and Gentile (15:8-33).
- G. Personal Greetings, Final Exhortation, Doxology (16:1-27).

