

# Introduction to Romans

Paul wrote his letter to the church in Rome about 57 A.D., about two years after he wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. (see Acts 20:2,3) While the place of his writing is not known for sure, it seems likely that he may have been in Corinth. In other words, he probably wrote Romans during the visit he promised the Corinthians when he wrote his second letter to them.

Although Paul wanted to visit Rome soon, he felt he personally had to deliver the collection taken for the church in Jerusalem, so he deferred a visit until after he had completed his circuit to Jerusalem. Unlike his letters to the Corinthians, Romans deals little with the problems in that church. Since Paul had never been there, he was not intimately acquainted with their concerns as he was with those at Corinth.

The church in Rome was predominantly Gentile, but it seems likely that there was a significant minority of believing Jews among them. Paul’s purpose in writing this letter was threefold:

1. To prepare the Roman church for his visit which he planned to make in conjunction with a proposed visit to Spain.
2. To explain the basic system of salvation to a church that had not previously had teaching from an apostle
3. To explain the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in God’s plan. (The Gentile believers were rejecting the smaller contingent of Jewish believers because the Jews still felt compelled to observe special days and dietary laws.)

The main theme of the book of Romans is the gospel, God’s salvation and his righteousness for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. In it Paul discusses guilt, justification by faith, sanctification, and eternal security. Incidentally, the book of Romans is the book Martin Luther read as a 15th century monk when God removed the veil of works from his eyes, and he understood for the first time that the just shall live by faith. This understanding nurtured by Paul’s explanation of the gospel in the book of Romans is what planted the seed in Luther’s heart that ultimately yielded The Reformation.

Four special characteristics define this book:

1. It is the most systematic of Paul’s letters, reading more like a theological essay than a letter.
2. It emphasizes Christian doctrine, discussing sin, salvation, grace, faith, righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, death, and resurrection.
3. It depends heavily on Old Testament quotations to carry its points, especially in chapters 9 through 11 in which Paul discusses the hardening and eventual salvation of Israel.
4. It expresses deep concern for Israel, examining her present status, her relationship to the Gentiles, and her final salvation.

(Background derived from the introductory notes to the book of Romans, NIV Study Bible)

# Notes and Prayer Requests

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# The letter to the ROMANS

Former Adventist Fellowship Bible Study

## 1. Greeting

### Romans 1:1-7

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—

<sup>2</sup> the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures

<sup>3</sup> regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> 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. (NIV)

## Key Words

**called** \_\_\_\_\_

**apostle** \_\_\_\_\_

**gospel** \_\_\_\_\_

**grace** \_\_\_\_\_

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:24-25, NIV

## A Look At the Greeting

1. The word “apostle” means “one who is sent”. Technically we refer to apostles as those who saw the risen Christ and received his commission to go teach the gospel. Where else does Paul declare his apostleship, and what do we learn about his calling or appointment from these references? (see 1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 2:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:21 Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1)

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2. The Greek word translated “set apart” or, in some version, “separated”, is the word aphorizo which also yields our word “horizon”. What does Paul mean when he declares he has been “set apart for [separated unto] the gospel of God”? (see Acts 9:15; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5; 13:2; Galatians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:12)

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3. Paul claims the call to declare the “gospel of God...promised beforehand through his prophets.” We often refer to the gospel of the Lord Jesus; what is significant about attributing it to God and linking it to prophecy? (see Romans 15:15-16; 2 Corinthian 11:7; 1 Peter 4:16-17; Acts 13:32-33; Titus 1:1-3; Luke 1:69-75; Romans 3:21-22)

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4. What is significant about the fact that Jesus had a human nature? (see John 1:1, 14; Romans 9:5; Hebrews 2:14-18)

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5. How did the resurrection testify to the divinity of Jesus and his role as Savior? (see John 20:8-9; Acts 2:24; 13:33-37; 17:31; Romans 8:10-11; 10:8-9; Ephesians 1:18-20; Colossians 2:9-12; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:20-21)

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6. What is the grace which Paul received through Jesus? (see 3:22-24; 2 Corinthian 12:8-10)

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7. What is the obedience that comes through faith? (see Acts 6:7; Romans 16:25-27; Hebrews 10:13-16, 32-39)

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8. Who are “the called” to whom the Romans belong? (see Jude 1; Revelation 17:14; John 10:27)

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## Application

9. Summarize Paul’s message in the greeting.

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10. Is there anything in the greeting that surprises you?

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11. How have the facts about Jesus in this greeting affected your life?

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12. Ask God to open you heart and to teach you the truths he wants you to know as you study the book of Romans.