

The Epistle To The Romans

Introduction

AUTHOR

Paul, the apostle (**Rom. 1:1**). The authorship of this epistle has been universally accepted, even by those sects who did not like Paul. It is ascribed to Paul by Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and many other writers in the early church. The internal evidence of the book is also supportive of Paul as its author.

PLACE OF WRITING

Corinth, as evident from the greetings of Gaius, who lived at Corinth (**Rom. 16:23; 1 Co 1:14**), and of Erastus, who had settled down there (**16:23; 2 Ti 4:20**). Also, Phoebe, who apparently accompanied the epistle (**16:1-2**), was from the church at Cenchrea, a "suburb" of Corinth.

TIME OF WRITING

57-58 A.D.; while on his third journey (**Acts 20:1-3**), just prior to his arrival to Jerusalem with the collection for the needy saints (**Rom. 15:25-26; Ac 20:16; 24:17**).

BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AT ROME

Nothing is revealed in the New Testament as to the start of the church in Rome. It is possible that visitors to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension were among the 3000 saved and later took the gospel with them back home (**Acts 2:10**). Or it could be that among those dispersed following Stephen's death were some that went to Rome and preached the gospel there (**Acts 8:1-4**). The first we read of Christians from Rome is possibly that of Aquila and Priscilla, who along with all Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius and were found by Paul at Corinth during his second journey (**Ac 18:1-2**). After travelling with Paul to Ephesus and working with the church there (**Acts 18:18-19, 24-26; 1 Co 16:19**), we find them back at Rome and hosting a church in their house (**Rom. 16:3-5**).

From the greetings given by Paul in chapter sixteen, it appears that there were several churches in Rome meeting in various homes (**Rom. 16:5,14,15**). The names of individuals would suggest that the Christians were primarily Gentiles, with a smaller number of Jews. The reputation of the Christians in Rome was widespread; both their faith (**Rom. 1:8**) and obedience (**Rom. 16:19**) were well known. For this reason Paul had long wanted to see them (**Rom. 15:23**), with the goal of sharing in their mutual edification (**Rom. 1:11-12**) and to be assisted on his way to Spain (**Rom. 15:22-24**).

PURPOSE OF WRITING

Paul expresses in this epistle that he had for some time planned to preach the gospel at Rome (**Rom. 1:13-15**) and from there go on to Spain (**Rom. 15:22-24**). Though he still had these intentions (**Rom. 15:28-29**), the spreading cancer of the "Judaizing teachers" which had disrupted churches in Antioch, Corinth and Galatia was likely to make its way to Rome. To prevent this, and to assure that his visit to Rome would be a pleasant one (**Rom. 15:30-33**), Paul writes:

"TO SET STRAIGHT THE DESIGN AND NATURE OF THE GOSPEL"

In doing so, he demonstrates how the gospel of Christ fulfills what is lacking in both heathenism and Judaism, thereby effectively replacing them as religious systems. Such an epistle would arm the church at Rome against those who would pervert the gospel or suggest that it was inadequate by itself.

THEME: Romans 1:16-17

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

In these two verses Paul states his confidence in the gospel and the reasons for it. The bulk of his epistle is devoted to explaining why and how the gospel of Christ is God's power to save those who believe.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)

I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (1:18-11:36)

A. SIN - THE "NEED" FOR SALVATION

1. The need of the Gentiles (1:18-2:16)
2. The need of the Jews (2:17-3:8)
3. The universal need for salvation (3:9-20)

B. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH - THE "PROVISION" MADE FOR SALVATION

1. God's righteousness through faith (3:21-31)
2. Abraham as an example (4:1-25)

C. FREEDOM - THE "RESULT" OF SALVATION

1. Freedom from wrath (5:1-21)
2. Freedom from sin (6:1-23)
3. Freedom from the Law (7:1-25)
4. Freedom from death (8:1-39)

D. JEW AND GENTILE - THE "SCOPE" OF SALVATION

1. God chooses to save believers (9:1-33)
2. Israel chose to trust in their own righteousness (10:1-21)
3. Both Jew and Gentile can have salvation through faith (11:1-36)

II. THE TRANSFORMED LIFE (12:1-15:13)

A. IN RELATION TO OVERALL CONDUCT (12:1-21)

B. IN RELATION TO CIVIL AUTHORITY (13:1-7)

C. IN RELATION TO FELLOW MAN (13:8-14)

D. IN RELATION TO WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-15:13)

CONCLUDING REMARKS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND BENEDICTION (15:14-16:27)

KEY REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Who wrote the epistle to the Romans?

- The apostle Paul (1:1)

2) From where was it written?

- Corinth

3) What is the approximate date of writing?

- 57 or 58 A.D.

4) What is the purpose of this epistle?

- To set straight the design and nature of the gospel

5) Where is the theme of this epistle stated?

- Romans 1:16-17