

Romans

Introduction

A. Author

B. Occasion (suggestions)

1. To announce his upcoming visit to Rome (Bruce).
2. To secure financial aid for his trip to Spain (15:24).
3. To commend Phoebe (16:1).
4. To introduce "Pauline" Christianity (Liberal view).
5. To express his sense of responsibility because so many of his converts were in the Church at Rome.
6. The problems created by Judaizers.
7. Rome was without apostolic oversight and Paul desired to give the Church of so important a city an orderly, comprehensive statement of the Christian faith.
8. Chambers:
 - a. To address the problem of broken fellowship between Jews and Gentiles and the mutual reluctance to evangelize the other culture.
 - b. To prepare the church for his visit.

C. Time and place of writing

1. Generally assigned to the third missionary tour: AD 57-58
2. AD 58 is the most widely accepted date; written during the three months stay in Greece (Acts 20:1-6).
3. References suggesting Corinth as the place of writing:
 - a. Cenchrea, a port town for Corinth (16:1).
 - b. Erastus (16:23). Acts 19:22; II Tim. 4:20.
 - c. The offering for Jerusalem from Macedonia and Greece (15:25-26).
 - d. Gaius (16:23). I Cor. 1:14.

D. The founding of the Church at Rome

1. Passages that infer a considerable amount of time between the founding of the Church and the writing of the epistle: 1:8-13; 16:19; 13:11, 12.
2. The Church appears well organized: 12:5-8. "He that rules" may imply the presence of elders.
3. Luke apparently thinks that the existence of the Roman Church is so well known that nothing need be said about it: Acts 28:15.
4. The Pentecostal-sojourner theory: Acts 2:10. (Meyer)
5. Christians scattered even to Rome at the death of Stephen: Acts 8:1-4; 11:19

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E. The founder of the Roman Church is unknown.

1. Probably not an apostle: 15:20. See II Cor. 10:13-16; Rom. 1:11
2. The Roman Catholic claim that it was founded by Peter at the beginning of the reign of Claudius about AD 41. Peter is not mentioned by Luke in connection with Rome (Acts 28), nor by Paul in the prison epistles or II Timothy.
3. The Roman Church was probably founded by converts or friends of Paul: 16:3-15.

The Salutation: 1:1-7

- A. The longest Pauline salutation
- B. The Gospel as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy: 2-3.
- C. The Gospel as affirmed by the Resurrection: 4.
- D. The affirmation of the author's apostleship: 1, 5
- E. The conventional greeting: 6-7

II. The Introduction: 1:8-15

- A. Thanksgiving and personal note: 8, 9.
- B. Paul's desire to visit Rome: 10-13.
 1. To impart a spiritual gift.
 2. To strengthen the Church
 3. To give and receive comfort.
 4. To have fruit in Rome as among other Gentiles.
- C. Paul's responsibility to all men: 14, 15.

III. Theme: 1:16-17

- A. The power of the Gospel: 16a.
- B. The universality of the Gospel: 16b-17
- C. The primary character of the Gospel (righteousness of God): 16a.
- D. The potential of the Gospel (faith to faith): 17a.

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E. The fundamental call of the Gospel (to live by faith): 17a.

IV. The Jew and Gentile Equally Under Sin; Equally Justified in Christ: 1:18-4:25.

A. Gentiles

1. Received the natural revelation: 1:18-20.
2. Idolatry (ungodliness of vs. 18): 1:21-23.
3. Immorality (unrighteousness of vs. 18): 1:24-27.
4. A catalog of sins: 1:28-32.

B. Jews

1. Guilty of judging Gentiles for those sins which they commit themselves: 2:1-16.
 - a. The judgment of God is to be expected: 2.
 - b. The judgment of God is according to deeds, not race or culture: 6.
 - c. The judgment of God is impartial: 11.
2. The Jews place mistaken confidence in tradition, ceremony, and personal attainment: 2:17-29.
3. Arguments anticipated as coming from Jewish mind: 3:1-8.
4. The Jew is no better than the Gentile: 3:9-20.

C. Jew and Gentile justified through faith in Christ: 3:21-4:25.

1. The righteousness of God revealed: 3:21, 22.
2. No distinction: 3:22-24.
3. The integrity of God preserved: 3:25-26.
4. The ground of Jewish boasting removed: 3:27-30
5. The Law fulfilled in faith: 3:31.
6. Abraham, an example of justification by faith: 4:1-25.

V. Results of Justification through faith in Christ: 5:1-8; 39.

A. Blessings: 5:1-5

1. Peace with God: 1.
2. Access by faith into grace: 2a.
3. Confident expectation (hope) of becoming like God (glory): 2b-5.

B. Saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus: 5:6-11

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1. Death: 6-10a.
2. Life: 10b-11.

C. What was lost in Adam was gained in Christ: 5:12-21

1. The main argument advanced: 12, 18, 19.

- a. By one act of one man came sin, condemnation, and death.
- b. By one act of one man came justification, righteousness, and life.

2. Parenthetical support for the main argument: 13-17.

- a. Death was in the world from Adam forward, although the Law had not been given: 13, 14a.
- b. Adam's sin was unique: 14b.
- c. Contrasts--Adam vs. Christ: 15-17.

(1) Disobedience caused death to many vs. grace, which comes upon many (all): 15.

(2) The sin of Adam was single causing a universal problem, whereas the act of Jesus involved many sins, yet brought about a (potentially) universal solution: 16.

(3) Sin leading to death vs. grace leading to life: 17.

3. Appendix to the main argument, affirming the sufficiency of grace: 20-21

D. A parenthetical response to those who might misunderstand grace and believe that it is subject to exploitation: 6:1-7; 25.

1. Baptism into the death of Christ was not only into His death for sin, but also into His death to sin: 6:1-11.

2. The Lordship of Jesus (vs. Savior) presented as the master-slave relationship: 6:12-23.

3. The Lordship of Jesus presented as the husband-wife relationship: 7:1-6.

4. The struggle that must go on between the "law of my members" and the "law of my mind": 7:7-25.

a. The law is not guilty of creating sin.

(1) It is the opportunity for sin: 7:7-11.

(2) The law itself is holy (it expresses the character and will of God), it is my sin that is unholy: 12-14.

b. The personal struggle: 15-25.

(1) The conflicting principles: 15-23.

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(2) The possibility of victory: 24, 25.

E. The ground of condemnation removed: 8:1-39.

1. There is no condemnation from God for those who are in Christ: 1, 2.
2. We are not to live as if we were under Law: 3-9.
3. Our new life is in Christ, and we must, therefore, have the spirit of the Father: 10-17.
4. Our glorious expectation, in which the universe itself shares, is a reason to continue the struggle: 18-25.
5. We are not left to struggle alone: 26-30.
 - a. The working of God on our behalf: 26-28.
 - b. The goal: conformation to the image of Christ: 29-30.
6. The absurdity of condemning those for whom Christ died and the glory of the universal salvation in Him: 31-39.

VI. The Response to the Anticipated Question: Does the universal salvation offered in Christ (not accepted by National Israel) mean that God has broken His promise to save all Israel?: 9:1-11:36.

A. Paul's grief for his kinsmen in the flesh: 9:1-5.

B. The mistaken belief that all descendants of Abraham were included in the promise: 9:6-13. (From the beginning it was only through the descendants of Isaac that the Messianic plan was pursued.)

C. God used National Israel, but He is not, thereby, committed to including all Jews in the Messianic Kingdom. Argument: God used Pharaoh, but this did not save Pharaoh. 9:14-18.

D. God is not unjust in His refusal to offer salvation by race: 9:19-33

1. God is God and we are not. His will is not subject to human approval: 9:19-21.
2. God has the right to use National Israel as a "common vessel," although He knew that it would be eventually destroyed: 22.
3. He intended that an "honorable vessel" should receive the glory, made of both Jews and Gentiles: 23-26.
4. The promise was made to only the true Israel, i.e., the remnant (of faith) torn from National Israel: 27-29.
5. Salvation by faith: open to Gentiles, a stumblingblock to National Israel: 30-33.

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E. Paul appeals to National Israel to accept God's righteousness in Christ: 10:1-21

1. Their misplaced zeal, their refusal to abandon self-created righteousness as the basis of their salvation: 1-3
2. Christ as the righteousness anticipated in the Law: 4.
3. Righteousness in Moses vs. that in Christ: 5-10.
4. Old Testament Scripture leads the Jews to expect universal (vs. national) salvation: 11-15.
5. Despite the loving invitation of God, Israel rejects the Word of Christ just as it rejected the Word of the Prophets: 16-21

F. The rejection of National Israel does not mean the rejection of any Jew: 11:1-36.

1. The very idea rejected: 1, 2a.
2. Reaffirmation that the promise of God is kept in the remnant who accept the grace of God: 2b-10.
3. The results of National Israel's rejection of Christ: 11-15a.
 - a. National Israel's refusal to respond did not result simply in their rejection (negative), but also in the readiness of Gentiles to obey the Gospel (positive).
 - b. There is hope that Jews will be moved by jealousy to reconsider the Gospel.
4. If National Israel would repent, the result would be an even greater victory for the Church (implied): 15b, 16.
5. The Gentiles warned against pride: 17-24.
 - a. The figure of natural vs. grafted branches.
 - b. The door is always open to Jews.
6. The conclusion of the argument: 25-26.
 - a. The mystery is now revealed, i.e., that salvation is in the remnant that accepts the Deliverer: 25-27.
 - b. National Israel is not to be hated, because the Father still loves and welcomes them and because there is no distinction with Him: 28-32.
 - c. In all this God is to be praised (not questioned): 33-36.

VII. A General Call for Humility and Mutual Acceptance: 12:1-15:12

A. A call to repentance: 12:1, 2.

B. A challenge to spirituality in general, unity in particular: 12:2-21

C. A parenthetical call for submission to civil authority (perhaps to reduce the danger of civil interference with the Church at Rome): 13:1-7.

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- D. A return to the theme of spirituality: 13:8-14.
- E. The responsibility of the mature Christian to his weaker brother: 14:1-15:4.
 - 1. Do not judge one another: 14:1-13a.
 - 2. Do not put a stumblingblock before your weaker brother: 14:13b-15:4.
- F. A final call for unity: 15:5-7.
- G. A final reminder to the Jews that universal salvation (by grace vs. by race) fulfills the promise made to the Fathers: 15:8-12.

VIII. Epistolary Close: 15:13-16:27

- A. Paul's ministry, his plans, and his requests: 15:13-33.
 - 1. His ministry to the Gentiles: 13-19.
 - 2. His policy of pioneer evangelism: 20, 21
 - 3. Long-range plans: 22-24; 28b, 29.
 - 4. Short-range plans: 25-28a.
 - 5. His prayer requests: 30-33.
- B. Commendation for Phoebe: 16:1, 2.
- C. Greetings to individuals and Churches: 16:3-15.
- D. Greetings from sister Churches: 16:16.
- E. A last word of warning and encouragement: 16:17-20.
- F. Greetings from fellow workers and relatives: 16:21-23.
- G. Benediction: 16:24.
- H. 16:25-27.