

The Book of Romans

#1- The Apostle Paul in Rome

Memory Verse

Romans 1:8 (NKJV) *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

When we study Romans we are really stepping onto holy ground. All of the stars in the sky are beyond our reach, they're eternal. But some of the stars shine brighter than others. It converted Luther, Augustine & Wesley.

Sunday – The Apostle Paul's Letter

Who? Romans 1:1 (NKJV) *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God*

Saul, (afterwards called Paul), was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, of Jewish parents, who possessed the right of Roman citizens; that, when young, he was sent to Jerusalem for the purpose of receiving a Jewish education; that he was there put under the training of the famous Rabbi Gamaliel, and was incorporated with the sect of the Pharisees, of whose system he imbibed all the pride, self-confidence, and intolerance; and distinguished himself as one of the most ingrained enemies of the Christian cause; but, being converted by a most singular interposition of Divine Providence and grace, he became one of the most zealous promoters and successful defenders of the cause which he had before so vigorously persecuted.

External evidence includes the testimony of such early Fathers as Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and Irenaeus.

Where? Romans 16:1, 2 (NKJV) *I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea [sin-kree-a], that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.*

Romans 16:1, 2 indicates that Paul probably wrote Romans in the Greek city of Cenchreae, which was near Corinth. Paul's mention of Phoebe, a resident of greater Corinth, establishes that place as the likely background for the letter to the Romans.

Romans 16:23 (NKJV) *Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.*

1 Corinthians 1:14–15 (NKJV) *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.*

2 Timothy 4:19–20 (NKJV) *Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth...*

When? In the spring of A.D. 58. Though this epistle is placed the first of the epistles, it was not first written: there were several epistles written before it, as the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, the first epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus: the reason why this epistle stands first, is either its excellency or its length.

During his third missionary journey through Asia.

Why?

***Acts 18:18** (NKJV) *So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him.*

The reason Paul wrote this epistle may be easily collected from the epistle itself. Paul had been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the Christians at Rome, by Aquila and Priscilla, (Rom 16:3), and by other Jews who had been expelled from Rome by the decree of Claudius, (mentioned Act_18:2); and, finding that they consisted partly of heathens converted to Christianity, and partly of Jews who had, with many remaining prejudices, believed in Jesus as the true Messiah, and that many contentions arose from the claims of the Gentile converts to equal privileges with the Jews.

Romans is saturated with Scripture. Mentions of "God" more.

Visiting the Galatian churches, Paul discovered that during his absence false teachers had convinced the members to submit to circumcision and to keep to other precepts of the law of Moses. Fearing that his opponents might reach Rome before he arrived, Paul wrote a letter (Romans) to forestall the same tragedy from happening in Rome. It is believed that the Epistle to the Galatians also was written from Corinth during Paul's three months there on his third missionary journey, perhaps shortly after his arrival.

"In his epistle to the Romans, Paul set forth the great principles of the gospel. He stated his position on the questions which were agitating the Jewish and the Gentile churches, and showed that the hopes and promises which had once belonged especially to the Jews were now offered to the Gentiles also." *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 373.

Paul's Desire to Visit Rome

Romans 15:20–26 (NKJV) *And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,²¹ but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand."²² For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.²³ But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you,²⁴ whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.²⁵ But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.*

Paul in Rome

Acts 25:11 (NKJV) *For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."*

Paul reached Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey with his offering for the poor, which he had collected from the congregations of Europe and Asia Minor. But unexpected events awaited him. He was arrested and chained. After being held prisoner for two years in Caesarea, he appealed to Caesar.

Acts 28:16 (NKJV) *Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.*

Acts 28:30–31 (NKJV) *Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.*

***Philippians 1:12–13** (NKJV) *But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;*

Philippians 4:21–22 (NKJV) *Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.²² All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.*

The "Saints" in Rome

Romans 1:7 (NKJV) *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. His intent was for the Christians in all of Rome to read the epistle.*

Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV) *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, "designated saints." Called to be holy ones.*

The apostle here shows that God had the Gentiles as much in the contemplation of his mercy and goodness as he had the Jews; and the blessings of the Gospel, now so freely dispensed to them, were the proof that God had thus chosen them,.

***Hebrews 2:9** (NKJV) *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

The final fire of hell was meant only for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

Even before the foundation of the world, God called you to have salvation in Him. Why should you not allow anything, anything at all, to hold you back from heeding that call?

The Believers in Rome

***Romans 1:8** (NKJV) *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Some say the church in Rome was started by Peter but there is no reference to this in the Bible. More likely Paul was the first apostle.*

Acts 2:7–11 (NKJV) *Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"⁸ And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."*

Conversions of Wesleys and Luther

In 1735 the Wesley brothers sailed to Georgia, but even in this missionary service, the old doubts about their experience of salvation surfaced. Neither John nor Charles could find assurance that he was indeed the child of God by grace. They returned to England believing their lives and ministry had failed. John Wesley wrote of his experience in Georgia, “I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?”

At seven I went to the Germans. In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the main-sail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards, “Was you not afraid?” He answered, “I thank God, no.” I asked, “But were not your women and children afraid?” He replied, mildly, “No; our women and children are not afraid to die.”

Shortly after his return from America. Both he and Charles were influenced by Moravian friends who bore witness to salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

Charles Wesley was the first of the two to be justified by faith, and on Whitsunday, May 21, 1738, he experienced Pentecost. He wrote in his journal that the Spirit of God “chased away the darkness of my unbelief.” The prolific hymnist (eventually he wrote six to seven-thousand hymns) wrote a hymn to commemorate his day of salvation. “And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour’s blood?”

John Wesley

Three days later, on May 24, 1738, John’s seeking for the grace of God ended in a meeting house on Aldersgate Street in London. He wrote in his journal that now-famous account of his conversion: “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.”

John immediately shared the good news with Charles. Charles wrote that “Towards ten, my brother was brought in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared, ‘I believe.’ We sang the hymn with great joy, and parted with prayer.”

Until their conversions the Wesleys had what John described as “a fair summer religion.” They were both ordained. They both preached, taught, wrote, composed hymns, and even gave themselves to missionary work—all to no avail. They had not Christ, or rather, Christ did not have them. They lived by good works, but not by faith.

Luther

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, “In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live [Romans 1:17].’” There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me.