

## Lesson 32

# ROMANS

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### THE AUTHOR

Romans is the first letter of Paul that we come to as we read the New Testament (Paul wrote \_\_\_\_ [a] New Testament epistles). It wasn't the first New Testament letter he wrote though; but, since it's the first in our New Testament, let's briefly think about this amazing man.

Paul was born in \_\_\_\_\_ [b] (Acts 9:11), a vital military center in the province of Cilicia, located in southeastern corner of what is modern Turkey. Although Paul was a \_\_\_\_\_ [c], he also had \_\_\_\_\_ [d] citizenship because his father was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). He was probably sent to Jerusalem soon after his thirteenth birthday—the age when Jewish boys became recognized as men—where he studied the Scriptures (i.e., the Old Testament) under a very prominent, respected rabbi by the name of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Under Gamaliel, Paul would have memorized and learned to interpret Scripture according to the rabbinical tradition. It was probably during his stay in Jerusalem that he became a \_\_\_\_\_ [e] (Acts 23:6).

In keeping with Jewish custom, Paul also learned the trade of his father, which was \_\_\_\_\_ [f] (Acts 18:3). Since he never encountered Jesus during His earthly ministry, it seems likely that he returned to Tarsus after his education in Jerusalem. Because of his elite training, he was undoubtedly a leader in one of the synagogues of Tarsus. According to his own words, he was very “\_\_\_\_\_ [g]” for the Law of Moses, and he was totally committed to the \_\_\_\_\_ [h] in every detail (Phil 3:5-6). It was probably while he was back in Tarsus that he began hearing about the new “sect” that was filling Jerusalem with the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. Soon he dedicated himself to helping stamp out this presumed heresy (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2).

Then, in about AD 36/37, an event changed his life. On his way to Damascus to hunt for Christians, Jesus appeared to him. Paul was shattered when he realized that he had been assaulting God rather than serving Him. A radical turnaround then happened. He was \_\_\_\_\_ [i] into Christ where his sins were washed away (Acts 22:16), and God commissioned him to be an apostle to the \_\_\_\_\_ [j] (Acts 9:15). From the moment of his conversion, his entire existence was consumed with his new mission of “proving that this Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 9:22), and proclaiming the gospel of \_\_\_\_\_ [k].

## THE CHURCH IN ROME

In Paul's day, Rome was the largest and most powerful city in the Mediterranean world. Estimates of its population in the first century range from 500,000 to over a million.

How the church began in Rome is unclear. One common tradition is that Peter founded the church there, but there is no real evidence to support that tradition. A common speculation is that the church was started by \_\_\_\_\_ [l] who had been converted on the day of \_\_\_\_\_ [m]. We do know that there was a significant Jewish population in Rome when the church began. In fact, by the early New Testament era, there were several \_\_\_\_\_ [n] in Rome, and the Jewish population has been estimated to be around fifty thousand. And we do know that Jews and proselytes from Rome heard Peter preach on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10). It seems probable that some of those Jewish \_\_\_\_\_ [o] on Pentecost returned to Rome and established the church there.

Regardless of how the church began in Rome, by the time Paul wrote his letter to Rome (about AD 57) the membership had changed dramatically. Only about eight years earlier—in AD 49—all or most of the Jews were \_\_\_\_\_ [p] from Rome (Acts 18:2). The Roman historian Suetonius wrote: "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, [Emperor Claudius] expelled them from the city." Most scholars believe the "Chrestus" he refers to is Christ. Suetonius mistakenly believed that Christ Himself was stirring up trouble among the Jews in Rome. What was actually happening, though, was that Jewish Christians were \_\_\_\_\_ [q] about Christ in the synagogues and this was causing \_\_\_\_\_ [r]. This kind of response in synagogues is well known from the accounts given in the book of Acts (Acts 13:45; 17:5, 13; 18:12-13). So, Jews and Jewish Christians had been expelled from Rome—and therefore the Roman church—a few years before Paul wrote Romans in AD 57. By that time a few Jews had begun to trickle back into Rome, but the percentage of Jews in the church when Paul wrote was still rather low.

## THE TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING

Luke gives the following report during Paul's \_\_\_\_\_ [s] missionary journey: "Paul purposed . . . to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome'" (Acts 19:21). Soon after that, Paul left for Greece and arrived in Corinth. There he settled down for three months (Acts 20:1-3). It was most likely during his time in \_\_\_\_\_ [t] that he wrote Romans. The letter was then carried to Rome by Phoebe, a sister in Christ from the church in Cenchrea, a town about 6.5 miles from Corinth (Rom 16:1).

## THE PURPOSE OF ROMANS

Why did Paul write Romans? Unlike many New Testament letters, it doesn't seem that Paul wrote Romans because of some negative situation in the church there; he devotes no space to refuting errors in the congregation. It seems that his primary purpose for writing is to bless the brethren there with \_\_\_\_\_[u] understanding of the \_\_\_\_\_[v] of grace. It seems his main goal is to increase their \_\_\_\_\_[w] of the full power of the gospel. This conclusion is based on a "purpose statement" that Paul makes near the beginning of his letter. Before we get to that "purpose statement" though, let's track Paul's travel plans and see how those plans relate to his purpose for writing Romans.

Paul had wanted to visit the brethren in Rome for some time during his missionary travels, but for one reason or another was never able to make it there (Rom 15:22-23). Now, after almost twenty years of preaching in the regions of Asia Minor and Greece, he is committed to making a trip to \_\_\_\_\_[x]. And as he plans for his Spain trip, he's determined to stop in Rome along the way (Rom 15:24). First, though, before heading to Spain and making a pitstop in Rome, he had to go back to Jerusalem to deliver the \_\_\_\_\_[y] he had been collecting from the Gentile churches "for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem" (Rom 15:25-26).

As Paul heads for Jerusalem, he asked the brethren at Rome to pray for him (Rom 15:30), and he asked them to pray for two specific things. First, Paul realized that a lot of \_\_\_\_\_[z] from the Jews would be lurking in Jerusalem, so he requested the Romans pray that God would "\_\_\_\_\_ [aa]" him from those hazards (Rom 15:31). Second, he was concerned about how the Gentile offering would be received by the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. So, Paul requested the Romans to pray that the Jewish brethren would receive the gift of the Gentile brethren in the proper \_\_\_\_\_[bb]. In his words, he wanted them to pray that "my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints" (Rom 15:31).

With Paul's travel plans in mind, he tells the Romans what he was hoping to do when he was finally able to visit them: "I am \_\_\_\_\_[cc] to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome" (Rom 1:15). That should be seen as his purpose for writing. He wanted to help them understand the gospel more \_\_\_\_\_[dd]; but based on his past experiences and the uncertainty about what would happen to him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-24), he couldn't be absolutely certain that his plan to visit the Romans would ever happen. This probably led him to the conclusion that if he was ever going to get to "preach the gospel" to them, perhaps the only way he would be able to do so was in \_\_\_\_\_[ee]. So, while staying in Corinth before he left for Jerusalem, he writes out his thoughts on the gospel and sends it to Rome in advance of his intended trip there.

## THEME OF ROMANS

There are multiple themes present in Romans, but I believe there is one \_\_\_\_\_[ff] theme to which every other theme contributes. That one theme is found in Paul's statement in Romans 3:38: "For we maintain that a man is justified by \_\_\_\_\_[gg] apart from works of the \_\_\_\_\_[hh]."

The main theme, then, is about how we're \_\_\_\_\_[ii] (i.e., justified) and the answer includes both a \_\_\_\_\_[jj] and a \_\_\_\_\_[kk] statement. The positive statement is that we are saved by faith. The negative statement is that we are not saved by works of law. It's just as important to include the negative statement in the theme as the positive one.

In actuality, then, the basic theme of Romans is the contrast between two \_\_\_\_\_[ll] of salvation—those two systems are a \_\_\_\_\_[mm] system and a \_\_\_\_\_[nn] system. The contrast between these two systems is expressed very clearly in Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace." This is the gospel. This is the \_\_\_\_\_[oo] news of salvation: we are free from trying to be saved by keeping the law. That's good news because a law system asks only one question: "Did you keep the law?" And if the answer is "no," then we're doomed. A law system demands nothing less than \_\_\_\_\_[pp]. Anything less—just one violation of the law—demands that a penalty be paid for breaking the law.

The contrast between law and grace as competing ways of salvation is not a matter of \_\_\_\_\_[qq] Testament versus \_\_\_\_\_[rr] Testament, as if law were the way to be saved before Christ came, and grace is now the way to be saved since Christ has come. No sinner has ever been saved nor can be saved by whatever law system applies to him. Every sinner who has been saved since the time of Adam has been saved by \_\_\_\_\_[ss] and not by \_\_\_\_\_[tt], and this will always be the case.

## OUTLINE OF ROMANS

The basic outline of Romans looks like this:

- All \_\_\_\_\_[uu] are under God's \_\_\_\_\_[vv], and all are lawbreakers (Rom 1-3:21)
- All lawbreakers—that is, all \_\_\_\_\_[ww]—are justified by grace through faith, not by \_\_\_\_\_[xx] keeping (Rom 3:21-5:21)
- Grace also gives us the power to overcome sin's \_\_\_\_\_[yy] in our lives (Rom 6:1-8:39)
- The \_\_\_\_\_[zz] of God in His dealing with the Jews (Rom 9:1-11:36)
- Grace demands living a \_\_\_\_\_[aaa] life (Rom 12:1-15:3)

## LESSONS FROM ROMANS

- We are free from law-keeping as a \_\_\_\_\_[bbb] of salvation.
- We are \_\_\_\_\_[ccc] free from \_\_\_\_\_[ddd] God's law as His people.
- Authentic, biblical \_\_\_\_\_[eee] responds in \_\_\_\_\_[fff]
- We have a \_\_\_\_\_[ggg] problem and need a \_\_\_\_\_[hhh] cure (forgiveness of our sins, and power to defeat sin in life).
- In \_\_\_\_\_[iii] God gives us a new nature, new life, and new spirit.
- Through the \_\_\_\_\_[jjj] we have the \_\_\_\_\_[kkk] to keep sin from controlling and dominating us.
- Even though we have the \_\_\_\_\_[lll] to keep sin from control us, resisting sin is a \_\_\_\_\_[mmm] battle.
- One day God will set the \_\_\_\_\_[nnn] free from sin, and our \_\_\_\_\_[ooo] will also be set free from sin.
- All of God's people—the true “\_\_\_\_\_ [ppp]”—will be saved the same way. In other words, there is only \_\_\_\_\_[qqq] plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles.
- God put us in a community called “the \_\_\_\_\_[rrr],” and He expects us all to find our place in the church to \_\_\_\_\_[sss].

## KEY PASSAGES FROM ROMANS

- Romans 1:16-17
- Romans 3:10, 23
- Romans 3:28
- Romans 5:6-11
- Romans 6:1-7
- Romans 8:1, 12-13
- Romans 10:12-15
- Romans 12:1-2

## FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] 13	[ss] grace
[b] Tarsus	[tt] law
[c] Jew	[uu] lawbreakers
[d] Roman	[vv] wrath
[e] Pharisee	[ww] sinners
[f] tent making	[xx] law
[g] zealous	[yy] control
[h] Law	[zz] faithfulness
[i] baptized	[aaa] transformed
[j] Gentiles	[bbb] means
[k] grace	[ccc] not
[l] Jews	[ddd] obeying
[m] Pentecost	[eee] faith
[n] synagogues	[fff] obedience
[o] converts	[ggg] double
[p] expelled	[hhh] double
[q] preaching	[iii] baptism
[r] riots	[jjj] Holy Spirit
[s] third	[kkk] power
[t] Corinth	[lll] power
[u] deeper	[mmm] constant
[v] gospel	[nnn] creation
[w] knowledge	[ooo] bodies
[x] Spain	[ppp] Israel
[y] funds	[qqq] one
[z] danger	[rrr] church
[aa] rescue	[sss] serve
[bb] spirit	
[cc] eager	
[dd] deeply	
[ee] writing	
[ff] main	
[gg] faith	
[hh] Law	
[ii] saved	
[jj] positive	
[kk] negative	
[ll] systems	
[mm] grace	
[nn] law	
[oo] good	
[pp] perfection	
[qq] Old	
[rr] New	