

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

1 - What's The Book of Romans All About?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney

I. Who Wrote the Book of Romans?

Paul wrote the book of Romans – actually, it wasn't written by Paul's hand. It was authored by Paul, but the actual handwriting was by Tertius.

Romans 16:22 "I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter greet you in the Lord." Tertius wrote the book of Romans. He was Paul's secretary or amanuensis.

From where was it written? - **Romans 16:23** "Gaius my host and the host of the whole church greets you..." Gaius was a Christian businessman and he lived in Corinth. The letter was written from Corinth by Paul.

But who is Paul? Paul was probably the greatest man who lived since Jesus Christ – the most influential man. Paul's ministry took him on three missionary journeys around the empire.

1) Religiously, or by race and religion, he was a Hebrew

Philippians 3:4ff Paul gives a personal testimony, "Though I myself have reason for such confidence, if anyone thinks he has reason to put confidence in the flesh, I have more. Circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. In regard to the law, a Pharisee. As for zeal persecuting the church. As for legalistic righteousness, faultless."

Yet in Acts 9, Paul was on the road to Damascus, with official letters in his hand, on his way to persecuting more Christians, when God spoke to him in a blinding light and said to him in **Acts 9:4** "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And Saul, who's name was later changed to Paul, was trembling and astonished when he said in **Acts 9:6** "Lord, what do you want me to do?" At that point Paul was converted.

2) **Paul, by culture, was Greek.** He was born and raised in Tarsus which was a seaport on the coast of Turkey. Tarsus was a great university center. It rivaled Athens. It had one of the greatest libraries of the world. Paul was a highly educated man. He spoke Greek fluently (Greek was the universal language at this time) which meant he could travel internationally and speak in several different countries.

3) **Politically, Paul was a Roman citizen.** That's important to understand because being a Roman citizen gave you a pass to the empire with privileges that others did not have. Only about one in five people in the Roman Empire were actually citizens of the empire. Yet Paul was a Roman citizen... God's chosen vessel for the hour.

Ephesians 2:10 "And we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

II. To Whom was it Written?

Romans 1:7 "To all who were in Rome, who are loved by God and called to be saints." The Bible says if you're a Christian, you're a saint. So the Bible says Paul wrote this letter to the Christians who were in Rome.

"The ambitious, the power-hungry, the charlatans, the bloodthirsty, the opportunistic were drawn to Rome as bugs to the light. Sometime during his life, every young adventurer, every hard-driving businessman, and every soldier of fortune would find himself in Rome. It was said in ancient days that all roads led to Rome. It was the hub of a sprawling military and political network... Founded in 753 BC, the City of Seven Hills soon flourished. By New Testament days it boasted a million inhabitants, more than any city of its time. Magnificent buildings, huge arenas, marble palaces, and splendid gardens gave witness to its wealth." *Knowing God Through Romans*, Martin DeHann II, Radio Bible Class, 1989, p. 2

Paul had started churches in Corinth, Thessalonica, and all over Greece and Turkey as well as the Mediterranean; but he'd never made it to Rome.

Roman 1:15 "This is why I'm so eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome." He wanted to go to Rome, but he wasn't able to so he wrote this letter.

As an interesting side note – many of you may know that Paul finally did go to Rome at the end of his life – paid for courtesy of the Roman Empire since Paul appealed to Caesar during one of his trials with the Jews who were trying to kill him. In the sovereignty of God, Paul spent two years in his own rented apartment in Rome freely teaching and preaching the Gospel unhindered!

Acts 28:30-31 "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 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 "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ."

Basically, Paul was under house arrest with the Praetorium or palace guard that was Caesar's special guard - 9,000 strong in Rome. What a strategic place of influence God gave Paul!

III. When Did He Write the Letter?

On his 3rd missionary journey, Paul made it all the way to Greece where he stayed in Corinth for 3 months. In Romans 16 we read about Gaius. Paul spent three months staying in the home of the businessman Gaius in Corinth, and while he was there he wrote the book of Romans – probably between 57-59 A.D.

IV. Why Did Paul Write this Letter?

1) **There was a personal reason.** **Romans 1:11-13** "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong. That is that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith... That's why I am so eager to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome."

2) **There was a financial reason.** This is a fundraising letter in one sense. Paul wrote Romans to enlist support to his trip to Spain. **15:22** "This is why I have often been hindered in coming to you. But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions and since I've been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. When I go to Spain I hope to visit you and have you assist me on my journey there after I've enjoyed your company for a while."

3) **There was a doctrinal reason.** He wanted to review and clarify the meaning and basis of Christian living. He wanted to clarify the meaning of salvation.

15:15 "I have written to you quite boldly on some points as if to remind you of them again because of the grace of God that God gave me."

Romans has been called the "Christian's Constitution." Paul is writing the constitution of the Christian life and he's reminding us of basic doctrinal truths to know and understand. The letter to the Romans is closer to a doctrinal statement. It's more systematic and more organized than a number of others of Paul's letters. The Puritan Richard Baxter calls it "Paul's magnum opus."

V. What's the Theme of the Book?

A. Theme of Romans

1:16-17 "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew and then for the Gentile. For in the gospel, the righteousness from God is revealed, the righteousness that is by faith from first to last just as it is written 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

B. Key words

"Righteousness" is used 34 times in the book of Romans. It is used 92 times in the New Testament and it's the key to the book of Romans. It means "a right relationship to God."

"God" is used 137 times.

"Law" is used 52 times.

"Christ" is used 68 times.

"Sin" is used 40 times.

"Faith" is used 34 times.

C. Overview - The book of Romans breaks down into 5 big chunks...

Ch. 1-3 **Sin** - He starts with the bad news, and drills down into why you need to be saved.

Ch. 4-5 **Salvation** – How can I get right with God? And unpacks 'Justification' or what it means to be made right with God in a moment!

Ch. 6-8 **Sanctification** – How can I stay right with God? 'Sanctification' – for a lifetime. Here he tells us how to live and grow in the Christian life. He talks about the new life of a believer and what happens after you're saved.

Ch. 9-11 **Sovereignty**

Ch. 12-16 **Service** – how should I now live in light of these great truths?