



Romans

Lesson 1 Chapter 1:1-15

Introduction

Somewhere around 55-58 A.D., at the close of his third missionary journey through Asia Minor and Greece, the Apostle Paul stopped in Corinth. He remained there for three months (Acts 20:3) waiting for delegates from various churches that were to accompany him to Jerusalem with an offering for the poor there. After going to Jerusalem, it was Paul's intention to visit the church in Rome on his way to take the gospel to Spain (Romans 15:24-36). With this in mind, he wrote this letter to the brethren in Rome to precede his arrival.

Although Paul had not established the church in Rome, he had heard of their faithfulness to the gospel (Romans 1:8) and desired to encourage them in the work (Romans 1:11-15). It has been suggested that Paul desired to make Rome his base of operation as he moved his ministry into Spain, and so was endeavoring to gain the cooperation and support from the believers in Rome. Rome was one of the largest and most important cities in the world at this time in history. The Roman Empire had gained control of much of the known world, and the city of Rome was the world capitol. This would make it strategically important in Paul's vision of world evangelism.

The church in Rome consisted of a mixture of Jewish and Gentile believers. This becomes obvious in Chapter 2 where he speaks to those who "rely upon the Law", and then in Chapter 11 he speaks "to you who are Gentiles." It is to this mixed multitude that Paul writes what is

one of his most profound theological works. In this letter he doesn't address any specific problems that the church is having or any errors that the believers might have fallen into as he does in many of his other letters. His purpose is to establish for the church at Rome a formal testimony of the gospel as he preaches it: justification by faith alone. The pure gospel of salvation by faith was being attacked from several sides. The Judaizers were Jews who had received salvation by faith, but they believed they were "kept" by keeping the Law. Another group that opposed Paul was the antinomians. They believed that they were saved by faith so they could live however they wanted because they were now under grace. Both these extremes were polluting the gospel so Paul sought to relate the truth by stating the facts of justification (and sanctification) by faith alone.

Though written almost 2000 years ago, the truths it contains have not changed. Christians still struggle with legalism and compromise in their walk today and, in the same way, need to be reminded of the pure truth of the gospel. "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..." Romans 3:21-24



Paul begins the letter to the Romans with a typical greeting and introduction that is common to most of his letters. He does this to identify himself and establish his authority in relating the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people

1. *What three things does Paul state about himself? How would these things establish his authority with the people? 1:1*

2. *From Acts 13:26-39 and Romans 3:21-24, summarize the “gospel” that Paul was set apart to preach.*

3. *In Romans 1:2, Paul states that the prophets testified concerning the Messiah. From the following verses, what were some of the details they gave concerning Him?*
Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 42:1-4
Micah 5:2-3

4. *From Romans 1:3-4, what two phrases does Paul use to describe Christ’s dual nature?*

5. *Why was it necessary for Christ to be both God and man? See Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:15-16.*

6. *Paul states in verse 5 that as an apostle he was called to “bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles.” What do you think Paul meant by the phrase “obedience of faith,” and how would this speak to the antinomians? (See introduction for views of the antinomians).*

7. *What does Paul thank God for concerning these people? What does he say he specifically prays for regarding them? 1:9-12*

8. *What reasons does Paul give for wanting to visit them? 1:13-15*

9. *Chapters 13-28 of the book of Acts give the details of Paul's missionary journeys including his visit to Jerusalem and his trip to Rome after writing Romans. From Acts 21:15-33, what happens to Paul in Jerusalem? From Acts 25:1-12, under what circumstances does he go to Rome? From Acts 23:11, who actually sent him there?*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
