

# ROMANS 1-4

ROMANS 1 | WEEK 1: OCT 11, 2015

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## INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

The heart of Paul's letters is Romans.

The History of Romans within the Christian church would categorize this letter as a game changer. From Augustine to Luther. And from Luther to Karl Barth. Even today the letter is at the forefront of (re)understanding Pauline theology.

## PURPOSE OF ROMANS

Written in Corinth between 55 and 58 A.D.

Uniqueness of Romans:

1. Paul is the only author. There is no co-author.
2. Written to a church that Paul did not start.

Paul introduces himself to the church through this letter.

He mentions his desire to visit Rome and then travel to Spain.

The relationship between the church in Rome and Jews may also be a factor for Paul's letter to the Romans.

## OUTLINE OF ROMANS

One's reading of Romans depends to a significant degree on the part of the letter one sees as most important and as most revealing of the story behind the letter.

Romans 1-4	God's faithful response to faithless humanity (aka Justification by Faith)
Romans 5-8	New situation for those who are justified by faith, thereby dying and rising with Christ and living in the Spirit
Romans 9-11	History of Salvation and Jewish Gentile Relationships
Romans 12-15	Need for Rome to embody this gospel
Romans 15-16	Relationship of all this to God's great story of salvation and Paul's mission

## ROMANS 1:1-17

### Introduction & greeting

#### Romans 1:1-7

Paul is set apart for the **gospel** of God (1:1)

**Gospel** promised through prophets, regarding God's Son (1:2–3)  
Descendent of David, appointed Son of God by his resurrection (1:4)

Paul's gospel draws on a deep well of Biblical hopes and promises and stands in contrast to the gospel of Rome. The heart of Romans is the gospel. And the heart of the gospel is Jesus and his resurrection. The opening greeting of Romans (1:1-7) gives a sense of what it's about. The challenge of Paul's gospel is that someone very different to Caesar, exercising a very different kind of power, is the world's true lord.

### **Romans 8-13**

Paul thanks God for them and longs to see them (1:8–13)

The Church in Rome was small. Meeting in houses. It is likely Paul knew a handful.

Under Claudius Jews had been expelled. Possibly due to the Jews and Christians fighting over the Messiah. When Nero becomes Caesar Jews are allowed back in.

### **Romans 14-17**

He is eager to preach the **gospel** in Rome (1:15)

I am not ashamed of the **gospel**; it is the power of God for salvation (1:16)

In the **gospel** the righteousness of God is revealed (1:17)

These dense verses contain the theme of Romans. In them we find a minilexicon of Paul's vocabulary.

## **ROMANS 1:18-32**

### **Disobedient humanity**

Paul structures his argument in 1:18-3:20 in chiastic form:

(A) The Gentile predicament (1:18-32)

(B) God's impartial judgment according to deeds (2:1-16)

(A') The Jewish predicament (2:17-3:8)

### **Romans 1:18-23**

The wrath of God is being revealed against godless humanity (1:18–20)

They did not glorify God, but their minds and hearts were darkened (1:21–23)

### **Romans 1:24-27**

God gave them over to impurities and shameful lusts (1:24–27)

### **Romans 1:28-32**

They became fully depraved (1:28–32)

Paul's main concern is the overall predicament of humanity, not the individual transgressions.