

# Epistle to the Romans

## Introduction

11 September 2025

### Author: Who wrote Romans?

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle...

- Saul, from Tarsus, Cilicia.
- Born circa AD 5, martyred AD 67.
- Greek-speaking diaspora Jew.
- Pharisee, student of Gamaliel.
- Persecutor of early Jewish Christians.
- Converted to Christ circa AD 35.

### Recipients: Who were the Romans?

- House-based gatherings in Rome.
- Gentile converts of the Petrine mission.
- Jewish Christians from Pentecost.
- Converts from the Pauline mission.
- Banished from Rome by Claudius in AD 49, Jews returned upon his death in 54.
- Mixed freemen and slaves.
- 20th century archeology & documents.

### History: Is Romans authentic

- Composed in Greek at Corinth or nearby at Cenchreae around AD 57.
- Papyrus 46, c. 175–225 CE, fragments of chapters 5-6, 8-15.
- Greek codices Vaticanus (c AD 335), Sinaiticus (c 345, Alexandrinus (c 420).
- Cited by the earliest Christian writers.
- Accepted by all churches as canonical.
- All scholars recognize that Romans is an authentic epistle written by Paul.

### Purpose: Why did Paul write Romans?

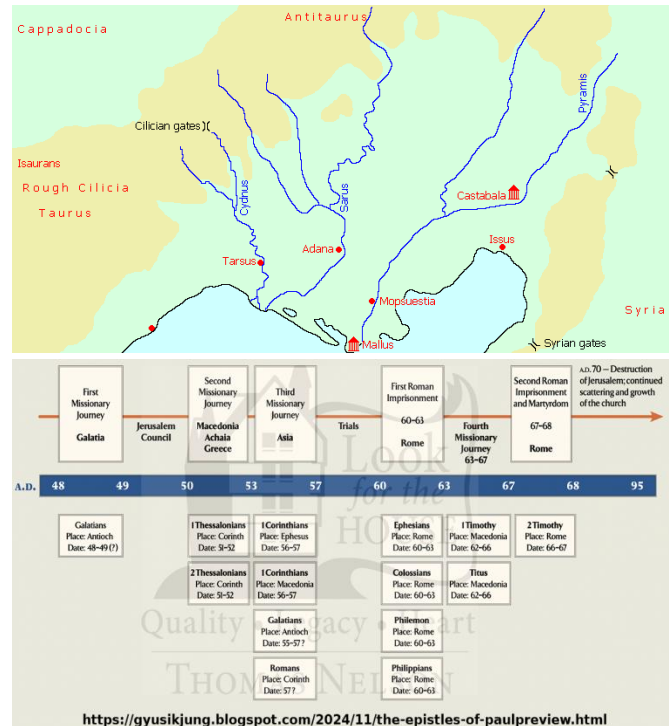
- To explain from Scripture Paul's doctrines about salvation (1:16).
- To strengthen relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians (9:24)
- To defend Paul's apostolic call to evangelize Gentiles (11:13).
- To solicit material support for Paul's mission to Spain (15:24).

### Importance: Why does Romans matter?

- Romans remains the longest, most systematic of Paul's extant epistles.
- Ancient and modern Christian theologies appeal to this epistle.
- Romans was a major source of ideas for the Protestant Reformation.
- It is frequently cited by conservative Christians for doctrine and comfort.

### Themes: What is Romans about?

- God's message about his Son (1:1-3).



## Epistle to the Romans: Introduction

- God's righteousness = (a) God's loyalty to his covenant;  
(b) always doing the right thing or judging wrong things.
- Righteousness from God = (a) reckoned true for the repentant ("justification"),  
(b) making sinful people right with God.

### Structure: What are Romans' sections?

- Chapters 1-4: The appearance of the Messiah & the content of his message.
- Chapters 5-8: Christian victory over sin & experience new life by God's Spirit.
- Chapters 9-11: Israel's failure and God's mercy for all who believe.
- Chapters 12-16: Christian behavior, mission and Jewish-Gentile relations.

### Style: How does Paul write?

- Having no authority in Rome, Paul writes in a kind, gentle, indirect manner.
- He employs many Greco-Roman rhetorical devices:
- He digresses often, anticipating readers' queries or objections.
- He often appeals to the *Tanakh*, Israel's & early Christians' sacred scriptures

### Accusations: What do skeptics say?

- Paul transformed Jesus' teaching into a new, different religion.
- Paul explained Jesus' crucifixion with pagan sacrificial ideas.
- By replacing Israel, Paul laid the basis for antisemitism.
- Justification by faith alone leads to lawless, immoral behavior.

### This course: What are our objectives

- To provide content for discussion groups in homes and churches.
- To inform lay ministers in house churches and emerging congregations.
- Not a substitute for academic courses or for scholarly commentaries.
- To experience courage and hope through the holy Scriptures (15:4).

### Commentaries: What does it mean?

- There are many. Read in one which you find helpful.
- Scholars use ones by James D. G. Dunn (2015) and by D. J. Moo (2018).
- We shall follow Steven E. Runge (2014)
- And consult N. T. Wright (2002)

### Versions: Which translation?

- Read in any versions which you enjoy.
- Compare versions at biblehub.com
- Find helpful notes, Greek text and commentary at netbible.org
- Consult the on-line Greek-English interlinear New Testament for Romans.
- Galen will (sometimes) provide a 'dynamic equivalent' translation.

### Assignment: How to prepare?

- Read Romans chapter 1 in different versions or languages.
- Ponder, outline, analyze Romans 1:1-7.
- Prepare comment and queries which you may share with your group.
- Pray briefly each day for the Holy Spirit to enlighten us all with God's words.

