

# ROMANS

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## Lesson 1

## Romans Chapter 1

This lesson begins our study of the book of Romans. As I indicated previously,, anyone who knows me at all knows that Romans Chapter 12 is my favorite chapter in the Bible. If anyone ever asks me how to live the Christian life I tell him or her to read, and apply, all that's contained in Chapter 12.

Martin Luther wrote: "[Romans] is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

As you will see in the lesson ahead that a lot of exciting, life changing, revelations are included within Romans, perhaps the best letter ever written by Paul.

In terms of background and helping our understanding of Paul, his approach to his ministry, and his excitement about spreading the gospel, we need to understand one of the basic differences between the Old Testament and New Testament.

During the early days of the Jewish people, God made it clear His desire was for them to become a Nation of Priests (Exodus 19:6). They were to become a beacon drawing other nations to them, and to God. The Queen of Sheba was an excellent example of a non-Hebrew being drawn to the Nation of Israel and visiting King Solomon, because of all she had heard about his God. We see in the Old Testament the concept of people and nations coming to Israel; whereas in the New Testament, we see the opposite approach. Christ, in His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), commands the Church to go and make disciples, traveling from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the outer most parts of the earth. The Church of the New Testament carries the Gospel to the lost world— it doesn't wait for the lost world to come to it. We call this being evangelistic—spreading the Good News.

Paul, being born, raised, and highly educated as a Jew came to realize this "mystery" as a part of his conversion. He realized the paradigm shift, i.e., that the model that Christ would use to build His Church was radically different than the one God had used to build the Nation of Israel. Realizing this, and realizing that Christ was indeed the Messiah who came to save both the Jew and the Gentile, Paul's heartfelt desire at all times was to carry the Gospel outward to the far ends of the earth.

He began in Antioch with three missionary journeys that covered the Mediterranean, then Rome, and finally he set his sights on Spain, as we will see in Romans Chapter 15. Knowing these things, we can begin to understand his excitement about this new approach to building a church, his role in spreading the Good News to everyone—not just the Jews, and his desire to build a strong church at Rome. Rome, as the center of the known world, would be used as a launching pad for missionary journeys to Spain and the northern reaches of the Roman Empire.

It will also help our understanding to know that this letter was written in approximately 57 AD, which means that some 27 or so years have passed since Christ's death and resurrection; and, furthermore, 20 years or so since Paul's Damascus Road conversion. This means that Paul has had twenty years of experience in addressing the concerns of the Jews, winning the confidence of the converted Jews (whom he use to persecute), and in starting and building churches made up of both Jews and Gentiles. This experience is evident in the depth and breadth of the content that Paul pours into the Roman Epistle.

In summary, the book of Romans will cover the righteousness of God, the reality of sin, the depravity of man, the means of salvation, law versus grace, flesh versus Spirit, the sovereignty of God, the security of the believer, the place of Israel in God's redemptive plan, Christian liberty, and life and love in the body of Christ. But, at the heart of it, Paul is writing to prepare a body of believers to be co-laborers in spreading the Good News. He is writing to us.

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*For this lesson, read Romans Chapter 1 and answer the following:*

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1. Why do you suppose that the passage in Romans 1:16-17 is called the "theme", or summary, of the entire letter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In Romans 1:1, Paul refers to himself as a servant, or bond-slave. Can you find out what that means? What made someone a "bond-slave" in those days? Determining the answer to this question may reveal to you a new dimension regarding your relationship with Christ.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In Romans 1:3-7, Paul tells us that we are the called of Christ through his death and resurrection. In verse 4, what validates that Christ is who he says he is, i.e., the Messiah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is Paul saying to the Roman Christians in Romans 1:8-15? Why does he want to come to them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Romans 1:16-17 is a pivotal passage with respect to understanding much of what Paul is trying to say in the entire letter. What are some of the important things that Paul conveys in each of these two verses? (There are several in each verse.)
  - a. Romans 1:16
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Romans 1:17
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In Romans 1:17, God revealed His righteousness. What does He reveal in Romans 1:18?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What does Romans 1:19-20 indicate to us about knowing God, and about proving that God exists?

8. The verses in Romans 1:21-32 were addressed to the people of the day, both in Rome and throughout the known world at the time. Do they apply today? In the space below, can you cite some examples around these scriptures that we see around us today? (Isn't this an indication that man needs Christ today more than ever?)
- a. Romans 1:21-23
  
  - b. Romans 1:24-25
  
  
  - c. Romans 1:26-27
  
  
  - d. Romans 1:28-31
  
  
  - e. Romans 1:32

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I pray that this study of Romans will deepen your faith, strengthen your walk, and resolve any lingering doubts or questions that you may have about your salvation. Before we can begin to spread the Good News, we need to understand what it is, and we need to have it in our hearts. Then we can have the same zeal and boldness as Paul regarding our calling as one of Christ's own.

May He richly bless you this week, as you study His Holy Word with us.

In Christ,

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