

DEEP DIVE

WEDNESDAYS

DISCIPLESHIP NIGHT

A Study of the Epistle of The Romans • Week #1 Study & Discussion Guide

Week #1: Background Epistle to the Romans

Author

Paul, the apostle

Place Of Writing

Corinth, as evident from the greetings of Gaius, who lived at Corinth (Romans 16:23; 1Corinthians 1:14), and of Erastus, who had settled down there (Romans 16:23; 2Timothy 4:20). Also, Phoebe, who apparently accompanied the epistle (Romans 16:1-2), was from the church at Cenchrea, a “suburb” of Corinth.

Time Of Writing

57-58 A.D.; while on his third journey (Acts 20:1-3), just prior to his arrival to Jerusalem with the collection for the needy saints (Romans 15:25-26; Acts 20:16; 24:17).

Background Of the Church at Rome

It is possible that visitors to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following the Lord’s ascension were among the 3000 saved and later took the gospel with them back home (Acts 2:10). Or it could be that among those dispersed following Stephen’s death were some that went to Rome and preached the gospel there (Acts 8:1-4).

The first we read of Christians from Rome is possibly that of Aquila and Priscilla, who along with all Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius and were found by Paul at Corinth during his second journey (Acts 18:1-2). After travelling with Paul to Ephesus and working with the church there (Acts 18:18-19, 24-26; 1 Corinthians 16:19), we find them back at Rome and hosting a church in their house (Romans 16:3-5).

The reputation of the Christians in Rome was widespread; both their faith (Romans 1:8) and obedience (Romans 16:19) were well known. For this reason, Paul had long wanted to see them (Romans 15:23), with the goal of sharing in their mutual edification (Romans 1:11-12) and to be assisted on his way to Spain (Romans 15:22-24).

Purpose Of Writing

In view of his personal plans, Paul wrote to introduce himself to a church he had never visited. At the same time, he set forth a full and orderly statement of the great principles of the gospel that he preached.

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Romans is commonly considered the greatest exposition of Christian doctrine anywhere in Scripture. It contains an orderly, logical development of profound theological truths. It is filled with the great themes of redemption, the guilt of all mankind, our inability to earn favor with God, the redeeming death of Christ, and the free gift of salvation to be received by faith alone. Since Paul had not visited Rome, the epistle does not address specific local problems but contains general teaching applicable to all Christians for all time. Throughout the history of the church, expositions of Romans have sparked many revivals as people have become aware of the magnificence of God and His grace toward us.

Theme: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

In these two verses Paul states his confidence in the gospel and the reasons for it. The bulk of his epistle is devoted to explaining why and how the gospel of Christ is God’s power to save those who believe.

Content

The overall doctrinal theme that Paul seeks to demonstrate is that God is righteous. In spite of all that happens in this world – even though all men are sinful (1:18-3:20); even though God does not punish but forgives guilty sinners (3:21-5:21); even though believers may not fully live in a way consistent with God’s righteousness (6:1-8:17); even though believers suffer and final redemption is delayed (8:18-39); even though many Jews do not believe (9:1-11:36) – still God is perfectly righteous, and by His grace has forgiven us. Because of this great mercy from an all-righteous God, we should live a pattern of life consistent with God’s own righteousness (12:1-16:27)

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Small Group Discussion

1. Who wrote the epistle to the Romans?
2. From where was it written?
3. What is the approximate date of the writing?
4. What is the purpose of this epistle?
5. Where is the theme of this epistle stated?
6. What was the reputation of the church at Rome?
7. List at least 3 themes from the content of this epistle (see Content section)

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Personal Application Questions

1. How do I want this book to affect me?
2. How is the overall theme of this book relevant to my life?
3. What sermon series spoke the most to you in 2024 and why?