

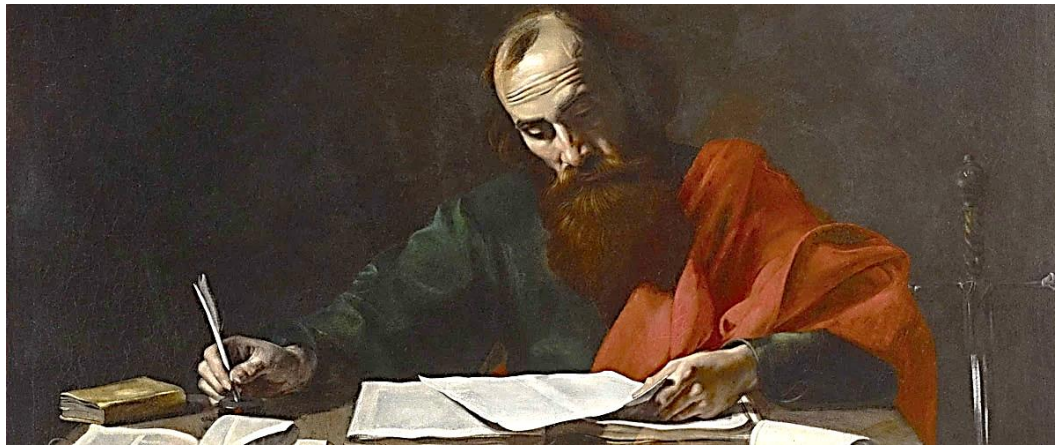


# ROMANS

## Lesson 1: Introduction to the Book of Romans

Mike Taylor

<https://www.taylornotes.info/monday>



### A. Why Study Romans?

1. This letter to the Romans will strengthen your Christian beliefs and give you greater confidence in explaining God's plan of salvation to others.
2. It will make clear what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
3. It presents the good news about how you, a sinner, can be declared "not guilty" before God when you place your faith in Jesus Christ.
4. It describes how you can experience victory over your sinful nature.
5. It reveals how the Holy Spirit strengthens and guides you each day.
6. It helps you to live in such a way that pleases God and makes you useful to him.

### B. Three Main Sections of Romans

1. Chapters 1-8 The gospel explained: Looking at the structure of Romans, chapters 1–8 deal primarily with explaining the gospel message (1:1-17), explaining why we need to embrace the gospel (1:18–4:25), and explaining the benefits conferred by embracing the gospel (5:1–8:39).
2. Chapters 9-11 The gospel and Israel: Paul addresses the implications of the gospel for the people of Israel (9:1–11:36),

3. Chapters 12-15 How to live the gospel: Paul concludes his letter with basic instructions and exhortations that flesh out the practical implications of the gospel in everyday life (12:1–15:13).

## C. Background

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1. Author: Paul the Apostle. Paul clearly states that he is the author (1:1) and the personal references and facts given in Chapter 15 tell us beyond any doubt that Paul is the author. Actually, this letter was not written by Paul, it was authored by Paul, but the actual handwriting was done by Tertius (16:22). Tertius was a scribe or secretary (amanuensis<sup>1</sup>) to whom Paul dictated, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, his letter to the Romans.
2. Date: A.D. 55-58: just before Paul's trip to Rome during his third missionary journey. He had been a Christian for about 20 years. Nero was Emperor (AD 54-68), but this letter was written before he burned Rome and blamed the Christians. Paul says, "Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's there" (15:25).
3. To whom was it written: To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be holy people (1:7) and to all people (1:5). Paul wrote this letter to both the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in Rome to persuade them to build up a peaceful and close relationship between their house churches.
4. The church in Rome: The origin of this church in Rome is unknown. It is likely this was not a single church but a collection of small house churches (Rom. 16:5). The church in Rome already had a worldwide reputation (1:8) and was full of goodness (15:14). It was primarily a Gentile church with some Jewish converts. Paul admonished both groups to change their attitude toward one another and explicitly asked the Gentile Christians to consider the dilemma faced by the Jewish Christians as they transitioned from Judaism to Christianity (14:1-15:13). Theologically, these two groups were arguing about whether God's righteousness comes by way of "doing" the law, or by faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>
5. The ancient city of Rome: Rome was about 6½ square miles (2½ x 2½ miles), not very big with a population of over one million people. Rome was the strategic center of the civilized world and the capital of the Roman Empire.
6. Setting: The place of the writing seems to be Corinth since Paul recommended Phoebe to the Romans. She was a deaconess from Cenchrea, the eastern seaport of Corinth (16:1). Paul was on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem taking the collection he gathered from the Gentile churches to the believers in the Jerusalem church who were experiencing

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<sup>1</sup> Amanuensis (pronounced: ah-man-yoo-ensis) is a person employed to write or type what another person dictates or to copy what has been written by another and also refers to a person who signs a document on behalf of another under their authority.



