

Romans intro material

Right now, this is simply other people's work which has been cut and pasted here. I have not done this intro yet myself. (Attributions are found throughout).

Introduction to the Book (Pastor Robert L. Bolender)

1. Written by the Apostle Paul (Romans 1:1), through the amanuensis Tertius (Romans 16:22).
2. Written near the end of Paul's Third Missionary Journey, winter of 56/57AD.
3. Written while Gaius hosted Paul in Corinth (Romans 16:23 cf. 1st Cor. 1:14. Also see Acts 19:29; 20:4). This associated with Erastus the city treasurer (cf. 2nd Tim. 4:20).
4. Written in Paul's hope to visit for the first time (Romans 1:10-13; 15:23; Acts 19:21) and use Rome as a base for missionary work in Spain (Romans 15:24,28).
5. This theological epistle is addressed to "called saints" (Romans 1:7) with a world-wide proclamation of faith (Romans 1:8) and report of obedience (Romans 16:19a).
 - a. Possibly formed by Jewish & Gentile proselyte believers returning from Pentecost (Acts 2:10).
 - b. Would have become predominantly Gentile after Claudius expels the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2).
 - c. May have had trouble re-integrating Jewish believers when they returned under Nero. Prisca and Aquila have a church in their home, near enough for a greeting but apparently separate from the recipients of this epistle (Romans 16:3-5a).
6. Followed Galatians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians. Still to write prison and pastoral epistles.
7. Text Critical Issues.
 - a. A shorter form of Romans circulated in the 2nd & 3rd centuries. This edition removed chapters 15&16.
 - b. This family of manuscripts also removed the references to Rome from chapter one (Romans 1:7,15).
 - c. The epistle's doxology (Romans 16:25-27) has a variety of placement traditions at the end of chapters 14,15, and/or 16.
 - d. The 16 chapter long version is undoubtedly the original, with the shortened form being used as a circular theological treatise.
8. Themes.
 - a. Righteousness & wrath revealed (Romans 1:16-17).
 - b. Depravity and the only answer (Romans 1:18-3:21).
 - i. Immoral depravity (Romans 1:18-32).
 - ii. Moral depravity (Romans 2:1-16).
 - iii. Religious depravity (Romans 2:17-3:20).
 - iv. The only answer: faith (Romans 3:21-31).
 - c. Justification (Romans 4-5).
 - d. Sanctification (Romans 6-8).
 - e. Discourse on Israel (Romans 9-11).
 - f. Discourse on the Church (Romans 12-15).

g. Greetings and closing admonishment (Romans 16).¹

¹ From <https://austinbiblechurch.com/sites/default/files/documents/Romans.pdf>

From Pastor Robert Dean from
https://deanbible.org/dbmfiles/notes/Romans_Introduction.pdf

Romans Introduction

- I. Author: Paul (Romans 1:1)
 - A. Internal Evidence:
 - The opening verse claims Pauline authorship (1:1)
 - Vocabulary and theological discourse is similar to earlier Pauline epistles (Galatians, 1, 2 Corinthians).
 - The writing style and logic is Paul's style.
 - The author is familiar with Priscilla and Aquila as was Paul (Rom 16:3 cf., Acts 18:2-3).
 - The author mentions a collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem, an endeavor Paul was involved in (Romans 15:25-27; cf., Acts 19:21; 20:1-5; 21:15, 17-19, 1Corinthians 16:1-5, and 2Corinthians 8:1-12; 9:1-5) The author claims descent from the tribe of Benjamin, as was Paul (Romans 11:1; Philippians 3:5)
 - The author plans to visit Rome as did the apostle Paul (Romans 1:10-13, 15:32; cf., Acts 19:21)
 - B. External Evidence
 - Apostolic Fathers attest Pauline authorship (Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp)
 - Second century attestation by Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus.
 - Romans is attributed to Paul in every early church list of accepted writings, including the Muratorian Fragment (ca., A.D. 170)
 - C. Tertius, the Amanuensis
 - The one interesting issue though is the role of Tertius, who claims to have written the epistle in Romans 16:22. Tertius was Paul's amanuensis who either took down the epistle in longhand as Paul dictated it or he took it down in shorthand, wrote out the letter and then submitted it to Paul for corrections and final edits. Since the final product was certified by Paul, the use of an amanuensis does no damage to the God breathing out (2 Tm. 3:16-17) the final product guaranteeing that it is free from error. In my view, it would seem that a missive such as Romans with an extremely tight logical structure must either have been dictated completely by Paul or he maintained strict editorial control over the final product.
 - D. Conclusion
 - Though an attempt was made by a few liberal European scholars in the late 19th century to dispute Pauline authorship, their arguments were rejected.
 - Today, Pauline authorship is accepted virtually without question.
- II. Date: Winter A.D. 56-57
 - During his third missionary journey Paul wrote three epistles, 1, 2Corinthians and Romans. The two Corinthian epistles were penned first, after Paul reached Macedonia from Ephesus. When he arrived in Corinth, sometime at the end of 56 or winter of 57, he wrote to the church in Rome. It was during this third missionary journey that he continuously made collections for the saints in Jerusalem (Rom

15:25-28, cf., Acts 24:17). His intent was to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, and then on to Rome.

Paul spent Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Phillipi so he wrote Romans prior to that. Nero was the emperor at that time.

The church in Rome was not founded by Paul, neither was it founded by Peter. No evidence exists concerning who founded that church. The most likely theory is that wither some of the Jews who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost, or perhaps some from the other areas where Paul had been (Asia, Macedonia, Greece), had believed Jesus was the promised Messiah and returned to Rome with the gospel. Internal evidence indicates Gentiles. The church was composed of both Gentiles (1:13; 11:13; 11:28–31; 15:15–16), and Jews (2:17–3:8; 3:21–4:1; 7:1–14; 14:1–15:12). Paul wrote Romans from Corinth where he was staying with Gaius of Corinth (16:23; cf. 1Corinthians 1:14). In Romans 16:23 he also mentioned “Erastus, the treasurer of the city” (16:23). A first-century inscription in Corinth mentions Erastus: “Erastus, the commissioner of public works, laid this pavement at his own expense.”

III. Historical Background

A. Rome was founded in 753 B.C.

B. Rome’s history can be divided into three periods

Rome as founded ca. 753 B.C. with two settlements on the Palatine Hill and the Quirinal. Tradition attributes the founding to Aeneas who escaped the destruction of Troy, by fleeing to the Italian peninsula. His descendants were believed to have been twin sons, Romulus and Remus, who became the legendary founders of Rome. Romulus murdered Remus. The traditional date marking his sole rule is April 21, 753 B.C.

1. Pre-Republic Period of the Monarchy, 753-510 B.C.

2. The Republic Period, 510 B.C.-27 B.C.

During this time the city expanded beyond its walls, conquered the neighboring Etruscans and Greeks on the peninsula, then expanded into North Africa-making treaties with the Egyptians, conquering the Carthaginians, and expanding west into Spain and east in the Middle East. As Rome expanded its wealth increased, prosperity ensued along with the problems of urban growth. With increased wealth came both the good and the evil—vice, violent entertainment in the coliseum, brilliant architectural and engineering accomplishments; military conquests, the expansion of a network of highways that led to a unification within the empire.

Under the Pax Romana, the gospel would benefit through expansion in an empire where there was at first, no fear of opposition or persecution.

The Republic ended in a series of civil wars and attempts to seize power by various generals.

3. The Empire, 27 B.C — A.D. 476/1453

With the consolidation of power under Octavian, the Senate bestowed on him the title of Augustus and the period of the Empire began. The emperors of the 1st century A.D. cover the period of the life of Jesus and of the new church. Several emperors are mentioned in the

NT—Augustus (Lk 2:1), Tiberius (Lk 3:1), Claudius (Acts 11:28; 18:2), and Nero (Acts 25:10–12; 27:24; 2 Tm 4:16, 17).

By the mid-first century A.D. Rome was the largest city in the world with a population exceeding one million inhabitants. A visitor would be overwhelmed with the magnificent architecture, the opulence on the one hand and squalor on the other.

The church in Rome included both slaves and free. The number was quite large and they would have met in several different locations. The historian, Tacitus, describes the number of Christians persecuted under Nero to be “an immense multitude.”

IV. The Occasion;

A. Paul gives four clues for understanding his situation at the time he penned Romans (15:23–33)

1. The only time that fits his description in ch. 15 is his winter stay in Corinth at the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20:2–3; cf. 2 Cor. 13:1).
2. Paul is aware that he has reached a transition period in his ministry.
3. Paul expresses his concern about his impending trip to Jerusalem and the issue of the relation between Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ.
4. Paul is seeking the support of the Roman Christians for his new ministry in Spain.

V. Literary Genre

The importance of identifying literary genre is overdone in modern theology. It is important to understand the broad genre distinctives for hermeneutics, i.e., poetry, narrative, law, history, prophecy, but not micro differences. New Testament epistles are letters, but, unique letters. Modern scholar's swallow camels and strain gnats to get at the precise genre.

VI. Key Terms and Doctrines

Faith

Works of the Law, Works

Sin

Justification

Righteousness

Saved

Redemption

Propitiation

Wrath

Gospel

Key Doctrines: sin, justification by faith alone, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification, the role of the HS in the believers life, the future for Israel, government, civil disobedience, spiritual gifts. δικαιοσύνη θεο, as used in Romans. It occurs at key junctures in the book: 1:17; 3:5; 3:21, 22; and 10:3. In addition, we see 'his righteousness' (δικαιοσύνη α το) referring to God's righteousness in 3:25 and 26

VII. Working Outline

- I. Introduction: God's righteousness is revealed and is acquired by faith (1:1-17).
 - A. Salutation (1:1-7)
 - B. Thanksgiving and Longing (1:8-15)
 - 1. Paul's Prayer of Thanks for the Romans (1:8-10)
 - 2. Paul's Desire to Visit the Romans (1:11-15)
 - C. The Theme of the Epistle (1:16-17)
- II. Justification: God's righteousness revealed in condemnation and justification by faith alone in Christ alone (1:18–5:11).
 - A. Condemnation: God's standard of perfect righteousness is violated by all mankind which demonstrates the universal need for God's righteousness (1:18–3:20).
 - 1. God's condemnation of man's unrighteousness is the result of man's rejection of God (1:18-32).
 - 2. God's condemnation of the self-reliant moralist is based on principles of divine standards and not on the relative standards of the human moralist (2:1-16).
 - 3. God's condemnation of the Jew is based on the Jewish trust in the attempt to acquire righteousness through rigorous observance of religious laws than on an inner transformation originating from God (2:17-3:8)
 - 4. God condemns the whole world because all are under sin (3:9-20).
 - B. Justification: God graciously provides righteousness to all who believe in Jesus Christ (3:21–5:11).
 - 1. God manifested His righteousness in the Law and the Prophets and has made His righteousness available to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ (3:21- 31).
 - 2. God illustrated the reality of imputed righteousness in the faith of Abraham (4:1-25).
 - a. Abraham Justified by Faith, not Works (4:1-8)
 - b. Abraham Justified by Faith, not Circumcision (4:9-12)
 - c. Abraham's Seed Justified by Faith, not Law (4:13-17)
 - d. Abraham Justified by Faith in the Promise (4:18-25)
 - 3. God's justification leads to the hope of final salvation (5:1-11)
 - a. Present: Peace with God (5:1-5)
 - b. Past: Powerlessness of Sinners (5:6-8)
 - c. Future: Escape from God's Wrath (5:9-11)
 - d. The Reign of Grace Vs. the Reign of Sin (5:12-21)
- III. Sanctification: God produces righteousness in those who have been declared righteous and continue a walk by faith (6:1–8:39).
 - A. The Rationale for Sanctification: God identifies the believer with Christ's death so that he is now dead to sin but alive to God through Christ (6:1-23).
 - 1. Union with Christ (6:1-14)
 - 2. Enslavement to Righteousness (6:15-23)
 - B. God does not enable the believer to be sanctified by the Law, the justified one is free from the Law and its domination (7:1-25).
 - 1. The Believer's Relationship to the Law (7:1-6)

- 2. The Law is Good but Sterile (7:7-13)
- 3. The Flesh is Bad and Powerless (7:14-25)
- C. God provides every believer with His Holy Spirit who alone has the power to sanctify (8:1-17)
 - 1. Over Sin (8:1-8)
 - 2. Over Death (8:9-11)
 - 3. Over Slavery (8:12-17)
- D. The Goal of Sanctification (8:18-39)
 - 1. Present Sufferings (8:18-27)
 - 2. Future Glory (8:28-30)
 - 3. Hymn of Assurance (8:31-39)
- IV. God will vindicate His righteousness in His relationship to Israel (9:1–11:36)
 - A. God's Past Dealings with Israel (9:1-33)
 - 1. Preface: Paul's Deep Sorrow because of Israel's Great Privileges (9:1-5)
 - 2. The Grace of God's Election (9:6-29)
 - 3. The Nation's Rejection of the Messiah via Legalism (9:30-33)
 - B. God's Present Dealings with Israel (10:1-21)
 - 1. Equality with the Gentiles (10:1-13)
 - 2. Obstinacy of the Jews (10:14-21)
 - C. God's Future Dealings with Israel (11:1-33)
 - 1. The Rejection is not Complete (11:1-10)
 - 2. The Rejection is not Final (11:11-32)
 - 3. Doxology: In Praise of God's Wisdom (11:33-36)
- V. Application: God's righteousness should be displayed in the life of the justified believer (12:1–15:13).
 - A. In the Assembly (12:1-21)
 - 1. The "set apart" Life (12:1-2)
 - 2. The Use of Spiritual Gifts (12:3-8)
 - 3. The Sincerity of Love (12:9-21)
 - B. In the State (13:1-14)
 - 1. In Relation to Authorities (13:1-7)
 - 2. In Relation to Neighbors (13:8-10)
 - 3. Because of our Eschatological Hope (13:11-14)
 - C. In Relation to Weak Believers (14:1–15:13)
 - 1. Judging and the Principle of Liberty (14:1-12)
 - 2. Stumbling Blocks and the Principle of Love (14:13-23)
 - 3. Selfishness and the Imitation of Christ (15:1-13)
- VI. Conclusion: Paul's Purpose, Plans and Praise in Connection with the Dissemination of Righteousness (15:14–16:27)
 - A. Paul's Mission Explained (15:14-33)
 - 1. His Reason for Writing (15:14-16)
 - 2. His Work among the Gentiles (15:17-21)
 - 3. His Plan to Visit Rome (15:22-33)
 - B. Final Greetings (16:1-27)

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle
to the ROMANS
An Expository Study by Dr. Daniel Hill
From <https://www.gracenotes.info/romans/romans.pdf>

Introduction

These studies in Romans have been compiled and written by Rev. Daniel Hill, PhD, pastor of Southwood Bible Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has graciously provided his notes so that they can be made available by on the Internet to people around the world.

After graduating from high school in Scottsdale, Arizona, Dan Hill served in the United States Navy. Upon receiving his honorable discharge in 1965 he attended Arizona State University where he received a degree in Speech and History. Dan and his wife Patricia were married in 1970. Pat is also a graduate of Arizona State University and is the Executive Administrator for Village Missions International, which has its headquarters in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Following three years of teaching in the public schools, Dr. Hill enrolled at Dallas Theological Seminary where he received his Masters degree in Theology in 1976. During that time he also was working on research that earned him a Doctorate from the California Graduate School of Theology in 1977.

Dr. Hill pastored Grace Bible Church in Prescott, Arizona for three years, then returned to Phoenix where he was the Bible editor for Alpha Omega Publications and assistant pastor of West Side Bible Church. In 1987, the Hills moved to Hope, Arkansas where Dr. Hill served as pastor of Hope Community Church. In 1990, Dr. Hill accepted his present pastorate at Southwood Bible Church in Tulsa.

STUDYING THE VERSES

This not an interactive course. You can take all the time you need to complete your study. If you file them carefully, they will be readily available when you can get to them. You may get busy and have to slow down your study pace or lay a lesson aside for a few days or longer. That is not a problem because there are no deadlines or examinations.

Begin each study session with prayer. The Holy

Spirit is your teacher, because these things are “spiritually discerned.” In prayer you can reestablish fellowship with the Lord, if necessary, and renew your commitment to God and submission to His sovereignty.

Read the passage to be studied in the Bible several times. Try to understand the ideas even before you have read any comments.

Follow the discussion of each word. If there are other Bible passages mentioned, turn to them and read them, not only the verses but also the context.

Try to see the connection between the parallel passages and the portion of ROMANS you are studying. Try to see what ideas are being amplified or illustrated.

The Lord bless you in your study of ROMANS.

The Epistle to the Romans

So often pastors, expositors, Bible teachers are asked what book of the Bible they would chose to have if they could only have one book for the remainder of their lives. The consensus is consistent

in the answer...the book of Romans.

Of the thirteen epistles written by Paul, Romans includes the second longest introduction.

This introduction extends from v 1 through to v 17. It is only exceeded by the first two chapters of Galatians that comprise Paul’s introduction of that letter. Galatians however needed a longer introduction because it was Paul’s first epistle and it

dealt with a problem in the Galatian churches, the problem of legalism.

Here, the epistle to the Romans does not deal with a specific problem. But Paul had never been to Rome at the time of its writing. So he includes a longer introduction to explain who he is, not so much by credentials (as in Galatians), but by person, who he is and why he is writing.

If we were to take a broad overview of Romans we would see two major themes separated by a parenthesis regarding Israel.

Romans 1-8, Our relationship to God

Romans 9-11, Paul’s desire for Israel to be saved

Romans 12-16, Our relationship one to another

If we look at this epistle chronologically, as it fits into sequence with the other letters of Paul we can see a pattern:

Galatians: 48 AD, a strong stand for grace. Legalism having no part in the Christian way of life.

I and II Thessalonians: 52 AD, the individual relationship of believers to one another and the believer’s anticipation of the return of Christ

I and II Corinthians: 56 AD, the cooperative responsibilities of believers in the local church.

These are the epistles on ecclesiology, the function of the local church.

And then Romans: 57 AD, written from Corinth to a church Paul had never visited. The letter is somewhat impersonal but objective. It deals with the doctrine by which we function as Christians, such as:

- Justification by faith
- Living by grace and power of the Spirit
- Serving the Lord with one another

In Ecclesiastes we note that Solomon's major theme was that we, as believers, enjoy life as we obey God's Word.

And these are not antithetical concepts. The reason we can enjoy life is because Christ has set us free from the Law and the oppressive laws of man.

And that truth, which is explained in practical terms in Galatians, is now explained in theological terms in Romans.

Romans is without a doubt the crown jewel of the epistles.

It has changed the course of Christian history more than once. During the reformation it was the one

letter that Martin Luther used to defend his position that we are saved by faith alone, that we live

by faith alone, and we live according to the Scriptures alone.

Of this letter Luther said: "It is the true masterpiece of the NT, and the very purest Gospel, which

is well worthy and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as daily bread for man's soul. It can never be too well read

or studied. The more it is handled the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes."

The French expositor Godet observed: "The reformation was undoubtedly the work of the epistle

to the Romans as well as that of Galatians. Spiritual revival in the church will be connected to a

deeper understand of this book."

Harry Ironsides said of Romans: "It is the most

scientific statement of the divine plan for the redemption of mankind. It is the orderly setting forth

of the Gospel that the mind of man craves, the declaration of man's need along with the gracious

plan of God's salvation which culminates in His glorification."

It has been said that Romans is not an epistle about

the Gospel it is the Gospel and to be ignorant of
Romans is to be ignorant of Christianity.

From John Griffith

<http://www.ironrangebible.com/griffith/Romans/Romans.htm>

Romans Chapter One

Lesson 1

Introduction:

- Romans is considered by many good theologians to be the seed-bed of all Christian BD.

- It was this book being extensively taught, along with Galatians, that brought about the reformation.

- We are free to assemble, to study the Word of God because we live under a system of law which has its roots in the reformation.

* To know the message of Romans, to have your feet firmly planted in Romans, will keep you from false doctrine, from being led astray.

* It is instructive I believe to note how some of the theologians of the past have approached this book and what their evaluation was.

Some Illuminating Observations:

Chrysostom; had it read to him twice a week! [347-407]

Malancthon; copied the book 2 times in his own hand [1497-1560]

Luther; in the preface to his commentary on Romans;

This Epistle is the chief book of the New Testament, the purest gospel. It deserves not only to be known word for word by every Christian, but to be the subject of his meditation day by day, the daily bread of his soul....

The more time one spends on it, the more precious it becomes and the better it appears."

Harry A. Ironsides; [d. 1951] [wrote his commentary in 1928]

"The Epistle to the Romans is undoubtedly the most scientific statement of the divine plan for the redemption of mankind that God has been pleased to give us. Apart altogether from the question of inspiration we may think of it as a treatise of transcendent, intellectual power, putting to shame the most brilliant philosophies ever conceived by the minds of men."

Romans is not about the Gospel, it is the Gospel: Overview.

1. Romans is referred to within the Epistle as:

- God's gospel; 1:1; 15:16
- Christ's gospel; 15:19; of His Son 1:9
- Paul's gospel; 2:16; 16:25

2. What these verses are saying is that Romans is the gospel, it is God's gospel, it is Christ's gospel, it is Paul's gospel, in this sense:

- It is God's gospel -> He gave it, He is the source of it! He is the author!
- It is Christ's gospel -> He accomplished it, affected it!
- It is Paul's gospel -> in that he had the privilege of expounding it, under inspiration, getting that message of grace into writing, so that every generation of the church age can understand it and be blessed by it!

3. Therefore Romans is a complete, full orbbed, presentation

- of how God is the source, the initiator of it!
- that Christ is the object of it!
- that Paul is the expounder of it!

4. The Theme of Romans: 1:16-17 [should be memorized]

- last phrase is most explosive: quote of Hab 2:4

5. Four Major Parts to the Book; All of Romans is a Revelation of something:

#1. God's wrath 1:1 - 3:20

This section deals with the question, What is man's condition??

What is his real problem, that is from God's viewpoint!

- Man has an answer to this question!
- Man is well and needs no help!
- Man is sick and needs help! enter psychobablers and socialists
 - Romans we'll find says that man is dead and needs life; he remains dead apart from God.

#2. Revelation of God's salvation; 3:21-8:39

- exposition of 2 very pivotal doctrines of Christianity.
- Justification: entrance into the family [3:21-5:21]
- Sanctification: living and growing in the family [6:1-8:39]

#3. Revelation of God's wisdom; 9:1-11:36

- know that Israel was chosen by God [Dt. 7:6-7]
 - Question dealt with here is Why has God set aside His chosen people? is it permanent? or only for a time?

#4. Revelation of God's will for the Believer ch 12-16

- ?? answered; What does God desire from His own people?

6. Written by the Apostle Paul, this has never been seriously challenged;

- winter of 56/57 or 57/58

Closer look at these 4 sections.

First Section:

#1. God's wrath 1:1 - 3:20

- Salutation: 1:1-7

- Introduction: 1:8-15 [thanksgiving and occasion for writing]

- Theme: 1:16-17

- Revelation of God's wrath: 1:18-3:21

Salutation: 1:1-7

- Here we have the common from to and greeting; followed by the purpose for writing.

1:1 Paul, the writer; must skip down to v.7 in order to find those addressed, to all the beloved in Rome called saints; then comes the greeting; in v.7b.

Paul begins the salutation in vs:1 by introducing himself; identifying his master and his office;

Notice that the first thing Paul does is to give us 3 terms to designate who he is, "bond-servant" "called an apostle"; "set apart for the gospel of God."

#1 bond-servant

Bill Puryear

from <http://www.amadorbiblestudies.org/Notes/Romans/>

A. "Historical Background.

1. The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C. about 250 years after the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by Solomon.

2. Rome was built on seven hills — the Capitoline, Palatine, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal, and Quirinal. Eventually it expanded onto other hills, including the Pincio and Janiculum. None of these exceeded 60 m (200 ft) above sea level, but they rose for the most part in steep slopes above the surrounding valleys and at some points formed sheer cliffs towering over these valleys. The Tiber flowed past, and later through, the city as it grew and was navigable for the 24 km (15 miles) between the coast and Rome.

a. The saying "All roads lead to Rome" was almost literally true at the height of imperial glory. The Romans began their famous highway system in 312 b.c. with the construction of the first section of the Appian Way, 'Queen of Roads.' They continued their road-building until, in the 2nd century b.c., they had complete communication arteries to every part of the empire, for a total of 80,000 km (50,000 miles) of first-class highways and 320,000 km (200,000 mi) of lesser roads.

b. Travel by land was slow and expensive for bulky commodities, so Rome depended on the sea for the transport of most goods. Mediterranean ports were the chief cities of the Roman world. The imperial navy guaranteed the safety of the Mediterranean, which the Romans called Mare Nostrum, 'our sea.'

c. Italy is strategically located for control of the Mediterranean and Rome was well located for controlling the peninsula of Italy. Situated at the lowest point on the Tiber River where firm abutments for a bridge could be found, Rome controlled the main line of communication along the western and more populous side of the peninsula.

d. With a communication network that kept it in touch with every part of the Mediterranean world, Rome also dominated every part of that world and fed off it economically and culturally. Rome did not have native economic resources to maintain its prosperity but depended on income from the empire. When the city's indispensability disappeared in a.d. 330, with Constantine's move of the capital to Constantinople, rapid decline set in.

3. The traditional date of the founding of Rome is 753 b.c., a date that became official in the 1st century A.D., but archeological discoveries on the Palatine hill push Latin origins there back to the 9th cent b.c. Rome was then governed by kings in conjunction with a council (the Senate) until about 509 b.c. Apparently these were Latin kings until about 600 b.c. During the following century Etruscan monarchs ruled the city and were responsible for its urbanization. The Etruscans seem also to have introduced numerous crafts to the Latins and to have greatly improved their economic posture.

4. The Roman Republic. About 509 b.c. the Latins revolted against the Etruscans and established the Republic, which was destined to last until Augustus brought it to an end in 27 b.c. Under the Republic the chief executive officers were the Consuls; two of them were elected annually. These men were supported by an increasing number of officials elected to administrative tasks.

a. Between 509 B.C. and 265 B.C. Rome contested with the Etruscans, Italic tribes, Celts or Gauls, and Greek colonists in Italy for domination of the peninsula. When the process was complete Rome had not annexed all of Italy but controlled it through a network of alliances.

b. Rome next became fearful over possible Carthaginian control of Sicily. Thus it entered rather recklessly upon the Punic Wars (264–241 b.c., 218–202, 149–146). In the first of these wars Rome developed its famous naval power, and by the end of the second war had come to dominate the entire western basin of the Mediterranean. During the third Rome razed the city of Carthage.

c. With the defeat of Carthage and its great general Hannibal in 202 b.c., Rome turned its attention eastward, for Philip V of Macedonia had allied with Hannibal during the Second Punic War. Rome fought a series of wars with Macedonia and the Seleucids of Syria during the first half of the 2nd century b.c. By the end of that time it dominated the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, just as it had asserted authority over the western basin during the previous fifty years.

d. A century of warfare abroad led to a century of political instability at home, sometimes with open warfare. This began with the reform efforts of the Gracchi in 133 b.c. and ended with the victory of Octavian (Augustus) over Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 b.c. Revolution came in part for the following reasons: oppression of subjects in the provinces, unfair treatment of allies in Italy, introduction of slavery on a large scale, ruin of many of the operators of small farms in Italy during Hannibal's campaigns, the rise of an army more loyal to generals than to the state, and the failure of the senatorial class to provide good government for the state.

e. With Octavian (Augustus), 'savior of the empire', came a bright new day of peace and prosperity and a new political order: the Empire period or the Principate (rule of the princeps — first citizen or emperor).

5. The Roman Empire. Augustus took herculean steps to rehabilitate a Rome that for long had been sadly neglected. Though he had risen to power through military action, he chose to implement a civilian government and cooperated with the Senate in the rule of both Rome and the empire. But this outward show of constitutionalism should not obscure the fact that the princeps (with his military support) was the real ruler of the state, and during the next two centuries there was a steady erosion of civilian power until a full-fledged military monarchy was established.

a. Augustus divided Rome into fourteen districts and in turn subdivided these into 265 precincts. Each precinct had its own political organization and its own set of officials. Augustus also organized a corps of 7,000 men to serve as a fire brigade and night police. This force was divided into 1,000-man cohorts, each serving two of the fourteen districts.

b. Augustus created boards or commissions to dispense governmental functions and organized a sort of cabinet or council to aid him in shaping policies. Gradually the basic functions of government were institutionalized in a well-entrenched bureaucracy. Thus, even though some emperors of the 1st century a.d. proved incapable or found themselves embroiled in controversy with the Senate or various segments of the populace, Rome and the empire generally enjoyed peace, security, prosperity, and reasonably good government.

c. Augustus sought to gain support for his regime through the ruler cult, a concept that had for its background the god-king ideal of the ancient Near East and the efforts of successors of Alexander the Great to link worship of the ruler with loyalty to the state. During his rise to power Augustus had arranged the deification of Julius Caesar in an effort to win the loyalty of his troops, and he erected a temple to the divine Julius in the Forum. And in each of the 265 precincts of Rome he set up shrines dedicated to the genius of Augustus — the divine spirit that watched over his fortunes. Gradually the ruler cult became entrenched; by a.d. 100 the whole empire had ruler-cult establishments.

d. Emperors encouraged this worship but did not demand it until the days of Domitian, at the end of the 1st century. Refusal to worship the emperor and goddess Roma constituted treason, so such refusal resulted in the persecution of Christians, which waxed and waned until Constantine declared Christianity a legal religion early in the 4th century.

6. First Century Rome.

a. Socio-Economic Aspects. Rome was the largest city of the empire, with a population approaching a million by the end of the first century a.d. The city limits had a circumference of slightly over 21 km (13 miles) by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70.

(1) The Rich. Economically and socially there was a great cleavage between the rich and the poor. The rich lived in sumptuous villas. The front part of a villa usually followed the Italian house plan, consisting of rooms grouped about an atrium, which was a sort of a reception room with an opening in the roof below which lay a small pool. The rear of the house consisted of an open pillared courtyard surrounded by rooms, on the pattern of Eastern Mediterranean house plans. Often the households consisted of scores of slaves. Women enjoyed a great deal of freedom and moved freely in society, commonly in the company of a slave, who helped with shopping and other activities.

(2) The Poor. The poor usually lived in great tenements or insulae, apartment buildings made of wood and brick that might rise four or more stories with only a few feet between them. These must have been oppressively hot in August. These insulae had no sanitary facilities nor water above the first floor. The Romans had only terracotta and lead pipes, and neither was capable of withstanding pressure necessary to bring water to a second or third floor. Life expectancy probably was not over about thirty-five, and lead poisoning might have been one of the contributing factors to early death.

(3) Economy. The economy of the city of Rome was extremely poor throughout the late Republic and under the Empire. From the late 3rd century b.c., when the ravages of Hannibal sent many ruined farmers to swell the unemployed in Rome, the masses were always in dire straits, for Rome had little basic commerce or industry to provide employment. To complicate matters, slavery increased dramatically during the 1st centuries b.c. and a.d. The tendency was to employ increasing numbers of slaves in all kinds of production, from publishing to baking to shoe manufacture. This excluded many free persons from the job market altogether, and those who could find employment or set up in business for themselves could expect to earn no more than it cost entrepreneurs to own and maintain slaves to produce comparable commodities. High unemployment brings welfare. It is estimated that over 200,000 were on the grain dole in the capital in Augustus's day, and the numbers certainly did not diminish. It became a regular practice

for the emperors to provide 'bread and circuses,' free food and free entertainment for the unemployed masses of the capital.

(4) Slavery. The increase of slavery changed the character of the city fundamentally — morally, politically, and ethnically. Slaves were supposed to have no moral judgment of their own but to obey blindly the wishes of their masters. Because manumission was easy, large numbers of slaves became free and attained Roman citizenship. The amoral obedience that had made them good slaves now made them poor citizens. Political effects of the substantial infusion of non-Romans were also great. These persons, largely from the East, had little familiarity with, or affinity for, Roman institutions. Especially, they would be amenable to demagoguery. Political stability and self-government began to break down under the influence of this foreign infusion as early as the late 2nd cent b.c. Finally, the whole racial complexion of Rome changed radically. Under the early Empire, freedmen and their descendants outnumbered the citizens of Roman and Italian stock perhaps four to one. The natives went off to military service and either were killed in battle or as veterans were settled in military colonies overseas.

(5) Jews. When Jews first came to Rome is not known, but a few of them probably arrived in the 2nd century b.c. It is thought that about 20,000 of them lived in the capital during the first half of the 1st century a.d. A total of thirteen synagogues are known to have existed in Rome, but not all of them may have functioned during the 1st century. A half-dozen Jewish catacombs have been discovered in Rome. Jews enjoyed a favored status in the Roman Empire and were not required to participate in the imperial or state cult. As long as Christianity was viewed as part of Judaism, it too enjoyed freedom from emperor worship. Expulsions of Jews from Rome during the days of Tiberius and Claudius were not religious persecutions but police measures taken for the maintenance of good order within the city. They did not terminate the favorable status of Judaism in the capital. Many Jews flooded the Roman slave market just before and after the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70.

(6) Christians. The origin of Christianity in Rome, like that of Judaism, cannot be determined with certainty. Roman Jews were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10-11), and they may have returned to the capital to found a church. But perhaps the nucleus of this fellowship consisted of Paul's converts in other spheres of missionary activity, such as Corinth and Ephesus. In this connection it is interesting to note the large number of individuals he was able to call by name in Romans 16. Paul sent his letter to the church at Rome by the hand of Phoebe, the deaconess of Cenchrea (eastern seaport of Corinth), who was on her way to Rome (Rom 16:1-2). Christianity grew rapidly at Rome. At least thirty-five Christian catacombs are known there, the earliest dating to the middle of the 2nd century. These were designed for burial of the dead, not as meeting places for harried Christians. Early in the 4th century there were at least forty churches in Rome, the three most important built by Constantine: St. Peter's in the Vatican, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, and St. John Lateran."

B. Founding of the Church in Rome.

1. The Church was not founded by any apostle, especially not Peter or Paul.

a. Peter was still in Jerusalem at the time of the Council of Jerusalem in 50 A.D. whereas it is almost certain that a church existed in Rome prior to this.

b. The Roman writer Suetonius records that the Emperor Claudius banished Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 because there had been rioting at the instigation of one called Chrestus. There is a strong possibility that Christians were mixed up in this. Acts 18:1-3 implies that Priscilla and Aquila were banished under this edict of Claudius. "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers."

c. There is no mention of Peter in this letter, especially in Paul's greetings to so many people in Chapter 16. It is difficult to imagine Paul not mentioning his friend Peter, if in fact Peter had founded the church.

2. Jews from Rome were among the first converts to Christianity on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:8-11, "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?"

Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

a. Churches did not have to be founded by an apostle. To maintain such a position is not only unhistorical but denies the power of God the Holy Spirit.

b. The knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ would be continually increasing as Christian travelers brought back with them accounts of apostolic preaching and teaching. Paul's letters were certainly beginning to be circulated and would have quickly found their way to Rome. At this time he had written First and Second Thessalonians, Galatians, and First and Second Corinthians.

c. "Rome had its origin in the mixed multitude of travelers to Rome (officials, civil servants, soldiers, merchants) who brought the gospel with them from the East."

3. Paul had never been to the city of Rome at the time he wrote this letter to them.

4. Clement of Rome (?-100 AD), a student of Paul and pastor-teacher of the Roman church, suggests that both Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome.

C. Composition of the Church.

1. It is initially made up of Jews who had visited Jerusalem for the Passover and were witnesses on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:10-11.

2. Priscilla and Aquila were Jews who probably opened their home for the assembly of the members of the church. They were wealthy tent makers with businesses in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus.

3. But the majority of believers were Gentiles.

a. In Romans 1:5-17 Paul includes the readers among the Gentiles to whom he has been particularly commissioned.

b. In Romans 1:12-14 he compares the members of this congregation to the "other Gentiles."

c. In Romans 6:19 Paul states that the readers had offered their bodies in slavery to impurity. This would seem to support a Gentile group more rather than a Jewish group.

d. In Romans 11:13 Paul says, "I am talking to you Gentiles" and it cannot easily be maintained that he is addressing a minority of the church because of his statement in Romans 11:28-31, where the readers are said to have obtained mercy through Jewish unbelief.

e. In Romans 15:16 Paul appeals to his commission among the Gentiles, which would have far less weight if directed mainly to a Jewish audience.

4. From the evidence of First Clement 6:1 and Tacitus (Annals, 15, 44), it appears that the church was of considerable size by the time of Nero's persecutions (63-64 A.D.)

D. Place of Writing and Date of the Epistle.

1. Paul had been intending to visit the church but had been prevented, Romans 15:21-22; 1:13. Our Lord wanted him to become the pastor-teacher of the church of Rome, where he would have the greatest influence in the world.

2. He had just completed his collection for the poverty-stricken believers at Jerusalem, Romans 15:25-28. He is determined to go to Jerusalem, which identifies this occasion with the period mentioned in Acts 20. Paul has been forced to leave Ephesus after three years of teaching there and has gone to Macedonia (Philippi) because of the problems in the Corinthian church. He spends three months teaching in Corinth, and then goes back through Macedonia and Asia en route back to Jerusalem. Therefore, Paul was in Greece, probably Corinth, at the time of writing. This is confirmed by:

a. The commendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2, who belonged to the church at Cenchræa, the port of Corinth.

b. The greeting of Gaius, Romans 16:23, Paul's host at the time, who is probably the Corinthian whom Paul mentions in 1Corinthians 1:14.

c. The greeting of Erastus, who was the city treasurer of Corinth, Romans 16:23, and is probably the same man who was left at Corinth as mentioned in 2Timothy 4:20.

d. And the mention of Timothy and Sopater (or Sosipater) as sending greetings, since these were Paul's companions when he left Greece on his last journey to Jerusalem.

3 Thus the date of the epistle is the year after Paul left Ephesus near the end of his third missionary journey. Considering the historical evidence for the date of Gallio's appointment to the proconsular office at Corinth, it is possible to calculate that Paul's departure from Corinth for Jerusalem took place either in 57 or 58 A.D. Either one of these dates fall within the decrees of Nero, when law and order were established throughout the provinces, and this would agree with Paul's exhortations to the readers to respect the civil authorities, Romans 13:1-7.

E. Purpose for the Epistle.

1. He wanted to teach them basic and intermediate doctrine, Romans 1:11, 15.

2. He also wanted to go on west to Spain and establish churches there, and hoped to receive the logistical support of the Romans for this mission, Romans 15:24, 28.

3. Paul probably received a fairly comprehensive report of the state of the church from Aquila and Priscilla and others of his associates and converts who had had contact with the church. Paul seems to have been aware of certain doctrinal problems, which were of some concern to the believers in Rome, and he sets out to answer them. The main

problem appears to have arisen from the need to understand the basic need for salvation, what the nature of salvation is, what the spiritual life of the Church Age is, and how and why all of this is different from what the Jews believe. Paul defends the importance of the principle of a universal Christian Church or body of believers from all of mankind based upon the gift of righteousness given by God to anyone who believes in Christ as opposed to the Jewish belief in a parochial (close-minded) religion for a select few based upon good works as defined by those select few.

F. Unity of the Epistle. There is limited manuscript evidence (p46 the Chester Beatty papyrus) to support the contention that the epistle circulated without the concluding chapter (16). However, in spite of the fact there are a lot of textual problems with where the doxology (Rom 16:25-27) is placed (the Chester Beatty papyrus, p46, places it after chapter 15) all other great manuscripts both Alexandrian and Western—p61, Aleph, B, C, D, Latin, Syriac, Boharic and Ethiopic versions place it at the end of chapter 16. There is some evidence that Marcion did not include chapters 15-16 in his text, but this is no surprise, since Marcion threw out everything that he thought was Jewish in any way from the canon of Scripture, such as Matthew, Mark, John, and even portions of Luke's gospel.

G. Author. No one has dared suggest that this epistle was ever written by anyone other than the apostle Paul.

H. Conclusion. The entire epistle as we have it now was written by Paul in 57 or 58 A.D. from Corinth to introduce the basic doctrines of the spiritual life of the universal church and how they differed from the false teachings of the Jews.

Ron Snider

from <http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/newtest.html>

Ron did not have an introduction per se