

## New Testament Foundations: Session Thirteen

# Romans: Paul's Magnum Opus

Romans is Paul's magnum opus—his systematic presentation of the Gospel he received and the Gospel he preached. Lawrence Richards calls it, “the theological cornerstone of the New Testament, and the greatest of Paul's epistles.”<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce said about it, “Time and time again in the course of Christian history it has liberated the minds of men, brought them back to an understanding of the essential Gospel of Christ, and started spiritual revolutions.”<sup>2</sup> Frederick Godet said, “The probability is that every great spiritual revival in the Church will be connected as cause and effect with a deeper understanding of this book.”<sup>3</sup> Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley were all profoundly affected by reading Romans. Besides these well-known leaders, there are the countless millions whose lives have been transformed by understanding Romans. “What happened to Augustine, Luther and Wesley launched great spiritual movements which have left their mark in world history. But similar things have happened, much more frequently, to very ordinary men and women as the words of this letter came home to them with power.”<sup>4</sup>

### AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

1. Paul wrote Romans in late 56 AD or early 57 AD during a three-month visit to \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 20:2, 3)
2. The church consisted of Jews and Gentiles, but it was predominantly Gentile. It was well \_\_\_\_\_ when Paul wrote his letter.
3. Romans is unique among the Pauline corpus for three reasons.
  - It was written to a church Paul had not \_\_\_\_\_ or visited.
  - It was not occasioned by a church \_\_\_\_\_ or doctrinal heresy.
  - It was not rambling like much of Paul's other writing, but \_\_\_\_\_ and logical in presentation.

### PURPOSE AND THEMES

1. Paul's stated purpose for his letter is to prepare the church for his planned \_\_\_\_\_ (15:28), to explain why he had not visited yet (1:13; 15:22), and to raise money for his trip to Spain (15:24).
2. His second purpose (unstated) is to present a clear, thorough, and systematic presentation of his \_\_\_\_\_.
3. His primary theme is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Romans 1:16

- The Gospel message is presented in a logical progression: Man is a sinner; Christ paid the price for man's sin; Christ's gift is received by faith alone; Salvation is complete identification with Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*

<sup>2</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol 5, p. 161

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Godet, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 1

<sup>4</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans*, p. 58

SECTION	TEXT	COMMENTS
Introduction	1:1-15	Who is Paul, what is his mandate, and what is his interest in the church at Rome?
Thesis	1:16, 17	What is the purpose for this letter, and what is the essence of the message Paul preaches?
The Guilt of the Gentiles	1:18-32	Why are the Gentiles, who have never heard the Gospel or the Law, <u>guilty before God</u> ?
The Guilt of the Jew	2:1-29	Why are the Jews, who are the children of promise and possessors of the Law, <u>guilty before God</u> ?
The Guilt of the Whole World	3:1-20	Why is the whole world guilty before God and how deep is their predicament?
The Righteousness of God by Faith	3:21-5:21	What is God's solution for the sin of mankind, and how is it worked out through faith in Christ's completed work?
Questions about Righteousness	6:1-8:39	What are the issues that arise out of our new spiritual relationship with God? (For example 6:1; 6:15; 7:7; 7:24)
Questions about Israel	9:1-11:36	Has God invalidated His covenant with Israel by instituting a new covenant based on faith?
Practical Application	12:1-15:13	How does this new covenant affect everything about our daily relationship with God and others?
Conclusion & Postscript	15:14-16:27	What are Paul's plans for the future, and what are his final thoughts for the Romans?

4. He identifies himself with three statements in his opening greeting as, "...a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God."
5. He presents his \_\_\_\_\_ in three statements.
  - I am under obligation to Greeks and to barbarians (1:14). I am eager to preach the gospel (1:15). I am not ashamed of the gospel (1:16).
6. He presents his \_\_\_\_\_ in three statements.
  - The gospel is the power of God. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God. The gospel is received by faith.