



Romans 1:1-17

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

This epistle [Romans] is really the chief part of the New Testament and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should 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.

—Martin Luther, *Preface to Romans* (1522)

Perhaps no other book has changed the course of modern history as the book of Romans. This book was instrumental in the salvation of Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and countless others down through church history. It sits first among the Pauline epistles and is also the longest.

Author: The apostle Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ (1:1)

Paul wrote this letter around AD 57 near the end of his third missionary journey, probably from Corinth, before heading to Jerusalem where he would be arrested (cf. Acts 21:15-26:32).

Theme: Good News for a Broken World (1:1b-6)

GOSPEL

Romans remains a timeless manifesto, a manifesto of freedom through Jesus Christ. It is the fullest, plainest, and grandest statement of the gospel in the NT. Its message is not that 'man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains' [Rousseau]. ...It is rather than human beings are born in sin and slavery, but that Jesus Christ came to set us free.

—John Stott

If we have gained a true understanding of this Epistle, we have an open door to all the most profound treasures of Scripture.

—John Calvin (1509-64)

Gospel. Greek, *euangelion*, "a good message; good news."

In the 1st century, if on a far-flung battlefield an emperor won a great victory...he would send heralds (angeloi) to declare his victory, peace, and authority... The gospel is an announcement, a declaration. It is not advice to be followed; it is news, good news about what has been done.

—Timothy Keller

Obedience. Greek, *hupakoe*, lit., "to hear under." It is the idea of listening to and then submitting to what is heard. This response leads to a change in attitude and action in the hearer.

Recipients: Believers in Rome, loved and called by God (1:7a)

The church in Rome probably began with the Jews and proselytes at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). In AD 49, the emperor Claudius expelled many of the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2) thus the church may have become predominately Gentile after this time.

Blessing: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1:7b)

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING & PRAYER (1:8-15)

Paul thanks God that their faith is spoken of throughout the Roman empire, prays for them, and longs to meet them in person.

1. To use his gifts to _____ their faith (1:11).
2. To be mutually _____ together (1:12).
3. To bear some _____ through evangelism (1:13).
4. To fulfill his _____ to preach the gospel (1:14-15).

PAUL'S FOCUS – THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (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."*

- The gospel displays God's _____ to save.
- The gospel is for _____ (Jew and Gentile).
- The gospel reveals God's gift of _____.
- The gospel is received by _____.
- The gospel is lived out by _____ (cf. Habakkuk 2:4).

As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from Rome.

—Suetonius (AD 69-122)

The whole gospel is contained in Christ. To move even a step from Christ means to withdraw oneself from the gospel.

—John Calvin

Night and day I pondered until I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, He justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning.

—Martin Luther

Moses gave Israel 613 commandments. David reduced them to eleven [Ps 15]. Micah to three [Mic 6:8]. Isaiah to two [Is 56:1], but Habakkuk to one—"the righteous shall live by his faith" [Hab. 2:4].

—Rabbi Simlai

The just not only commences to live his life by his faith but he continues to live by his faith. ...Faith is essential all along; every day and all the day, in all things. Our natural life begins by breathing and it must be continued by breathing; what the breath is to the body, that is faith to the soul.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

Righteousness and life are both by faith. Those who are righteous by faith also live by faith. Having begun in faith, they continue in the same path.

—John Stott