



Romans: God of Righteousness

Memory Verse: Romans 5:1 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Background

Romans is the 45th book of the Bible and the very first of the Epistles in the New Testament. The book of Romans was written by Paul (with secretarial assistance from Tertius, see *Romans 16:22*) whom we were introduced to in Acts. Paul, formerly known as Saul, was a well-educated Pharisee from an influential family of Tarsus. Once a persecutor of Christians determined to destroy the Church, Saul had an encounter with Jesus Christ as he was traveling to Damascus (Acts 9). This encounter would change his life and the course of the Church forever. Saul became Paul, a saved man filled with zeal and devotion to Christ and His cause. Jesus said of Paul, "This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel." (Acts 9:15). Paul made three long missionary journeys throughout the Roman Empire, spreading the gospel and planting churches along the way. Paul is the known author of 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament. All of these books are known as Epistles or Letters that Paul wrote expounding on the doctrinal revelation and theological significance of the events in the Gospels and the book of Acts. Paul suffered much for the cause of Christ facing incredible hardships, persecution, and imprisonment before being martyred c. 64-68 AD.

Paul wrote the book of Romans from the Greek city of Corinth around 57 AD, near the end of his third missionary journey. Even though Paul had not yet been to the church in Rome, Paul wrote letting them know of his intention to visit after he had traveled to Jerusalem. Paul also asked that they be praying for him. At this time, God had not yet told Paul He would see him to Rome (Acts 23:11), and Paul was not sure he would get away from Jerusalem alive (Romans 15:31). The letter of Romans has been called a "theological textbook" and is considered the first great work of Christian theology. In it, Paul gives a thorough explanation of the gospel and the Christian life.

The Short Story

Salvation is found only in Christ, and God's righteousness is given to those who put their faith in Him.

What's the Big Idea?

The theme throughout the book of Romans is the fundamental nature of Christ's work on the cross and what that means for humanity. Paul begins by discussing the wickedness of all humanity and God's righteous anger over human sin. Everyone has fallen short of God's standard of righteousness and are condemned. However, God in His rich grace and mercy provides a way of justification, a way to be made righteous in His sight. "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith..." (3:22-25). Jesus' blood shed on the cross covers all of our sins and those who believe are made righteous. Paul continues his book by making it clear that the Christian life doesn't end with salvation. Those who have been saved are to continue to pursue God and holiness, being sanctified with help from the Holy Spirit. Paul also writes about God's past, present, and future purpose for Israel. Romans ends with practical instruction for the believer as they live out their new life in Christ.

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

The book of Romans begins with the doctrinal truths on the sin of humanity and the redemption found in Christ alone. Christ has saved us from our dead and sinful nature so that we might stand before God as righteous. Therefore, He deserves our whole-hearted allegiance, devotion, and obedience. The ending of Romans with instructions for the practical Christian life not only shows the importance of our belief in Christ, but also how we live out those beliefs. Paul's words for the Romans are also for us today, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." (12:1).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- Was Paul talking to and about believers or unbelievers in Romans Chapter 6?
- What are the foundational points Paul has already established before reaching Chapter 6?
- What is Paul's answer to the questions he asks in v. 1 and v. 15? Discuss the significance.
- What is a believers stance with sin and why are we able to make that stance?
- What's the difference between being a "slave" to sin and "slave" to God?
- List the outcome of serving sin. List the outcome of serving God (righteousness, obedience)
- In whom do we have our eternal life? How is this confirmed in vs. in chapter 6 and other books?

Practical Application

- What are some excuses you have heard people or yourself state to excuse sin?
- What is God's response to sin and our excuses? Is this difficult to remember? Why?
- Where have you found yourself living as a prisoner even though you are free? Why?
- What is the truth about your stance with sin? How can you remind yourself of this?
- What is the difference between Justification and Sanctification? Which one is Paul discussing here?
- How have you seen sin pay death in your life besides physical? How have you seen God give life?
- In who's power and authority do you stand? Where do you desire to proclaim that and receive life?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 3:20, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law..."
- 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
- 5:8, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- 7:21-25, "So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me..."
- 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him..."
- 13:8, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another..."
- 13:10, "Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

Bonus Features: Where is Jesus?

Paul makes it clear in Romans that Jesus is and has always been God's solution to the sin problem. In Romans 3 we see that God has a dilemma. Because He is a just and righteous God he MUST punish humanity for it's sin. But he left those sins unpunished so that, at his perfect time, "God presented Christ as a sacrifice for atonement" (3:25).

Jesus is God's answer to OUR problem. For we all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. So what is one to do? Have FAITH in Jesus as God's one and only Son! For righteousness is by faith, which in turn produces actions. Jesus is God's ultimate, perfect and ONLY solution.

Personal Takeaways and Notes