

Romans 1:1-7 Answers Introduction to Romans

Introduction: Today we launch into a study of Paul's letter to the believers in Rome.

Quotes About Romans: Poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge proclaimed Romans to be "the most profound book in existence." The famous commentator Frédéric Godet called Romans "the cathedral of the Christian life." Martin Luther said "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."

Why is Romans important? The book of Romans is a primary source document for what Christianity is supposed to look like: *What do Christians believe about sin? What do Christians believe salvation? What do Christians believe Jesus? What kind of lives do Christians live?*

Background:

1. Why is it thought Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this? See *Romans 16:23, 1 Corinthians 1:14*. We learn from Romans 16:23 that Paul was staying with someone named Gaius when he wrote Romans, probably the same Gaius of 1 Corinthians 1:14. Thus, he was most likely in Corinth (Greece), about 600 miles away. If you drove it today it would take about 20 hours by time you took a ferry across the Ionian Sea. Paul was on his third missionary journey so the date of writing would have been around A.D. 57. (about 25 years after Jesus' resurrection).

Overview:

The book of Romans has 16 chapters and can be divided 5 sections: Sin, Salvation, Sanctification, Sovereignty, Service.

******What literary function does this first paragraph serve (1:1-7)?** This first paragraph served to introduce Paul and greet the recipients of the letter.

2. This is the longest of all Paul's greetings. Why might Paul have felt the need to make such a detailed introduction (1:1-5)? See *ahead to 1:10, 15:22-29*. Paul did not start the church in Rome (The Roman Catholics are quick to ascribe that honor to Peter!) nor had he ever visited them before. He had however met a number of believers from Rome (see 16:1-16). This letter was a prelude to a proposed visit.

3. What can we learn about Paul from verses 1 and 5? Paul was **1)** a servant of Jesus, **2)** called to be an apostle, **3)** set apart for the gospel (1:1) and **4)** tasked to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations (1:5).

4. Paul described himself as a servant of Christ Jesus (1:1). The Greek is *doulos*, the common word for slave. Why might the translators have translated this servant rather than slave? Roman slavery was enough different from 1800s American slavery that we might envision the wrong thing if they simply translated it as slave. Roman slaves were often highly educated, generally permitted to work for pay to earn their freedom and not uncommonly were entrusted with immense amounts of money and responsibility (*ESV Study Bible*, p. 2201).

Application: *Whose servant are you? Are you serving yourself, sin or Jesus?*

ESV 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

5. Apostle (1:1) remains an untranslated word in our Bibles. It is transliterated from *apostolos*. What word would adequately translate *apostolos*? The Greek word means delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders (Thayer #652); *apo* means off and *stello* means to prepare or make ready. Thus, one who is made ready for a mission and then sent off. In secular Greek the *apostolos* was the personal representative of the one who sent him and had the authority to represent his master (TDNTT, I, p. 126). Options for translation would include missionary, ambassador and representative (sort of a manufacturer's rep!).

6. What authority did an apostle (1:1) have in the early church? See *Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:19-20, 1 Thessalonians 2:13*. A New Testament apostle was equal in authority to an Old Testament prophet. The apostles were personally chosen representatives of Jesus and His teachings (NBD, p. 60). They were the standard for doctrine in the New Testament church.

Why do you suppose they did not translate it? It is perhaps because the word *apostolos* was used two different ways in the New Testament. One was to refer to the men handpicked and trained by Jesus in person, men who also saw the resurrected Lord Jesus. The other way it was used was to refer to men who were moved by the Holy Spirit to be missionaries, but who had not been personally chosen by Jesus nor seen Him resurrected.

7. In what sense was Paul set apart for the gospel (1:1)? See *John 15:16, Acts 9:15, 13:2, Galatians 1:15-16*. God's will for Paul's life was that he take the gospel to the gentiles. He was set apart for a gospel ministry. As Jesus said to the Twelve, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you" (Jn 15:16). Paul really was called into the ministry.

ESV Galatians 1:15-16 . . . he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles . . .

8. Gospel (1:1) is an Anglo-Saxon word used to translate the Greek *euangellion*. What does it mean? The *go* is a shortened form of good and *spel* meant story, so good story. In Greek, *eu* means good (as in eulogy) and *angelos* (as in angel) means messenger or message.

9. What can we learn about the gospel from 1:2-3? The gospel was **1)** promised beforehand by the prophets in the Old Testament and **2)** it concerns God's Son. The gospel is the good news that God's Son has come in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Bibliology: Paul referred to the Old Testament as the "holy scriptures" (1:2). He considered the Old Testament a sacred writing containing valuable promises from God concerning Jesus (Hendriksen, p. 41).

10. What can we learn about the Son from 1:3-4? The Son **1)** was descended from David, **2)** was proved to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead and **3)** is none other than Jesus Christ our Lord.

11. Why is it significant that the Son was descended from David (1:3)? *See 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 132:11, Jeremiah 23:5.* The Old Testament prophets predicted the Messiah, the Son of God, the Christ, would come from King David's lineage. He is the Son of David, the Lion from the tribe of Judah!

12. How did the resurrection declare Jesus to be the Son of God (1:4)? Not many people come back from the dead. Jesus' resurrection validates who He was and everything He taught. (You just can't keep a good Man down!).

What does the title Son of God signify (1:4)? To a Jewish mind this title was synonymous with Messiah or Christ. The title does not mean that Jesus is less than God in any way. Rather He is God in the flesh.

ESV **Romans 9:5** . . . Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

ESV **Titus 2:13** . . . blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ . . .

ESV **Colossians 2:9** . . . in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily . . .

13. How are all three members of the Trinity seen in 1:1-4? The Gospel of God (the Father) is the good news about the Son of God who was raised from the dead by the Spirit of holiness.

14. According to 1:5, Jesus called Paul to apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations. What is the relationship obedience and faith? *See James 2:14-20.* The NIV reads, "the obedience that comes from faith." We are saved by faith, but a saving faith always produces obedience.

Based on 1:5, for whose sake did Paul preach the gospel (1:5)? Paul did it for the sake of his (Jesus') name. Our salvation is not really about us, it is about God. We are saved for God's glory. As the Westminster catechism states, man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever (Question 1). When you witness, you should do so not for the sake of the person, but for the sake of Jesus.

15. What was revolutionary about the statement that the gospel is for all the nations

(1:5)? For two millennia prior to Jesus' coming, the only nation on earth God had a covenant relationship with was Israel. All God's promises were to Abraham and his descendants.

16. According to 1:6-7, what calling did Paul's readers have? See ahead to 8:28-30. They were called to belong to Jesus and to be saints. God's calling is like a Star Trek tractor beam that cannot ultimately be resisted.

ESV Romans 8:28-30 . . . we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Divine Callings: Paul was called to be an apostle and his readers were called **1)** to belong to Jesus (1:6) and **2)** to be saints (1:7).

17. Paul did not write to everyone in Rome. How did describe those to whom he wrote

(1:7)? He wrote to those in Rome who were loved by God and called to be saints. Reading between the lines, this implies there were people in Rome not loved by God, not called to be saints. When the Bible states that God loves the whole world, it means He even loves people who are not Jewish. He loves all types of men. He loves all men without distinction. However, He does not love all men without exception. Those God loves He calls to be saints.

What does saint mean (1:7)? It is from *hagios*, "holy ones". It refers to those who are set apart for God to be exclusively His (Thayer, # 40).

William Hendriksen: "A saint, then, is a person whose guilt has been blotted out on the basis of Christ's substitutionary atonement, and who, consequently, by means of the power of the indwelling Spirit, strives to live to God's glory" (p. 47).

Where's the church? An old Wendy's commercial famously featured an elder lady asking a competitor, "Where's the beef?" Often in his salutations Paul would greet "the church" in a particular city. Here instead he greeted the "saints" in Rome. **Why the difference?** Old time Baptists argued that any time the word church is used with reference to a locale it refers to a single congregation meeting in one assembly. Since there obviously were several different house churches in Rome, each with its own meeting place (Ro 16), it would have been improper for Paul to greet "the" church in Rome. He instead greeted the saints in Rome.

What fairly standard greeting did Paul give in 1:7b? He prayed for them to have grace and peace from the Father and Jesus.

So What?

18. What personal applications can you derive from 1:1-7?

1. I, like Paul, should see myself as a servant of Jesus and be about serving Him (1:1).
2. I should be as concerned about spreading the gospel as was Paul (1:5) — for Jesus' sake.
3. My faith in Jesus should express itself in obedience (1:5).
4. I am called to be and act like a saint (1:7).

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the text of the ESV.
- You can hear this lesson being taught at www.SermonAudio.Com/NTRF.

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