

Through the Bible Book by Book

New Testament

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ROMANS

Theme: The Epistle to the Romans is a complete, logical, inspired answer to the great question of the ages, “**How should a man be just with God?**” (Job 9:2).

In the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Acts, are found scattered in different places teachings concerning that great doctrine which forms the very foundation of Romans - justification by faith. It has remained for the apostle Paul to gather up these teachings and adding thereto the special revelations vouchsafed unto him, to give us the most complete statement of doctrine found in the New Testament, embodied in an Epistle which has been called “*the cathedral of Christian doctrine.*”

We shall sum up the theme of Romans as follows:

- The justification of sinful men,
- The sanctification of justified men
- The glorification of sanctified men, through faith and by the power of God.

Occasion and Reason for Writing: While at Corinth on his last visit there Paul met a Christian lady named Phoebe who was going to Rome. Romans 16:1,2. He took advantage of this circumstance to send by her a letter to the church there telling them of his coming visit and giving them a statement of the distinctive truths which had been revealed to him.

When Written: During Paul’s last visit to Corinth. II Corinthians 13:1; Acts 20:1, 2.

Contents: The Epistle may be divided into the following three broad divisions:

1. Doctrinal, unfolding Paul’s argument of justification by faith. Chs. 1 to 8.
 2. Dispensational. Chs. 9 to 11. In chapters 1 to 8 and 12 to 16 Paul deals with the church. In chapters 9 to 11 he turns aside for a short while to speak about Israel and to show their relation to God’s plan of salvation. This section answers the question, What place does the Jewish nation have in God’s plan of salvation.
 3. Practical, containing exhortations relative to Christian living. Chs. 12 to 16.
- We shall use the following outline as the basis of our study:

I. Condemnation. 1:1 to 3:20.

II. Justification. 3:21 to 5:21.

III. Sanctification. Chs. 6-8.

IV. Dispensation. Chs. 9-11.

V. Exhortation. Chs. 12-16.

I. Condemnation. Chs. 1:1 to 3:20.

Before beginning the study of Paul's main argument notice -

1. The salutation. 1:1-7.
2. The introduction (1:8-15), where Paul expresses his intention of visiting the Roman church.
3. The theme (1:16, 17). Verse 16 contains in brief the subject of the whole Epistle.

The Gospel is-

- (1) **the power of God unto salvation,**
- (2) **to everyone that believeth,**
- (3) **to the Jew first, and also**
- (4) **to the Greek.**

Paul now begins his great argument for justification by faith by laying down his first premise; namely, the whole world is guilty before God and under condemnation.

He shows that-

1. *The heathen are under condemnation (1:18-32).*

Because, having had a revelation of God in the beginning (vv. 19,20), they rejected it (v. 21). This rejection of the light led to spiritual ignorance (v. 22), spiritual ignorance led to idolatry (vv. 23-25), and idolatry led to moral corruption (vv. 26-32).

2. *The Jew is under condemnation (Ch. 2).*

Instead of being humbled by his knowledge of the law as he should have been, he has become self-righteous and critical, his self-righteousness blinding him to the fact that in the sight of God he is no better than the heathen who have not the law (2:1-16).

In fact his knowledge of the law increases his condemnation and makes him more guilty than the heathen who have not had the light (2:17-29).

3. *There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.*

Both are under sin, without any hope of being justified by the works of the law or by any human means (3:1-20).

II. Justification. Chs. 3:21 to 5:21.

The last section concluded with a picture of the whole world guilty before God, shut up in the prison-house of sin, and awaiting the penalty of the law. From the human side there is no way of escape; it must come from the Divine side. The way of escape is now revealed - justification by faith.

By justification we mean that judicial act of God whereby those who put their faith in Christ are declared righteous in His eyes and free from guilt and punishment.

It may be illustrated by a judge's acquittal of a prisoner and declaring him innocent.

We shall notice in this section:

1. *The fact of justification by faith* (3:21-31).

The Jew could not conceive of righteousness apart from the law. But since the law condemned instead of justified, it could not bring salvation. But now God reveals a righteousness which is apart from the law, a gift (v. 24), obtained by all who believe in Christ (v. 22), and made possible by His atoning death (v. 25). Because Christ died and paid the penalty of the law, God can be just and a justifier (v. 26) ; i.e., He can acquit a guilty sinner without setting aside the demands of His holy law.

2. *Old Testament illustrations of justification by faith* (Ch. 4).

By referring the Jew to his own Scriptures Paul shows him that the above named doctrine is not new. He first of all mentions Abraham. If any Jew would have a right to claim justification by his works it was Abraham, the "**father of all them that believe,**" the "**friend of God.**" This patriarch was righteous in the sight of God; but this righteousness was by faith and not by works (vv. 1-3). David was "**a man after God's own heart.**" He received this testimony not because of his own righteousness, for he committed many sins, but because of his faith (vv. 6-8).

3. *The results of justification by faith.* 5:1-11.

4. *The security brought by justification by faith* (5:12-21).

Just as surely as union with the first Adam brings sin, condemnation and death, so surely does union with the second Adam bring righteousness, justification, and life.

III. Sanctification. Chs. 6 to 8.

In chapters 1-5 Paul has been dealing with sins, the outward manifestation of sin in our nature, and with the guilt following those sins. In chapters 6-8 he deals with sin; i.e., with the sinful nature itself.

The first section speaks of our deliverance from the guilt and penalty; the second section, of our deliverance from the power of sin. The first deals with our actions; the second with our nature. Chapters 6-8 answer the question: now that he has been justified, what is the Christian's relation to sin? The answer to this question may be reduced to one word-Sanctification, i.e., separation from sin and separation unto God.

In this section we learn that-

1. *The Christian is dead to sin* (Ch. 6).

His baptism was symbolical of his identification with Christ in death and resurrection (vv. 1-10). The Christian by faith is to reckon himself dead to sin (vv. 11, 12); and this reckoning finds its practical application in his turning from every known sin and his yielding to God (v. 13).

2. *The Christian is freed from the law as a means of sanctification* (Ch. 7).

As death dissolves the marriage relation, so the believer's death to sin releases him from the law (vv. 1-6), that he might be married to Christ. This relationship to the law brought him constantly under condemnation, for it required a righteousness that corrupt human nature could not yield. This was not so much the fault of the law, for it was good, holy and spiritual. The fault lay with the carnal nature that could not fulfill its requirements. After describing his own experience when he discovered the spiritual nature of the law and his own inability to keep it, Paul utters a cry which is both a call for help and a question: "**O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**"

3. *The answer to this cry is found in chapter 8* where we learn that the righteousness which the law requires is worked out in us by the Holy Spirit who comes to dethrone sin, produce the fruits of righteousness, bear witness to our sonship, and help us in prayer.

IV. Dispensation. chapters 9 to 11.

So far Paul has been unfolding God's plan of salvation, and has come to the conclusion that salvation is by faith in Christ to all who believe, whether of Jew or Gentile.

He has been dealing with salvation in relation to the individual, but what is its relation to Israel as a nation?

- If they as a nation have been rejected what becomes of the Old Testament promises of national restoration?
- If Israel is God's chosen people, to whom were committed His Word and to whom were given the covenants, and the law, why is it that they as a nation have rejected their Messiah?
- Will Israel ever be restored?
- What is to be the attitude of the Christians toward them?

These questions are anticipated by Paul and are answered by him in the section we are about to study.

Let us sum up the contents of this section:

1. The theme of chapter 9:1-29 is as follows:

Though the greater part of the Jewish nation have rejected Christ, yet God's promises concerning their national redemption have not failed, for within the nation there is a faithful remnant, who, when the time comes for Israel's complete restoration, will form the nucleus of the new nation.

2. The theme of chapters 9:30 to 10:21 is as follows: Israel's rejection is entirely their own fault.

3. The central thought of Chapter 11 is as follows:

The rejection of Israel is neither total nor final. It is not total for there is a remnant of the nation who are true to God and their salvation is a pledge of the salvation of the entire nation (vv. 1-10). It is not final, for after that the fullness of the Gentiles has come into the church, God will send the Redeemer who shall bring the entire nation into that condition of Millennial blessedness and glory foretold by the prophets (vv. 11-36).

V. Exhortation. chapters 12 to 16.

Like most of Paul's doctrinal Epistles, Romans contains a practical section.

The apostle may carry his readers to the highest heights of Christian doctrine, but he never fails to bring them back to earth where they are to apply the doctrine to daily life.

The above section really follows chapter 8.

Chapters 9-11 are parenthetical; i.e., they are inserted because of their great importance, but are not necessary to complete the sense of the Epistle. Romans would be complete - at least in form - without these chapters.

The "**therefore**" of 12:1 is the link that connects this section with the first eight chapters.

Because of what has been set forth in those chapters - their justification, sanctification and hope of coming glorification - Christians are to consecrate themselves to God, serve one another in love, and walk in wisdom and holiness before the world.

We shall sum up the contents of this section as follows:

1. *The Christian's duty as a member of the church* (12:1-21):

- Consecration (vv. 1,2);
- Service (vv. 3-8);
- Love to the brethren (vv. 9-21).

2. *His duty as the member of the state* (13:17): obedience to authority.

3. *His duty toward other members of the state* (13:8-14): love.
4. *His duty toward weaker brethren* (14:1 to 15:13): forbearance.
5. *Conclusion* (15:14 to 16:27).

- Paul's ministry among the Gentiles (vv. 14-21);
- His proposed visit (vv. 22-33);
- Salutations (16:1-23);
- Benediction. (vv. 24-27).

Learn the following chapter outline of Romans:

Chapter

1. The heathen's guilt.
2. The Jew's guilt.
3. Universal condemnation.
4. Justification by faith.
5. Results of justification.
6. Freedom from sin.
7. Freedom from the law.
8. Freedom from condemnation.
9. The election of Israel.
10. The rejection of Israel.
11. The restoration of Israel.
12. Consecration.
13. Duties to the state.
14. Duties to weak brethren.
15. Paul's labor and coming visit.
16. Salutations.

~ end of Romans ~

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