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Discover Your Bible Series

Revised
Edition

Discover
ROMANS
FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE

STUDY GUIDE



Part One of a Two-Part Study

STUDY GUIDE

Discover
ROMANS
FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE




**FAITH
ALIVE.**
Christian Resources

Grand Rapids, Michigan

*The gospel . . . is the power of God that
brings salvation to everyone who believes:
first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

Romans 1:16

We thank Neva Evenhouse for writing the original lesson material (1984) on which this revised study of Romans is based. We also thank Edith Bajema for her contributions to an earlier revision (1999). This latest revised edition incorporates updates and suggestions by readers and small group leaders.

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How to Study

The questions in this study booklet will help you discover for yourself what the Bible says. This is inductive Bible study—in which you will discover the message for yourself.

Questions are the key to inductive Bible study. Through questions you search for the writers' thoughts and ideas. The questions in this booklet are designed to help you in your quest for answers. You can and should ask your own questions too. The Bible comes alive with meaning for many people as they discover the exciting truths it contains. Our hope and prayer is that this booklet will help the Bible come alive for you.

The questions in this study are designed to be used with the New International Version of the Bible, but other translations can also be used.

Step 1. Read each Bible passage several times. Allow the ideas to sink in. Think about their meaning. Ask questions about the passage.

Step 2. Answer the questions, drawing your answers from the passage. Remember that the purpose of the study is to discover what the Bible says. Write your answers in your own words. If you use Bible study aids such as commentaries or Bible handbooks, do so only after completing your own personal study.

Step 3. Apply the Bible's message to your own life. Ask,

- What is this passage saying to me?
- How does it challenge me? Comfort me? Encourage me?
- Is there a promise I should claim? A warning I should heed?
- For what can I give thanks?

If you sense God speaking to you in some way, respond to God in a personal prayer.

Step 4. Share your thoughts with someone else if possible. This will be easiest if you are part of a Bible study group that meets regularly to share discoveries and discuss questions.

If you would like to learn of a study group in your area or would like information on training to start a small group Bible study,

- call toll-free 1-888-644-0814, e-mail smallgroups@crcna.org, or visit www.smallgroupministries.org
- call toll-free 1-800-333-8300 or visit www.FaithAliveResources.org (to order materials)

Introduction

What is the book of Romans? It's a letter from the apostle Paul "to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people" (Rom. 1:7).

In this study we'll learn a few things about Paul and the "holy people" to whom he was writing. But mostly we'll learn about God's great salvation for "everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (1:16). We'll discover the good news that in Jesus Christ "the righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith" (1:17). In other words, we'll learn firsthand that we can have a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus.

Jesus is the Son of God who became one of us and gave up his own perfect, righteous life for our sake. He died in our place so that we can be free of the curse of sin and death. He also conquered death by rising to life again. And by believing in him, we can have new life—full life with God forever, the way it was intended from the beginning.

Jesus came to show us the full love of God. Jesus came to bring God's salvation to all who believe, trusting that God credits them—us!—with Jesus' righteousness. Romans helps us understand how God accomplished that through Jesus *for us*—and how we can begin living by the power of God each day.

Throughout this letter to Romans we can see that Paul believed what he taught. That's because Paul himself experienced the life-changing power of salvation through Christ. And because of that, Paul was "not ashamed" to share this good news with others (1:16).

Glossary of Terms

Abraham—the father of the Jewish nation, called by God to leave his homeland and follow in faith to the land God would show him (see Gen. 11:26-25:10). Abraham (formerly Abram) believed God’s promises, and the Lord “credited it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Abraham is also called the father of all believers (Rom. 4:11).

Adam—the first person created by God, Adam is the human father of the human race. Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God plunged all humankind into sin (see Gen. 1:26-5:5; Rom. 5:14).

apostle—“one sent forth”; refers to a messenger sent on a special mission. The New Testament apostles were leaders in the early Christian church; they were specially chosen by Jesus to be his witnesses. In the narrowest sense of the term, an apostle must have actually seen the Lord and been an eyewitness to his resurrection (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8, 21-25; 9:1-15; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 9:1-2).

atonement—from the Hebrew word meaning “to cover over,” implying a sacrifice that made amends for wrongdoing. Includes Christ’s payment of the penalty for sin—his life of perfect obedience and his death as a substitute for us. See also **reconciliation**.

baptize—to immerse in or sprinkle with water. This act identifies a person with Christ and is a sign of the washing away of sin through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and of rising to new life through Christ’s resurrection (Rom. 6:3-11). Baptism is commanded by Christ in Matthew 28:19.

blaspheme—to scoff at or misuse the name of God.

circumcision—removal of the male foreskin. God commanded Abraham and his descendants to do this as a sign that they belonged to God and as a symbol of the cutting away of sin from their lives (Gen. 17). In the New Testament circumcision is replaced with baptism in Christ. True circumcision is of the heart, not the flesh (Jer. 4:4; Col. 2:9-12).

covenant—a mutually binding agreement between two parties. God made covenants with his chosen people, Israel (most notably with the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

crucified (crucifixion)—put to death by nailing or binding to a cross (see Rom. 6:6). The Roman Empire made much use of this brutal form of punishment in public places to intimidate people from engaging in rebellion. Our word *excruciating* (to describe terrible, intense pain) comes from the word *crucify*.

David—son of Jesse, second Old Testament king of Israel, direct ancestor of Jesus Christ. Known for slaying the giant Goliath and for writing

many beautiful psalms. Called “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14; see 1 Sam. 16-1 Kings 2:12).

eternal life—life that lasts forever with God. It begins when one receives Jesus by faith as Savior (John 6:40), and it reaches fulfillment in the new heaven and earth when the believer’s soul is reunited with his or her resurrected body to live in God’s presence forever (1 Cor. 15:20-54).

faith—defined in Hebrews 11:1 as “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Can be defined in simple terms as “belief and trust.” True saving faith is a gift that consists of knowledge and confidence—a sure knowledge by which a believer accepts as true all that God has revealed in his Word, and confidence that all our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake.

flesh—refers to our human nature, frequently with reference to our sinful rebellion against God.

Gentiles—all people who are not Jews.

glorification (glorified)—the future aspect of salvation in which the believer is fully conformed to Christ’s image (see Rom. 8:30).

glorify—to exalt or worship (see Rom. 1:21).

glory—splendor, majesty, power, worth, excellence of quality and character. In the Old Testament God’s glory was represented in a cloud (Ex. 33:12-34:7). God’s glory is also revealed in the world around us (Ps. 19:1). Jesus revealed God’s glory through his teaching and miracles and through his death and resurrection (John 2:11; 11:4; 12:23-28). In Christ, we also reflect and share in God’s glory (Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 3:18).

gospel—literally means “good news” and refers to the message of God’s salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

grace—God’s undeserved favor and forgiving love. Jesus is the full expression of God’s grace for the salvation and new life of all who believe in him as Lord and Savior (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-10).

holy people—see **saints**.

Holy Scriptures—(Rom. 1:2) Paul is referring here to the ancient Jewish Scriptures, which today make up the Old Testament part of the Christian Bible. As a whole, these Scriptures are sometimes called “the Law and the Prophets” in the New Testament (Matt. 22:40; Rom. 3:21), and they consist of the Law (*Torah*, Pentateuch, first five books [of Moses]: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and books known as “the Prophets” (Joshua through Kings; Isaiah through Malachi) as well as “the Writings” (remaining books of history, poetry, songs, and wisdom literature).

Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity. The other two persons are God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ). They are three persons in one being. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, works true faith in our hearts, and empowers us to live holy lives. The Spirit's presence in our hearts guarantees that we will receive God's promises (John 16:7-15; Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:13-14).

hope—in combination with faith this means looking ahead in solid trust to the fulfillment of all God's promises (Heb. 7:19; 11:1).

Jesus Christ—the sinless Son of God, who gave his life as an atonement for sin. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The name *Jesus* means "savior," and *Christ* means "anointed one."

Jews—the people of Israel, descendants of Abraham; God's special people chosen to be a blessing to all other nations (Gen. 12:2-3).

judgment—God's "righteous judgment" (Rom. 2:5) is God's condemnation of sin and the requirement of death to atone for sin. This term can also refer to the judgment appointed for all humanity at Christ's second coming, when all people will be either justified (through Christ—Rom. 3:24) or condemned on the basis of what they have done (Rom. 2:5-11).

justification (justify, justified)—the procedure of being credited as righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. This is not merely a pardon; the demands of the law have been fully met through the atoning work of Christ.

the law (of God)—generally this term refers to the law that God gave to his people Israel (the Jews), summarized in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:1-21) but also including ceremonies prescribed in Genesis through Deuteronomy.

the Law and the Prophets—the teachings of the Old Testament. See **Holy Scriptures**.

mercy—God's free and undeserved compassion. To be more precise, it refers to showing leniency by holding back punishment even if justice calls for it (see Mic. 7:18-19).

Moses—the leader of the Israelites when God delivered them from slavery in Egypt and as they lived in the wilderness before entering the promised land of Canaan (see Exodus through Deuteronomy). Moses received the law from God and taught it to the Israelites (later known as the Jews).

peace—a result of justification through Christ that yields an assurance of well-being and freedom (guided by the Spirit) to live wholly in relationship with God and others.

reconciliation (reconcile, reconciled)—the act by which a person is restored to harmony with God through the atoning death of his Son, Jesus Christ. See also **justification**.

redemption—the act of buying something back with a ransom payment; sinners are freed from the consequences of sin by the ransom paid by Christ’s death on the cross (Mark 10:45). In this way Christ bought back all the lives of sinners who believe in him as Savior and Lord.

repentance—the word *repent* means “turn around” or “turn back”; repentance for sin involves turning around one’s life to live for God as Lord and Savior (Luke 5:32; 2 Cor. 7:10).

resurrection—refers to Christ’s returning to life on the third day after his death for our sake (Matt. 28:1-10). Romans 6:5 teaches that when Christ returns, we will “be united with him in a resurrection like his.” See also **eternal life**.

righteous (righteousness)—the condition of being right with God. As God’s people, we are called to be righteous and are credited with Christ’s righteousness: we are made right with God through Christ’s death and given the ability to live in right relationships with others through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 3:21-26). See **sanctified**.

sacrifice—an offering given to God to regain right standing with God. In the Old Testament (old covenant), right standing was regained by offering an animal sacrifice for sin. To establish the new covenant, Christ offered himself as the “once for all” perfect sacrifice for the sins of all who believe in him (Heb. 10:10).

saints—believers in the Lord; a people belonging to God. People who belong to God are set apart as holy, called to serve a special purpose—to live for God and his kingdom. The Holy Spirit of God fills all believers with new life and begins to work at *sanctifying them*, which means “making them holy.” In other words, they become *saints*. All believers in Christ are saints, being remade to be like the Lord Jesus. (See 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 1 Pet. 2:4-10.)

salvation—eternal deliverance from the power and penalty of sin; salvation is possible only through the finished work of Jesus Christ, in whom we believe as Savior and Lord (John 3:16; 14:6).

sanctified (sanctification)—made holy. Sanctification is the process of spiritual growth by which the believer learns to live more and more in a way that honors Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). See **saints**.

Sarah—wife of Abraham, mother of Isaac (Gen. 11:29-23:19).

saved—see **salvation**.

sin—disobedience to God; refers to breaking God’s law (1 John 3:4).

Spirit—see **Holy Spirit**.

transgression—an act that means, literally, “going beyond a set limit” or “crossing the line”; usually refers to violating a command of God or going beyond the bounds set by God. See also **sin**.

trespass—an act that means, literally, “to pass across”; similar to transgression. Trespassing refers to going where you are not allowed or do not belong. In the Bible it means violating bounds set by God. See also **sin**.

wrath of God—According to the *TNIV Study Bible*, God’s wrath is “not a petulant, irrational burst of anger” such as humans often show; instead it is “a holy, just revulsion against what is contrary to and opposes [God’s] holy nature and will.” Further, “God’s wrath is not limited to the end-time judgment of the wicked” (see 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 19:15; 20:11-15); in Romans 1:18, for example, “the wrath of God is his abandonment of the wicked to their sins” (see Rom. 1:24-32).

Lesson 1

Romans 1:1-17

The Power That Brings Salvation

Introductory Notes

As the first line of Romans tells us, the author of this book (which is actually a letter) is the apostle Paul. Also known as Saul (Acts 13:9), Paul was raised in the Jewish community of faith, became a Pharisee who persecuted Christians, and came to believe in Christ after receiving a vision of Jesus. (See Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-31.) Commissioned in this way by Jesus himself, Paul became a dynamic missionary for Christ (Acts 13-28), completing three long missionary journeys and writing many letters to churches and their leaders. Thirteen of those letters, including Romans, are part of the New Testament in our Bible today. Eventually Paul also made it to Rome, as a prisoner “because of the hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20), and he was presumably released after sharing his story with the Roman emperor.

Romans is sometimes called “the gospel according to Paul.” It offers a thorough treatment of the basic teachings of the Christian faith as revealed to Paul. Although this letter is more formal than some of Paul’s letters, it reflects the apostle’s rich personality. He is warm, intense, urgent, concerned, logical, and practical. The letter also has two main parts. The first eleven chapters are largely doctrinal, dealing with how people are made right with God through the finished work of Christ. Then the rest of the letter (Rom. 12-16) offers sound, practical teaching on everyday Christian living.

As you begin your study of Romans together, look for clues that help you form an answer to the question *How can I be put right with God?*

1. Romans 1:1-5

- a. What does Paul say about himself in these verses? Why do you think he emphasizes these things?

b. In these verses what does Paul say about Jesus Christ?

2. *Romans 1:6-7*

a. To whom is Paul writing, and what does he say about them?

b. How does Paul greet his readers?

3. *Romans 1:8-12*

a. Summarize Paul's prayer for the believers in Rome.

b. What does Paul desire to have happen when he can visit them?

4. *Romans 1:13-15*

- a. What more does Paul say about his plans?

- b. What do these verses tell us about Paul's dependence on God's timing? (See also v. 10.)

5. *Romans 1:16-17*

- a. What does the gospel accomplish through the power of God?

- b. Who will be saved?

- c. What is revealed in the gospel? Why is that important?

- d. What does Paul mean by the phrase "first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16)?

Questions for Reflection

Looking back over the material of this lesson, how would you describe the good news of Jesus to someone who hasn't heard it before?

What are you hoping to learn as you go further into this book? What have you learned already about Paul and Jesus and having a right relationship with God?