**Metadata**

* + The city of Rome (seat of the empire) was cosmopolitan. The text of the epistle indicates that such was true of the church as well. Made up of both Jewish and Gentile converts with the conflicts of such diverse backgrounds.
	+ There was much immorality and idolatry in the city, which Paul referenced in the letter (cf. 1:18-32; 13:12-14)
	+ The epistle was written during Nero’s reign. (A.D. 54-68). Written while Paul was in Corinth, during his third missionary journey, (Acts 20:2-3). About three years before entering the city as a prisoner.
	+ Nothing is revealed re: the origin of the church there. Possibly founded by some on Pentecost as they returned to their home (cf. Acts 2:10).
	+ Consider: Though Catholics teach that Peter was the first bishop of Rome, Paul nowhere refers to his presence or influence there.
	+ Paul had longed to go to Rome for many years (15:23). The letter was written as an adjunct to a future visit by Paul. The central message could not wait until his personal visit.
	+ The book was actually penned by the hand of Tertius (16:22).

**Concise Outline of Book**

1. **Introduction to the Epistle (1:1-17)**
	1. Salutation (1:1-15)
	2. Epistle theme: Gospel is the power of God to salvation to all who believe (1:16-17)
2. **Argument for Salvation or Justification by Faith (1:18** – **11:36)**
	1. The sinful condition of the whole world and the need for salvation (1:18 – 3:20)
	2. Justification is on equal terms to all men by faith (3:21-51)
	3. Possible objections to the grace of God considered (6:1 – 7:25)
	4. Positive benefits of the grace of God considered (8:1-39)
	5. Application of the argument that justification is by faith – a vindication of God’s treatment of the Jews and the Gentiles (9:1 – 11:36)
3. **Hortative Section (Exhortations) Dealing with Practical Living Based on the Argument Presented (12:1** – **15:13)**
	1. Exhortations predicated on the mercies of God detailed in the preceding argumentation, concerning certain general obligations that are required (12:1-8)
	2. Various exhortations to love and numerous related duties and responsibilities (12:9-21)
	3. Obligation to civil authority (13:1-7)
	4. Central responsibility of the redeemed to love one’s neighbor as one’s self (13:8-10)
	5. Exhortation to necessary holiness as one approaches eternal salvation (13:11-14)
	6. Application of freedom and brotherly love in the realm of liberty (14:1-23)
	7. The example of Christ’s love manifested and its application to self-denial for the welfare of others (15:1-13)
4. **Personal Information Conveyed (15:14-33)**
	1. Paul’s reason for writing the epistle (15:14-21)
	2. Paul’s plans that include a visit to Rome (15:22-33)
5. **Greetings to and from Certain Brethren (16:1-23)**
	1. Commendation of Phoebe (16:1-2)
	2. Salutations addressed to certain saints in Rome (16:3-16)
	3. Warnings about those who would cause divisions and occasions of stumbling (16:17-20)
	4. Salutations - Paul’s fellow-laborers (16:21-23)
6. **Benediction and Doxology (16:24-27)**

*(Note: Outline adapted from fuller outline by Clinton Hamilton, Truth Commentaries: Romans - Introduction, lxxix – lxxxiv)*

**Paul’s Purpose in Writing Romans**

* Unlike his letter to the Galatians (Polemic), the letter to the Romans was didactic. But, the main subject of both was the same. Justification by Faith. Both Jew and Gentile are revealed as recipients of God’s grace (cf. 1:16)
* After the letter sustains its premise, Paul gives various exhortations concerning obligations that directly arise as a consequence of their justification (salvation) by faith.

**Chapter Synopses**

1. After his greeting, Paul expresses his desire to visit Rome. He then establishes the theme of his letter, salvation for all men through Jesus Christ. In contrast to the just in Christ, Paul describes the ungodliness of the Gentiles.
2. Paul affirms the Jew is under condemnation just as the Gentile because of a hard, impenitent heart. God is no respecter of persons.
3. Paul defends the judgment of God as righteous. All stand condemned because all are guilty of sin. Salvation is attained by God’s grace, through faith, with no place for man’s boasting.
4. Paul uses Abraham as an example of justification by faith, noting that his approval by God predated the covenant of circumcision. This shows that the law, which brings wrath, is not the basis for standing with God. Faith is.
5. Paul affirms that Christ’s death was for us. Our rejoicing is to be in Christ. Sin entered into the world because of Adam. Salvation came into the world because of Jesus Christ.
6. Paul explains that baptism makes one a new creature. Therefore, the redeemed must not continue to sin. Sin must not have dominion over the Christian. Instead we have become slaves to God, to live righteously before Him.
7. Paul states that the Law no longer has dominion, because a new covenant has been established. This is good, because the law could not save men from sin. We are delivered by Jesus Christ.
8. Paul affirms that in Jesus Christ there is no condemnation. If we are His, we are heirs with Him. As such, nothing under heaven can separate us from God. We are the elect, chosen by God for justification.
9. Paul relates the Jew’s rejection of Christ, and relates that standing with God is not a matter of physical lineage, rather spiritual. This spiritual lineage is open both to Jew and Gentile.
10. Paul asserts that Israel needs salvation, to be obtained through submitting to God’s righteousness. Salvation comes through a response to the gospel, faith and confession. This puts a premium upon the preaching of the gospel, emphasizing the need for a preacher.
11. Paul states that God has not rejected Israel totally, but has reserved a remnant by grace. Just like the Gentile, their salvation is conditioned upon humility and faith.
12. Paul exhorts the Romans to a holy life, emanating from a renewed mind. The redeemed are to act with love, hospitality and goodness toward all men.
13. Paul commands submission to civil authorities. He calls for love, and holiness.
14. Paul gives a basis for the unity of believers in matters of personal liberty. The basis is love and selflessness, as each brother recognizes he will stand before God, accountable for his own work. Rather than judging in these matters, each one is to seek to edify the other.
15. Paul states that our responsibility as Christians is love and selflessness. This will lead to unity, which pleases God. Paul then describes his desire to visit Rome, though he indicated his priority to be a visit to Jerusalem to take a collection to the poor saints there.
16. Paul sends his final salutations and commendations to the saints in Rome. He warns them to mark and avoid those who would bring division. He ends with a benediction to God.

**Suggested Memory Work**

**(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.”*

**(2:11)**, *“For there is no partiality with God.”*

**(3:9)**, *“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.”*

**(4:13)**, *“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”*

**(5:6-8)**, *“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

**(6:3-4)**, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

**(7:24-25),** *“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

**(8:16-17),** *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”*

**(9:6-7),** *“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called.’”*

**(10:9-10),** *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

**(11:22),** *“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.”*

**(12:1-2),** *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

**(13:1),** *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*

**(14:1),** *“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.”*

**(15:5-6),** *“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

**(16:16),** *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”*

**Difficult Passages**

* Explain the meaning of the phrase, *“from faith to faith”* (1:17)
* Explain how our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God (3:5)
* Discuss the concept of imputation (NKJV, *“accounted”*), contrasting truth with the Calvinistic concept (4:3,6,8,10,22-23)
* Explain how Abraham is the *“father of us all”* (4:16)
* Discuss the indwelling of the Spirit (8:9-11)
* How does the Spirit bear witness with our spirit? (8:16)
* Explain the intercession described in (8:26-27)
* Explain the phrase *“disputes over doubtful things”* (14:1)
* Explain the phrase *“the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly”* (16:20)

**Doctrinal Considerations**

* The gospel concisely stated (1:3-4,6-7; 5:6-11)
* The basis of living before God (Faith) (1:14-17)
* Proof regarding God’s existence (1:20)
* **The origin of depraved thought (1:18-32)**
* Homosexuality is sinful (1:24-27)
* The end of the rebellious sinner (1:28-32)
* **The righteous judgment of God (2:1-16; 3:1-8; 9:14-33)**
* **Justification by faith apart from the law (2:12-16; 3:20-31; 4:1-25; 5:1-2; 11:5-6)**
* Circumcision in the New Covenant (2:25-29)
* The universal nature of sin (3:9-20, 23)
* Adam & Christ – A comparison regarding spiritual life and death (5:12-21)
* What baptism accomplishes, and why (6:3-11)
* The destructive nature of sin (6:1-23)
* **Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage – An illustration of the death of the Old Law (7:1-6)**
* The relationship between sin and law (7:7-25)
* The effectual nature of Spirit VS Law (8:1-17)
* The hope of Salvation (8:18-30; 31-39)
* **Israel’s rejection, and the inclusion of the Gentile (9:6-33; 10:11-13, 16-21; 11:1-36; 15:8-13)**
* What faith and confession accomplish, and why (10:8-11)
* The part preaching plays in the salvation of mankind (10:14-15)
* Serving God with spiritual gifts (12:3-8)
* Our responsibility to Civil Powers (13:1-7)
* Love your neighbor (13:8-10)
* Fellowship in the realm of liberty (14:1 – 15:7)
* The importance of a pure conscience (14:5,14,20-23)
* The sinfulness of division (16:17-20)

**Practical Considerations**

* The importance and effectiveness of influence (1:8)
* A demonstration of petitioning God in prayer on behalf of others (1:9-12)
* The sin of abetting the immoral (1:32)
* What are the practical implications of the phrase *“there is no partiality with God”* (2:11). Can this passage justify women preachers and elders?
* Consider the benefits of tribulation (5:3-5)
* The abundance of God’s grace gives no justification for continuing in sin (cf. 5:20 – 6:6)
* Consider what sin does to a man (6:14,16,20,23)
* Having been saved, we should no longer sin! (6:22; 8:8; 13:11-14)
* Consider Paul’s view of divorce (7:2-3)
* Consider the nature of the conflict that wages within men (cf. 7:14-24). How can we be victorious in this conflict?
* It is dangerous to question God! (9:18-21)
* Consider how our experience of God differs, depending upon our response to Him (11:22,30-33)
* The practical call to renew your minds (12:1-2)
* Exhortations to Christian living (12:9-21)
* A proper response to spiritual blessing is to recompense materially (cf. 15:25-27)

**Questions to Consider**

* Is it legitimate to defend homosexuality on the basis that Jesus did not “condemn it”? If not, why not?
* What in Paul’s doctrine might lead to the misrepresentation of his teaching noted in (3:8)?
* Define: Propitiation (3:25), Explain how Christ has been set forth as a propitiation.
* Why would being justified by works be a cause for boasting? (cf. 3:27; 4:2)
* Can we exclude the idea of the need for obedience based on (4:4-8)? If not, why not?
* Please explain the use of the word *“because”* in (4:25).
* Why do we sometimes do things we know to be wrong? (cf. 7:23-24)
* What is the difference between Jesus as God’s son, and our claim to be children of God? (cf. John 3:16; Romans 8:14-17)
* In what way do *“all things work together for good to those who love God”* (8:28)?
* What does the idea of predestination entail in Romans 8:29-20)?
* Why is it dangerous to live in accord with personal convictions of right and wrong? (10:3)
* Please define calling on the name of the Lord (10:13)
* Is there any basis upon which we may “glory”? (cf. 15:17-21)
* Did Phoebe hold the office of deacon in the church at Cenchrea? (cf. 16:1)
* Contrast the *“house”* church of Priscilla and Aquila with the present day concept of house churches (cf. 16:5)
* Explain the scriptural use of the phrase “church of Christ” (16:16)
* In what way did Tertius write the epistle to the Romans? (16:22)
* What lessons can be learned from Paul’s benediction? (16:25-27)

**Student Questions**

*(Use another page to prepare questions and comments for class discussion. Since this is not a “verse by verse” study, make sure that all your questions concerning the text are answered).*