

Bible Study Guide – Romans: Introduction
Bellevue Church of Christ – Spring / Summer 2018

Facts about the Epistle:

Author: The Apostle Paul (1:1)

Destination: To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints (1:7)

Place of Writing: Probably Corinth (Third Missionary Journey)

- Paul commends Phoebe who probably delivered the letter. Phoebe is said to have been from Cenchraea, which was the port city of Corinth (16:1-2)
- Paul's host at the time of writing was named Gaius (16:23). Gaius is the name of a man Paul baptized at Corinth (I Cor 1:14).
- Erastus, Timothy and Sopater were with Paul when the epistle was written (16:21,23), and also when he was in Greece (Acts 19:21-22; 20:2-4).
- Both times Paul intended to go to Jerusalem and then to Rome (Acts 19:21; Rom 15:24-26,28). Paul was going to Jerusalem to deliver money to the poor saints (Acts 24:17; Rom 15:26-28)

Date of Writing: Probably between 55 and 57 A.D.
(Gallio Inscription / Acts 18:12-18; 20:3, 31; Rom 15:26ff)

Church Founder: Unknown - (15:20; Acts 18:1-2)

Outline:

I. _____ of the Gospel (Ch. 1-8) - *How the Gospel Saves Sinners*

_____ - Forgiveness of past sins

_____ - Set apart for God's Service (Power over daily temptation)

_____ - Future salvation (from decay)

II. _____ of the Gospel (Ch. 9-11) - *Israel's Rejection*

III. _____ of the Gospel (Ch. 12-16) - *Everyday Living*

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Key Terms:

Righteousness:

God's Righteousness (The Righteousness of God):

Key Verse:

Romans 1:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Questions for Discussion:

How does Romans specifically compliment Acts of Apostles? (What vs. Why)

Compare and contrast Romans with Paul's other epistles? How is it different?

Teacher Notes

Author

Romans 1:1 (ESV)

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Destination

Romans 1:7 (ESV)

⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Place of Writing

Corinth is the most likely place of composition, since Phoebe of nearby Cenchrea was apparently entrusted with the carrying of the letter (Rom 16:1, 2). The mention of Gaius as Paul's host (Rom 16:23) confirms this conclusion, Gaius having been one of the most prominent of converts during the apostle's mission at Corinth (1 Cor 1:14). Cenchrea is a less likely possibility. Paul would not naturally have gone there except to board ship. At that juncture a plot against his life forced him to change his plan (Acts 20:3). Thus it is hard to imagine Paul finding time or peace of mind at Cenchrea for composing a book like Romans. A Macedonian origin has also been claimed for the books, with Romans 15:25 as support (cf. NEB). But the verb can be understood futuristically: "I am about to go."¹

Acts 19:21–22 (ESV)

²¹ Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."²² And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Acts 20:2–4 (ESV)

² When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.³ There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.⁴ Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

¹ Harrison, E. F. (1976). [Romans](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians* (Vol. 10, p. 4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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Acts 24:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings.

Romans 15:24–28 (ESV)

²⁴ I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. ²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷ For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. ²⁸ When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.

Romans 16:1–2 (ESV)

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, ² that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

Romans 16:21–23 (ESV)

²¹ Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

²² I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³ Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

1 Corinthians 1:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

Date of Writing

Fixed dates for the span of Paul's labors are few, but one of them is the summer of A.D. 51, when Gallio arrived in Corinth to serve as proconsul of Achaia. After this the apostle stayed in the city "some time" (Acts 18:18). Possibly in the spring of 52 he went to Caesarea and Jerusalem, stopping at Antioch on the way back and probably spending the winter of 52 there. Presumably, his return to Ephesus was in the spring of 53, marking the beginning of a three-year ministry there (Acts 20:31). At the end of 56 he spent three months in Corinth (Acts 20:3), starting his final trip to Jerusalem in the spring of 57. When he wrote Romans the fund for the Jerusalem church seems to have been finally completed (Rom 15:26ff.). This may indicate a date in early 57 rather than late 56 for the writing of the letter. (The fund was incomplete when Paul, on the way from Ephesus to Corinth, wrote 2 Cor 8–9.)²

² Harrison, E. F. (1976). [Romans](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians* (Vol. 10, p. 4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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***Gallio** (gal'lee-oh), the son of the Roman rhetorician Seneca, brother of Seneca the philosopher, and holder of several important civil positions in the Roman Empire. His full name was Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeus. According to Acts 18:12-17, Paul was brought before Gallio's judgment seat in Corinth (discovered in recent times in the old city) when Gallio was proconsul in Achaia. After a perfunctory hearing, Gallio perceived that the dispute between Paul and his Jewish accusers was over an internal religious matter and refused to proceed with the case. In this account, Gallio is characterized as one possessing no inclination, in the case either of Paul or of the subsequent beating of Sosthenes, to make official intervention in what he perceived as strictly internal Jewish issues.*

There are no further references to Gallio in the NT. Roman sources indicate that, after spending time in Achaia and Egypt, he returned to Rome to take an official position. After his brother Seneca's death in a conspiracy against Nero in the early 60s, Gallio fell into disgrace and ultimately committed suicide.

Gallio is important to biblical studies because his stay in Corinth is generally regarded as providing important extrabiblical evidence for establishing the chronology of Paul's activities. An inscription discovered at Delphi mentions Gallio as proconsul of Achaia at the time of the twenty-sixth accolade (an honor given to Roman officials) of the Emperor Claudius. It is not clear whether this was A.D. 52/53 or 51/52, but most scholars prefer the earlier date. Thus, according to Acts 18:12-17, the inscription, and Paul's own writings (1 Cor. 3:5-15), it would appear that Paul was in Corinth ca. A.D. 51/52 and that he founded the church there.

*If Acts 18:1-17 is read as an accurate account of Paul's first visit to Corinth, it could be concluded that Paul founded the church there ca. A.D. 51-53. It is possible, however, that the text has condensed the accounts of several visits of Paul to Corinth, and thus the links between the Gallio inscription and Paul's activities in Corinth may not be as sure an indicator as some suppose regarding the date when Paul founded the church in Corinth. **See also** Achaia; Chronology, New Testament; Corinth; Paul; Tribunal. A.J.M.³*

Acts 18:12–18 (ESV)

¹² But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, ¹³ saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law." ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. ¹⁵ But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." ¹⁶ And he drove them from the tribunal. ¹⁷ And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

³ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., p. 331). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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¹⁸ After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.

Acts 20:3 (ESV)

³ There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Acts 20:31 (ESV)

³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

Romans 15:26ff (ESV)

²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷ For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. ²⁸ When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. ²⁹ I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹ that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³² so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. ³³ May the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Church Founder

Acts 18:1–2 (ESV)

¹ After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them,

Romans 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation,

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Outline:

I. **Principles** of the Gospel (Ch. 1-8) - *How the Gospel Saves Sinners*

Justification - Forgiveness of past sins

Sanctification - Set apart for God's Service (Power over daily temptation)

Glorification - Future salvation (from decay)

II. **Problem** of the Gospel (Ch. 9-11) - *Israel's Rejection*

III. **Practice** of the Gospel (Ch. 12-16) - *Everyday Living*

Key Terms:

Righteousness – *To be in a **right** relationship with God*

God's Righteousness (*The Righteousness of God*) – *God's plan to bring man into a **right relationship with Him***

Questions for Discussion:

How does Romans specifically compliment Acts of Apostles? (What vs. Why)

Acts is a historical account of the founding and spread of the early church through the ministry of Christ's Apostles. It explains the "what" regarding the works of those Apostles in spreading the Gospel....what they did, where they went, and how people responded.

In Romans, Paul gives his most detailed treatise on the "why" behind God's plan, the need for the Gospel, the power of the Gospel, etc.

Compare and contrast Romans with Paul's other epistles? How is it different?

Romans is one of only two letters in the New Testament, written by Paul, that were sent to church where Paul had never visited (along with the letter to the Colossians). Because of this, Paul delivers his most complete treatise on what salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is all about.