

# The Letter of St. Paul to the ROMANS

I

## OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 32**. The psalm speaks to many of the same concepts that we will find in the book of Romans. Blessed is the man whose sin is forgiven!

## INTRODUCTION

We are quite certain that St. Paul wrote the book of Romans in the year 57 A.D., during his third missionary journey, probably from the city of Corinth. He expresses a strong yearning to visit the Roman Christians, but he is prevented from doing so by his eagerness to deliver a special offering to the saints in Jerusalem, who were suffering from famine and persecution.

Romans is a very systematic book – reflecting an inspired style that, undoubtedly, was very comfortable for the logical, practical residents of the imperial capital. Unlike some of Paul's other letters which are more contemplative and mystical (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians), or pastoral (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus), the book of Romans is straightforward, logical and doctrinal. In the book of Romans, Paul speaks directly to the practical issue of how a person becomes right with God (justification) and the practical implications of God's sacrificial transaction with the human race that is revealed in Christ.

It was in Romans that Martin Luther found comfort for his troubled soul and the spiritual awakening that led to the Reformation of the Christian church. "It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes" (*Luther's Works* 35:395).

## SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL

Read **Romans 1:1-5** and consider the following questions:

How was Paul set apart for the gospel of God?

Why was Paul set apart for the gospel of God?

What did it mean for Paul that he was *set apart* for the gospel of God?

Paul lists several facts about Jesus. Note them here:

Christianity is different from many other religions of the world in that it is rooted in history and grounded in historical fact. Why is it necessary to know and appropriate these facts?

What is meant by "apostleship"? (See **Mark 3:13-19** for some additional insight.)

What is "the obedience that comes from faith?"

How are faith and obedience related?

What is more important: faith or obedience?

**Read Romans 1:6-7.**

What does it mean to you personally that you belong to Jesus Christ?

Describe the meaning of the word "saint." Are you a saint? Be prepared to defend your answer.

Write a definition of each of these words:

Grace

Peace

How are grace and peace related?

**NOT ASHAMED TO PROCLAIM**

**Read Romans 1:8-15.**

Why was Paul thankful for the Romans?

What kind of reputation does your church have among other Christians? Give some characteristics of your congregation that people might talk favorably (or unfavorably) about.

Paul's prayer life included people he hadn't even met yet but had heard about from others. How does your prayer life stack up in comparison?

How is the faith of others encouraging to you? How might your faith encourage others?

**Read Romans 1:16,17.**

How did Paul show that he was not ashamed of the gospel?

Explain the significance of Paul's words concerning the gospel: "It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."

What is the "righteousness from God" that is revealed in the gospel?

How does this righteousness from God apply to you?

What is the role of faith in securing righteousness from God?

Martin Luther found in these verses a source of supreme comfort and inexpressible joy. Why were these verses so meaningful and powerful for him?

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**VERSE TO REMEMBER**

**Romans 1:16,17:**

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*