



09 SEPTEMBER 2026
LET'S HIT THE ROAD

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:7

The book of *Romans* has been credited with many things in church history:

It is said Augustine was converted after reading and understanding *Romans*

Martin Luther read it and was so influenced as to begin what would become the Protestant Reformation

While in prison, John Bunyan used *Romans* as his guide in writing *Pilgrim's Progress*

John Wesley listened to someone else read Luther's introduction to the book and was so overwhelmed he led the Methodist church to its greatest spiritual heights

Whatever else might be added to this list, it could be argued that *Romans* is perhaps the most important book in the Bible.

It presents doctrinal truth. *Romans* presents the basics of faith. Salvation by grace, justification, sanctification, adoption into the family, judgment, and identification with Christ are all outlined here.

It presents dispensational truth. Paul takes an opportunity to show the relationship between Israel and the church in the eternal plan of God.

It presents developmental truth. Finally, Paul explains the secret of Christian victory over the flesh, the duties Christians have towards one another, and their relationship to government.

BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK

While the truths laid out are applicable for us today, an understanding of the times in which *Romans* was written is helpful in understanding its message. [\[see map\]](#)

Author: The Apostle Paul (cf [16:22](#)) [Galatians 4:13-15](#)

NOTE: according to [16:1](#), the letter was delivered by Phebe, a member of the church in Corinth, from the city of Cenchrea

Date: ~60 A.D., during the reign of Nero

Setting: Paul wrote this epistle to Christian believers living in the capital city of the Roman Empire. At the time, he was in Corinth, soon to be on his way back to Jerusalem. Paul had intentions of visiting Rome in the near future.

NOTE: In 64 AD, Nero brought a great persecution to Christianity throughout his empire. He wanted to put more statues of himself around Rome, but there was no more room. History suspects he started a fire to clear the way for temples to himself and then blamed Christians for the tragedy. Thus, it has been said, 'Nero fiddled while Rome burned.'

The question must be asked: *How did Christianity get to Rome?*

At the time Paul wrote this letter, Christ had been gone from the earth for almost thirty years. The Apostle addressed his letter to 'all that be in Rome' ([1:7](#)) rather than to the *church* at Rome. [Chapter 16](#) contains a list of salutations clearly outlined to various groups in the city. Most likely, these were local house churches yet to be properly organized.

[Acts 2:10](#) indicates there were people at Pentecost from the city of Rome. In all likelihood, these people had gotten saved while in Jerusalem and then took their basic understanding of Jesus Christ back home with them. From them, the gospel spread and believers began to meet together.

Two of the believers in Rome were **Pricilla** and **Aquila**, whom Paul had worked with in Corinth ([Acts 18:2](#)). They ministered for quite awhile in that city before being forced out of Rome by Emperor Claudius. At the time *Romans* was written, they had returned to the capital to live, and most likely worked at training the believers there.

BEYOND POPES

There are those who attribute the founding of the church at Rome to the Apostle Peter...most notably the Catholics, who claim him as their first pope. cf 1 Peter 5:13

According to the Roman Catholic Church, Saint Peter was the first pope. Catholic dogma also indicates Peter began his office in Rome in 41 A.D. and served for twenty five years.

this date would have been less than ten years after Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead; would Peter have been safe in Rome under Emperor Claudius?

Wikipedia lists his bishopric as beginning in 30 AD... two years *before* Christ died [accessed September 2019]

For the following reasons, Peter **COULD NOT** have been the first pope...or any other pope, for that matter:

1. Peter was in jail in Jerusalem in 44 AD Acts 5
2. Peter was present at the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD Acts 15:7
3. Shortly after that, within two years, he was in Antioch where Paul confronted him to his face Galatians 2:11-14
4. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans in 60 AD, indicating he wanted to go to Rome, but he would not 'build upon another man's foundation' Romans 15:20
5. likewise, in Romans 16, Paul greeted as many as twenty four people by name who lived in Rome...but not Peter
6. in Acts 28 there is no mention of Peter among the brethren who received Paul upon his arrival at Rome...had Peter been in Rome for eighteen years at this point, would he have ignored Paul's imprisonment there?
7. likewise, if Peter had been in Rome for almost twenty years, why did Paul need to write the epistle of *Romans* and instruct the Christians in basic doctrinal issues?

8. Paul wrote four different epistles while he was under house arrest in Rome (*Philippians*, *Colossians*, *Philemon*, and *Ephesians*)...in these letters, he named many fellow laborers, but never mentioned Peter
9. in the second epistle to Timothy, written during Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, not only is Peter not mentioned, but Paul stated 'only Luke is with me'
2 Timothy 4:11
10. likewise, in that same letter, Paul stated 'at my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me' ...is it likely, if Peter was the leader of the church in Rome, that he would have forsaken Paul at such a pivotal moment?
2 Timothy 4:16
11. in 1 Peter 5:1, Peter referred to *himself* as an elder ('fellow elder'), not as the Vicar of Christ, when he addressed other pastors in those regions

BASIS FOR WRITING

Paul was about to finish his ministry work in Asia and would return to Jerusalem with the love gift from those churches. His burden had always been to preach at Rome and this letter was his way of preparing the believers for his arrival.

Little did Paul realize that his time spent in Rome would be under house arrest. The last few chapters of the book of Acts detail his long journey to Italy, by way of Crete and a shipwreck on Malta. Interestingly enough, however, the Roman government, which had outlawed Christianity, paid for Paul's entire ministry there.

BASIC OUTLINE

The book of *Romans* is comprised of four sections, likened to four buildings:

- 🏛️ **The Court House** chapters 1-3 This speaks of **condemnation** and answers the question *Is the world lost?*
- ⚡ **The Power Plant** chapters 4-8 This speaks of **salvation** and answers the question *How does God save sinners?*
- ✳️ **The Synagogue** chapters 9-11 This is a parenthetical section that deals with **vindication** and answers the question *How does Israel fit into the church age?*
- ✝️ **The Church** chapters 12-16 Here, **exhortation** is given to believers and the question is answered *How should a saved man walk?*

