

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

## GOLDEN TEXT

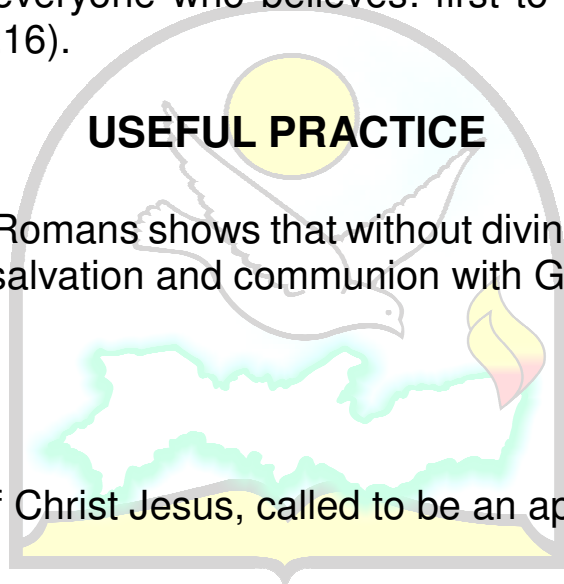
“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

## USEFUL PRACTICE

The Epistle to the Romans shows that without divine grace all our efforts are useless for our salvation and communion with God.

### Scripture Reading Romans 1:1-17

- 1- Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God
- 2- the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures
- 3- regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David,
- 4- and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 5- Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.
- 6- And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.
- 7 - To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:



Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

8- First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.

9- God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you

10- in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11- I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong

12- that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

13 - I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14 - I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

15 - That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

17- For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To present an overview of Paul's letter to the Romans, emphasizing the terrible spiritual situation in which mankind has been after the Fall.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

**I. To know** the author, the place, the date and the receivers of the Epistle to the Romans;

**II. To show** the literary form, contents and purpose of the Epistle to the Romans;

**III. To explain** the spiritual value of Romans.

## INTRODUCTION

In this quarter we will have the privilege of studying the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. We can say that we will never be the same after a careful reading and a systematic study of this Epistle. Romans shows that the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. It also reveals that man, lost in the darkness of sin, is reconciled to God by his grace. This grace is what justifies and qualifies us to have fellowship with Him.

In the Epistle to Romans we learn that the Adamic nature, which dominates the old man, is dethroned by faith in Christ, and that it is possible for us to live in newness of life through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. We will see that this Letter is a call to Christian freedom.

### I - AUTHOR, PLACE, DATE AND RECEIVERS

**1. The author.** There is a consensus among theologians and Bible scholars that the Epistle to the Romans was written by Paul (Rom 1:1). The argument that denies the originality of this record has no credibility among New Testament scholars. Paul wrote this letter with the help of Tertius, his amanuensis, scribe (Rom 16:22). The custom of the time allowed the amanuensis to have some freedom in drafting the document, acting as a kind of shorthand writer. Based on this fact, some critics have argued about the authenticity of certain passages of the Letter to the Romans, by assigning them to a non-Pauline authorship. However the contents of Romans leave no doubt that all its substance reflects Paul's writing style.

**2. Place and date.** Paul wrote to the Romans probably between the years 56 and 57 A.D., when he was in the thriving city of Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, in the territory of Greece. Paul stayed in Greece for about three months during his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 20:3). The book of Acts shows us that it was in Corinth, Greek city, where Paul established his center for missionary activities. In Corinth, Paul remained with his faithful friend Gaius.

**3. Receivers.** Some interpreters, writing about the Epistle to the Romans classify it as being of atemporal nature. They are not wrong, since it was

inspired by the Holy Spirit and as such transcends the barriers of time. Romans 1:7 shows us, very clearly, the recipient of the letter: "To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ". Who would, therefore, be these "all in Rome?" There is a dispute about the actual receivers of this letter. Some argue that Paul wrote to the Jews who lived in Rome, while others defend that the Gentile Christians are the recipients. However, Paul wrote to the church in Rome. A church formed by both Jews and Gentiles.

## **II - LITERARY FORM, CONTENTS AND PURPOSE**

**1. Literary form.** The Epistle of Paul to the Romans follows the pattern of other documents from the first century of the Christian era. The outline obeys the order of this type of document, always with a greeting and a prayer (Rom 1:1,7,8,16). A very common literary form in Paul's day was written in dialogue form. Plato, Greek philosopher, for example, wrote dozens of them. However, as the expert in New Testament, Brodus D. Hale well observed this literary form hardly fits the Pauline model. What we can see in Romans reading is the use of diatribes by the apostle. In this literary model, which was a feature often used by Stoic and Cynic philosophers, the author made use of a critical exposition about some work.

**2. Contents.** The Romans contents deal with some very specific issues, such as the sinfulness of man, God's salvation, justification by faith and God's grace. Soon after the words of greeting we observe the section that addresses the manifestation of the righteousness of God through faith (Rom 1:18 to 4:25). Paul shows the spiritual need that Gentiles, Jews and all mankind have of God's salvation. Paul also shows in Chapters 5-8 (5:1-8:39), the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit in the process of salvation. The practical result of the Gospel in the believer's salvation is highlighted here. Through the Holy Spirit the believer experiences peace with God. In chapters 9-11 we find Paul's theology regarding the treatment of God to his people, Israel. Three aspects of God's treatment to Israel are disclosed - past, present and future. In the last section, Paul shows the practical side of the Gospel in transforming lives (12 to 15:13). The closing of the letter, which addresses the missionary enterprise of the apostle and some final recommendations, extends from chapter 15:14 to 16:27.

**3. Purpose.** A careful reading of Romans shows us that this letter does not have only one purpose, but several. The main one, according to the Life Application Study Bible, is "to present Paul to the Romans and summarize the apostle's message, before his arrival in Rome" (free

translation). However, we can also highlight the following purposes: the apostle wants to make the Roman church into a missionary base, so that he could get to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28); It is also clear that the apostle is imbued with the defense of the gospel he preached. So, the accusations that Paul promoted an anti-Judaism are not true, because the letter also has an apologetic and pastoral purpose, as we can be see in Chapters 14:15.

### **III - SPIRITUAL VALUE**

**1. Doctrinal foundation.** The Epistle to the Romans is considered the most theological of all others written by Paul. The strong doctrinal contents of this letter are undoubtedly the most complete of the New Testament. Romans addresses some of the deepest issues of Christianity - the doctrines of the so-called election, predestination, justification, glorification and eternal inheritance.

Paul shows the church that sinners can find redemption in the powerful message of the Gospel, which is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. The Letter to the Romans reveals that it is through the grace of God, manifested in the blessed person of Jesus Christ, that mankind can have their relationship with the Creator made right. The old nature is subdued on the cross and then the Holy Spirit makes the power of the cross emanate into the believer's life.

**2. Spiritual Renewal.** There is no doubt that the Church in Rome, to whom the Epistle to the Romans was addressed, experienced a tremendous spiritual renewal through its reading. However, the spiritual renewal coming from the reading of this letter can be seen in the lives of many believers throughout the church's history. Take Augustine, bishop of Hippo, as an example, who had his life changed when he read Romans 13:13. On the other hand, Martin Luther, the great German reformer, was challenged to break with Catholic tradition when he also read the Letter to the Romans. John Wesley also witnessed strong renewal in his life through the reading of the commentary of this letter, written by the Reformer.

## **CONCLUSION**

An overview of Paul's letter to the Romans allows us to glimpse the terrible spiritual situation in which mankind has been after the Fall. It is something desperate. However, the Letter shows, clearly, that God, by his

gracious love, which surpasses all understanding, came out to sinners to offer them forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ, his blessed Son. It is he who, through his substitutionary sacrifice, took the human race out of the darkness of sin and gave sinners the opportunity to live a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

