

THE APOSTLE PAUL IN ROME



Lesson 1 for
October 7, 2017

This quarter we're studying the book of Romans. First, it's good to know how Paul—the author—related to the Christians living in the most important city of that time.



Thanks to the letter of Paul, we'll also learn how the believers in Rome lived and behaved.

Paul and Rome.

1. Paul's letter to the Romans.
2. Paul's desire to visit Rome.
3. Paul in Rome.

The Church in Rome.

1. Called to be saints.
2. The believers in Rome.

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

"But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem." (Romans 15:25-26)

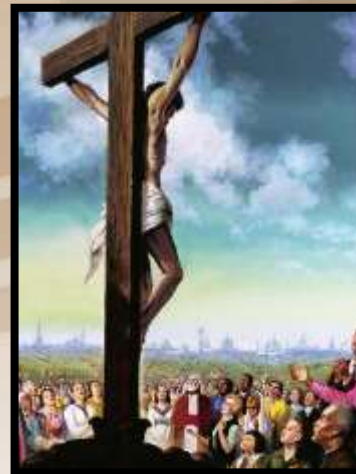
Paul delivered that offering to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey.

That suggests Paul's letter to the Romans was written in the first months of year 58 AD during his stay in Corinth.

Why was Paul moved to write this letter?

Paul heard news about the apostasy of the Galatians who had embraced salvation by works, so he wrote them a harsh letter.

He also wanted to warn the believers in Rome so they could avoid the same mistake.



PAUL'S DESIRE TO VISIT ROME

"whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while." (Romans 15:24)

According to Romans 15, why couldn't Paul visit Rome right then?



He wanted to spread the Gospel where no churches had yet been planted (v. 20-22).



He had to deliver some offerings from Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem (v. 15:25-28).

Then Paul planned to go to Spain and to visit Rome on his way there (v. 28).

He hoped he would be a blessing for the believers in Rome, and he expected them to help him with his work in Spain (v. 24). That way they could bless others too.



PAUL IN ROME

"But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.'" (Acts 23:11)

Paul arrived in Rome after visiting Jerusalem, but not the way he had planned.

He was arrested while visiting the Temple. He was accused of bringing Gentiles into the atrium.



Paul was moved to Caesarea where he remained safe for two years. Because he had appealed to Caesar he was moved to Rome.



Some brothers warmly welcomed him to Rome. He lived under guard in a rented house for two years before being finally judged and liberated.

There he could freely preach to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 28:11-31).



“During his sojourn at Corinth, Paul found time to look forward to new and wider fields of service. His contemplated journey to Rome especially occupied his thoughts. To see the Christian faith firmly established at the great center of the known world was one of his dearest hopes and most cherished plans. A church had already been established in Rome, and the apostle desired to secure the co-operation of the believers there in the work to be accomplished in Italy and in other countries. To prepare the way for his labors among these brethren, many of whom were as yet strangers to him, he sent them a letter announcing his purpose of visiting Rome and his hope of planting the standard of the cross in Spain.”

E.G.W. (The Acts of the Apostles, cp. 35, p. 373)

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

"To all who are 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)

Those greetings were written to the believers in Rome, but they also apply to us. Paul said we are:

Beloved of God

- God especially loves those who responde to His love.

Called to be saints

- We are set apart from the world and consecrated to God because we accepted Christ and we were baptized.



God loves everyone and has chosen everyone to be saved. Nevertheless, only those who accept salvation will receive it (Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 3:9).

THE BELIEVERS IN ROME

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

(Romans 15:14)



We don't know how the church in Rome was planted, but we know it was a strong church. Paul told them: “your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” (Romans 1:8)

Paul praised the Romans' faith and three other things:



They were full of goodness

- The way they lived testified to God's love.



They were filled with knowledge

- They were rooted to the Bible.



They were able to admonish one another

- They could encourage one another and be encouraged by others.

E.G.W. (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, cp. 2, p. 87)

“The eternal God has drawn the line of distinction between the saints and the sinners, the converted and the unconverted. The two classes do not blend into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. They are as distinct as midday and midnight. Those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ will be dwelling upon the themes of the great salvation. The Bible is the storehouse that supplies their souls with nourishing food... Holiness and truth, grace and righteousness, occupy the thoughts. Self dies, and Christ lives in His servants.”