

## Romans Overview

Romans is the foundational book for the Body of Christ. If you wanted to know what Paul first taught to the local churches he established, study Romans. Paul had not yet been to Rome (Rom. 1:10-15, Rom. 15:22), and so in writing his epistle to them, included the foundational knowledge they would need to the end that they'd be established in *the faith* (Rom. 1:11, 16:26).

This phrase “the faith” is used in Romans 1:15 (as well as 2 Tim. 3:8); note the definite article *the*—this denotes that it is a singular, specific, *defined* body of truth, that is not subject to change or the relativism characteristic of the world, and which has so permeated the church. There is not “my truth,” there is God’s Truth, and that is revealed in the Scriptures.

Romans can be divided into three sections: ch. 1-8 concerns our salvation and sanctification, 9-11 concerns Israel, and 12-16 concerns our service.

Chapters 1-8 can be subdivided into three sections: 1-3 concluding *all* under sin, 4-5 our justification and position in Christ by faith alone, and 6-8 our practical sanctification in Christ.

Chapters 9-11 also can be divided: ch. 9 Israel’s election, ch. 10 Israel’s rejection of Christ, and ch. 11 the prophetic salvation and return of the remnant of Israel.

Chapters 12-16 then deal with our reasonable service: ch. 12 as members of one another, ch. 13 as subject to authorities, ch. 14 as strong to the weak, ch. 15 as ministers of Christ to both Jews and gentiles, and ch. 16 as established servants of Christ.

Romans 1-8 can also be summarized:

Problem (1-3) > solution (4-5) > conclusion (6-8);

Or,

The law of sin (1-3) > the law of faith (4-5) > the law of the Spirit (6-8).

Romans was written from Corinth (Cenchrea, a port of Corinth), evidenced by Paul stating that Gaius was his host (Rom. 16:23), and who Paul mentions he baptized in 1 Corinthians 1:14, and whom he includes in the Corinthian audience. He also mentions Phebe, who he commends to the Romans as a servant of the church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1, 16:23); from Romans 16:2 it is evident that she is going to travel to Rome from Corinth, and it seems likely she herself delivered Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul also mentions that Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, also salutes those in Rome (Rom. 16:23), and who 2 Tim. 4:20 says abode at Corinth.

In Acts 20, after leaving Macedonia, Paul returns to Greece where he stayed 3 months. In Acts 20:22, Paul says he “goes bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem.” In Romans 15:25-26 Paul says that he is now going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints, and that those of Macedonia and Achaia had made a contribution for them. And so it would seem the letter of Romans was written during Acts 20, while Paul was in Greece.