

# Bible Reading Notes

## Romans

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## Romans 1

Paul wrote this letter on his way to Jerusalem. The purpose was to introduce himself to the Roman church in hopes that they would be willing to receive him and support his effort to take the gospel to Spain.

**1:16-17** – Paul begins to define the gospel that he preaches. The following chapters will expand these verses.

**1:18-3:20** – This first section of the book will show the universal sinfulness of all people.

**1:18-32** – Paul begins with the sinfulness of pagans who have not heard the gospel but are still accountable because of God's revelation in nature.

**1:20** – Creation reveals the existence and nature of God, so all men are without excuse.

**1:23** – The pagan's great sin was to worship creation rather than the creator.

**1:24 – God gave them up** – In response to their sin and rebellion, God allowed them to experience the consequences of their sin. This language is repeated in vv. 26 and 28.

**1:26-27 – contrary to nature** – Scripture is very clear that homosexual or lesbian desires and actions are contrary to nature – to the order that God established at creation.

## Romans 2

**2:1-11** – Paul now deals with moral Gentiles and shows that they too are guilty before God.

**2:12-3:8** – the guilt of the Jews who have the law of God is pronounced

**2:12** – The standard of judgment will be the amount of revelation we have received.

**2:16 – on that day** – This is a reference to the judgment on the last day of history.

**2:24** – Paul is alluding to Isaiah 52:5.

**2:28-29** – Physical circumcision was never intended to secure right standing with God nor something to be trusted in. God always looks at a person's heart rather than externals.

### **Romans 3**

**3:4** – Paul is quoting from Psalm 51:4 a psalm of confession by David after his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah.

**3:9-20** – Paul uses many Old Testament quotations to summarize his argument that all men are guilty before God, both Jews and Gentiles.

**3:21 – righteousness of God** – Because no one is righteous in themselves, a new righteousness is needed – the righteousness that Christ has earned for his people.

**3:25 – propitiation** – Christ came to turn aside the wrath of God from the sinner to himself.

**3:26** – Because of Christ, God is able to be just (since his justice was satisfied in Christ) and yet justify (declare righteous) the sinner who trusts in Christ.

**3:27-28 – justified by faith** – The reason that the gospel excludes human boasting is because we have done nothing to earn salvation. Justification by faith means we rest only in what Christ has done.

## Romans 4

At the end of Romans 3 Paul made clear that justification does not come through law-keeping but through faith. This chapter gives the illustration of that principle in the life of Abraham.

**4:3** – This quote is from Genesis 15:6. This event took place prior to Abraham's circumcision (v. 10) and the giving of the law (v. 13).

**4:7-8** – Paul is quoting David from Psalm 32:1-2.

**4:11** – God brought Abraham to salvation prior to his circumcision so it would be clear that circumcision did not play a roll in salvation.

**4:16** – **may rest on grace** – Justification by grace is the opposite of justification by law-keeping. God's salvation is received by faith and has nothing to do with our good works.

**4:24** – The example of Abraham's faith is written for us, so we too will believe as Abraham did.

## Romans 5

**5:1-11** – Paul now begins to write about the effects of justification.

**5:2-3** – We can rejoice in our sufferings (v. 3) because it is in the context of the hope we have for eternal glory. Our future certainties give us the proper perspective on temporary suffering.

**5:12-21** – This section deals with salvation from a representative perspective. Adam, in the garden, was the representative of the all his descendants. His fall into sin meant all of his descendants also fell into sin. Christ represented his people, the elect, and all the elect receive eternal life, the benefits of Christ's obedience and death (v. 19).

**5:13 – sin is not counted where there is no law** – Paul does not mean that the sinners were not guilty before God, but that the law had not yet been given to Moses.

**5:19 – all men** – This phrase is used twice in this verse. In the first place it is in reference to those Adam represented. This “all” refers to all humans since Adam represented all human beings. The second “all” refers to those whom Christ represented. This “all” refers to the elect that Christ was given by the Father and for which he died.

## **Romans 6**

**6-7** – Now that we have been made alive by Christ, we are no longer to live the life of death characterized by sin. We have been set free from that old life.

**6:1** – Paul uses the language of an opponent to continue his argument.

**6:2 – died to sin** – In our conversion we have undergone a radical change and sin no longer has power over us. We must live with this fact in mind.

**6:3 – baptized** – Our baptism is the sign and seal of our relationship with Christ, in both his death and resurrection. Because Christ has died and been raised, believers too have died to the power of sin and been raised to a new life.

**6:11-14** – In light of our relationship with Christ we must live with the mental awareness that we are no longer under the power of sin (v. 11) and live our lives as those set free (vv. 12-14).

**6:15** – This is another statement from Paul’s “opponent.”

**6:17-19** – Every person is a slave. The unbeliever is a slave to the sin that has mastery over him. The believer is a slave to God living under the power he supplies to live a life of righteousness.

## Romans 7

**7:6 – released from the law** – In terms of law-keeping being the means by which we strive to have a relationship with God. As believers we are required to keep God's moral law, but we do so as an expression of obedience and thanksgiving, not as a means of earning salvation.

**7:7-25** – There is some disagreement among commentators whether Paul is referring to himself pre-conversion or post-conversion. I believe that Paul is referring to his ongoing battle with sin as a believer. Only a believer has the desire to be obedient (vv. 15, 18) and to delight in God's law (v. 22).

**7:7 – law** – The law was never designed to be a means of salvation; rather, it was designed to point out our sin.

**7:12 – holy and righteous and good** – Even though the law points out our sin, it is a gift from God and is always good.

## Romans 8

Romans 7 focused on the believer's struggle with sin. This chapter focuses on the victory believers have in the Holy Spirit.

**8:4** – At our conversion we left the life of the flesh for the life of the Spirit.

**8:15-17** – Part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to give us assurance that we are the children of God.

**8:18** – To follow Christ is to enter into his sufferings (v. 17). But no matter what those sufferings may be, they cannot compare to the eternal glory that awaits us with Christ.

**8:19-22** – Not just believers, but all of creation is longing for the return of Christ so it can be set free from its bondage to sin.

**8:23 – adoption as sons** – We are now adopted by God, but our full adoption, which includes our resurrection bodies, will occur when Christ returns.

**8:26-27** – The Holy Spirit also has been given to us to help in our prayer lives, particularly when we do not know how to pray about a situation.

**8:29 – foreknew** – This does not refer to God's prior knowledge. For God to foreknow someone is to love them beforehand. This is the way God's knowledge is used in Psalm 1:6. God knows the righteous, but he does not know the wicked.

**8:31-39** – The chapter concludes with Paul's great message of assurance. Since God has not withheld his Son from us, we can be confident that he will not allow us to be separated from his love.

**8:36** – This comes from Psalm 44:22

## **Romans 9**

Chapter 9 begins a new section in the letter. This section deals with God's work in the nation of Israel. These two chapters have many Old Testament quotations.

**9:4-5** – Israel, the Old Testament covenant people, had many blessings from God, yet they rejected Christ.

**9:8** – One is not saved because they are born into a covenant family. Being a physical descendent of Abraham did not guarantee salvation. This has always been the case.

**9:16** – Salvation is never dependent on human effort but on God's decision to show mercy.

**9:20ff** – Notice that Paul never defends God. God is God and has the right to do with his creation whatsoever he determines to do.

**9:31-32** – Israel's problem is that they trusted in their law-obedience to get right standing with God and ignored God's requirement of faith.



## **Romans 10**

**10:9** – Salvation comes not by law-keeping but through faith in Christ. This is the central message of the gospel.

**10:12-13** – Salvation is available to anyone, Jew or Greek, who believes.

**10:17** – The reason we support missions is because one cannot be saved apart from hearing and believing the gospel.

## **Romans 11**

**11:2-4** – This account is found in 1 Kings 19. The point is that God still has a remnant of Jews who have believed in Paul's day and today.

**11:11 – trespass** – Israel's rejection of Christ is what moved the church to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

**11:16-21** – The church is portrayed as a tree. The natural branches are Jews, some of which have been broken off. The wild branches are the Gentile believers who have been engrafted.

**11:25-26** – This is a greatly disputed passage. I believe Paul is teaching that just prior to the end there will be time of salvation for many ethnic Jews.

**11:33-36** – Paul's doxology to God for his great work of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles.

## Romans 12

**12:1 – therefore** – Paul now begins a new section applying the theology of the first eleven chapters.

**12:3-8** – In light of God's grace to you in your salvation, you are to use the spiritual gifts that God has given you for ministry in the church. The gifts God gives varies, but all are essential to the health of the body.

**12:9-21** – Paul gives a series of statements which define what should characterize the one who has come to Christ in faith. This is a picture of the life of the believer.

## Romans 13

**13:1-7** – This is instruction for the believer in terms of our relationship with and attitude towards governing authorities. This is in the context of Nero's reign in Rome.

**13:1 – no authority except from God** – All authorities have been put in their position by God. This point is made as well in vv. 4 and 6. This is why we are called to respect (v. 7) and obey them (v. 2).

**13:8-10** – Having experienced the great love of God in Christ, we are called to have lives characterized by love.

**13:10 – love is the fulfilling of the law** – We keep the ten commandments when we love the Lord and love our neighbors fully.

**13:11-14** – Having been set free from the power of sin by Christ, we are no longer to live in the darkness but in the light and so be ready for Christ's return.

## Romans 14

Romans 14 focuses on the use of Christian liberty in the context of loving both the stronger and weaker brother.

**14:1 – weak in faith** – These are the believers who were still keeping Jewish food laws and for conscience sake did not eat any meat (v. 2). The **strong** are those who believe they are free to eat anything.

**14:3** – This is the principle that Paul will flesh out in the rest of the reading. Both the weak and the strong are not to judge each other. Food should not cause division in the church.

**14:5 – esteems one day** – This is a reference to Old Testament holy days that are no longer binding on the New Testament church.

**14:13-14** – Paul considers himself to be part of the strong group. But he wants the strong not to use their freedom to cause the weak to stumble.

**14:20 – stumble** – To cause the weak to sin by following the example of the strong contrary to their conscience (v. 23).

**14:21** – Love is evidenced when the strong are willing to give up some of their freedom for the sake of others.

## Romans 15

**15:3** – This is a quote from Psalm 69:9, which pointed to Christ.

**15:8-13** – Paul quotes a series of Old Testament passages to show that it was always God's plan to bring salvation to the Gentiles and include them as part of his people.

**15:22-33** – Paul tells the Romans why he wants to come visit them. He desires their help in the journey he wants to make to Spain (v. 24).

## Romans 16

**16:1-16** – Though Paul has never been to the Roman church, he knows many of their members who have moved to Rome from other churches he founded.

**16:20 – will soon crush Satan** – This is the perspective that we are all to live with. At times our world may seem to be in darkness, but Satan's complete defeat is the reality that gives believers perspective and hope.







