

INTRODUCTION TO 45TH BIBLEBOOK

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS (beginning A.D. 57)

A. The writer of Romans	1
B. The recipients of Romans	1
C. The date and place of writing Romans	3
D. The purpose of Romans	3
E. The title, theme and division of Romans	4
F. The main message of Romans	5

A. THE WRITER OF ROMANS.

The writer is a Jew (9:3-4), who is well acquainted with both the Hebrew and the Greek text of the Old Testament, with all the Jewish opinions and prejudices and with the Greek world. The authorship of the letter to the Romans is more surely established than any other book in the Bible or even in the ancient world. In the letter, Paul introduced himself as the writer of Romans (1:1) and several times speaks in the first person. All the early church fathers said that Paul wrote Romans.

B. THE RECIPIENTS OF ROMANS.

How did the church in Rome originate?

1. The dispersion of the Jews to many countries.

The dispersion of Jews, which began with the exiles to Assyria and Babylon, caused Jews to live in many countries like Babylonia, Persia, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. In the providence of God, *this 'dispersion' became an important reason why the Christian message was spread so quickly throughout the Roman Empire.*

The Jews had received permission to exercise their religion according to their own customs everywhere in the Roman Empire. They built synagogues everywhere in the midst of the Gentile nations. The Gentiles were often attracted to the pure monotheism of the Old Testament and many converted to Judaism. 'Proselytes'¹ were Gentiles who kept the whole law and who were circumcised. 'Worshippers of God'² were Gentiles who accepted God and kept the Ten Commandments, but were not circumcised and did not keep the whole ceremonial law. Because the apostles were Jews, they always had access to these synagogues, where they could preach the gospel and meet people without causing suspicion to the authorities. These proselytes and worshippers of God were the best prepared to receive the gospel and formed the foundation of the new churches among the Gentiles³.

2. The Jews in Rome.

There were many Jews and converts to Judaism in Rome. Originally they had come as prisoners, but after their freedom the Jewish community settled in a large district across the Tiber river. They had considerable influence on the Romans. The Roman writers ridiculed Romans who became Jews and they wrote about Roman proselytes who sent gifts to Jerusalem. They said that synagogues were popular places of meeting.

3. The origin of the church in Rome.

It is not known how the gospel came to Rome for the first time.

The ministry of Jesus.

The earliest ministry to Romans was that of Jesus himself to non-Jews⁴. For example, in Matthew 8:5-12, he healed the servant of a Roman centurion.

The ministry of Peter.

According to Acts 2:10-11, at Pentecost in May A.D. 30, there were Jews and converts to Judaism from Rome. Some of them must have been among the three thousand converts to Christianity after the preaching of the apostle Peter and on their return to Rome must have preached the gospel in Rome.

The tradition that the church in Rome was founded by Peter is possible and is based on a statement of Dionysius of Corinth in the second half of the second century. The events described in Acts 1-12 occurred between A.D. 30-44. It is possible that during those years, the apostle Peter made one or more visits to Rome in order to establish the Jewish Christians there. In A.D. 36, Peter was in Jerusalem to meet the newly converted Paul⁵. In about A.D. 40, before the reign of Claudius and Herod, who received the control of Judea from him, Peter preached the gospel in Caesarea to some of the first Gentiles. From A.D. 41 onwards the attitude of the Jews in Jerusalem changed for the worse against the apostles.

¹ Proselytes to Judaism (προσηλυτου)(Acts 2:11; cf.:13 43; Matthew 23:15)

² God-fearing Gentiles (ευλαβης)(Acts 2:5) or worshippers of God (σεβομενου)(Acts 13:50; 16:14; 17:4,17; 18:7)Acts 2:5; 16:14.

³ Acts 13:43-49

⁴ Matthew 8:5-11; John 4:7; 12:20-21

⁵ Acts 9:26-28; Galatians 1:18

In A.D. 44 Peter was again in Jerusalem when he was arrested and imprisoned by Herod. The church prayed for him in the house of Mark's mother and after his release by divine intervention, Peter left for another place. Because many Christians gathered in their house, Mark was probably acquainted with the other apostles and several of the early other followers of Jesus.

The ministry of Mark.

According to the testimony of the early church fathers, Mark worked together with Peter in Rome. This probably happened in the period after A.D. 44 when the apostle Peter had left Jerusalem for another place. The church father Eusebius wrote in A.D. 300, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter." The church father Clement of Alexandria, wrote in A.D. 190, "The occasion for writing the Gospel of Mark was the following: Peter had publicly preached the word in Rome ... Mark had followed him for a long time and remembered what he had spoken. Many people, who were present, urged Mark to write down what Peter had said. He did this and distributed the Gospel among those who had asked him for it. When Peter learned about this, he neither strongly forbade it nor promoted it." And the church father Papias, who was a disciple of the apostle John, wrote in A.D. 115, "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote down accurately ... whatever he remembered of what was said and done by the Lord. ... Mark gave careful attention to leave out nothing of what he had heard and also to falsify nothing." There is absolutely no justification to deny the unanimous testimony of the ancient historians that Mark wrote this Gospel and that it was mainly based on the preaching and teaching of the apostle Peter in Rome. Mark probably wrote his Gospel between A.D. 44-46 in Rome for the Romans.

The ministry of other Christians.

People travelled extensively in all parts of the Roman Empire by way of its network of roads and cargo ships, which sailed from beginning of March to the middle of November each year. The New Testament shows several great travellers: Priscilla and Aquila at different times of their lives travelled from Pontus to Rome, from Rome to Corinth⁶, from Corinth to Ephesus⁷, from Ephesus to Rome (16:3), and again from Rome to Ephesus⁸. Also Luke, Timothy, Titus and Paul himself travelled extensively⁹. There existed constant traffic between Rome and all her provinces and people travelled a lot. The mission-minded church at Antioch certainly had travellers to and from Rome who could have spread the message and thus strengthen the existing church in Rome. In the same way, the churches of Philippi, Corinth and Ephesus may well have co-operated, because communications between these great cities and Rome was constant. Paul wrote (A.D. 57) in Romans 1:8 that the faith of the Romans was known all over the world.

Therefore the church at Rome must have existed for quite some time. The Roman writer, Suetonius, (A.D. 75-160)¹⁰ wrote, "Since the Jews were continually making disturbances at the instigation of 'Chrestus', Claudius expelled them from Rome." He was referring to the quarrels between Jews who became Christians and those who remained hostile to the new faith. This happened in A.D. 49, and thus Priscilla and Aquila probably became Christians before they came from Rome to Corinth in A.D. 49. The conclusion is that the church in Rome probably came into existence through the testimony of ordinary Christians.

The ministry of Paul.

During his first three missionary journeys between A.D. 47-57, Paul had become acquainted with several believers belonging to the church at Rome¹¹. However, he himself came to Rome for the first time in A.D. 60 as a prisoner. Nevertheless Paul was very effective in proclaiming the gospel from his prison in Rome so that throughout the whole palace guard it had become clear that Paul was imprisoned not for a crime but for being a Christian¹². Between A.D. 60-61 Paul wrote the letters Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians from his prison in Rome. Finally, during his second imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, which was his last letter in about A.D. 64/65. Peter was not in Rome while Paul was there, otherwise Paul would have written about him.

The tradition about the ministry of the apostles in Rome.

While the apostle Paul travelled extensively between his two imprisonments in Rome between A.D. 61-64, the apostle Peter and Mark were in Rome¹³. Peter wrote his two letters about A.D. 63 from Rome. A fourth century Latin church father, Ambrosiaster, wrote in his commentary on the Letter to the Romans that the church at Rome was not founded by the apostles, but by certain Jewish Christians who imposed a 'Judaic form' on the church¹⁴. The tradition that ascribed to the apostle Peter a 25 year episcopacy between A.D. 42-67 over the church at Rome is very dubious, because the apostle Paul would not have omitted such an important fact from his letter to the Romans! And Luke would not have omitted it from his book of Acts!

⁶ Acts 18:2

⁷ Acts 18:18-19; 1 Corinthians 16:19

⁸ 2 Timothy 4:19

⁹ 2 Corinth 11:25-26

¹⁰ in Vita Claudii xxv:4

¹¹ Romans 16:3-15

¹² Acts 28 and Philippians 1:12-14

¹³ 1 Peter 5:13

¹⁴ compare Acts 15:1; 21:24

4. The situation of the church in Rome.

The church at Rome consisted of a majority of Gentile converts and a minority of Jewish converts (1:5-6,13; 11:13; 15:9-18). This led to tensions within the church at Rome:

The apostle Paul combated certain views generally held by the Jews and converts to Judaism.

The Jews believed that physical descent from Abraham, circumcision and keeping the law were sufficient to gain the favour of God. Their teachers of the law taught that God had promised Abraham that he would save his descendants on the ground of Abraham's merits, no matter how godless and sinful his descendants were! They also taught that no circumcised person would ever go to hell and that all Israel would share in the eternal life! The Jews believed that the blessings of the Messianic kingdom would be limited to the Jews and Jewish converts! They believed that the Jews were so much elevated above all the other nations that the theocratic kingdom with all its blessings would belong only to Israel! Gentiles could secure a subordinate place in God's kingdom only by becoming Jews!

The Jews believed that submission to the authority of Gentile nations was contrary to their duty to their Messiah King. They questioned the payment of taxes to the Romans and despised the Gentiles. This constantly led to rebellion in Rome, their banishment from Rome and finally to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans.

The apostle Paul rebuked the Gentile Christians for not considering the scruples of the Jewish Christians (14:1 to 15:13).

He taught the strong Christians¹⁵ not to look down upon the scruples of the weak Christians and he taught the weak Christians not to judge the convictions of the strong Christians.

The apostle Paul taught that there is only one gospel, one message of salvation for both Gentiles and Jews.

Both Gentiles (chapter 1) and Jews (chapter 2) have sinned and miss God's perfect standard and God's glorious goal for their lives (3:23). Both Gentiles and Jews are saved or justified in the same way, and that is by the atoning death of Jesus Christ and by faith in Jesus Christ (3:24-25). And both Gentiles and Jews who believe are the true descendants of Abraham (4:11-12). In short, Romans 10:12-13 says, "*There is no difference between Jew and Gentile. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!*"

C. THE DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS.

1. The place of writing Romans.

According to Acts 20:2-3, at the end of his third missionary journey, Paul travelled through Macedonia to Corinth. This was Paul's third visit to Corinth. He arrived in Corinth before the winter A.D. 56 and spent three months in Corinth. Everything points to Corinth as the place where Paul wrote Romans. Paul had received the contributions made in Macedonia and Achaia for the collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem and thus he must have been in that area (15:25-26). He conveyed the greetings of Gaius and Erastus (16:23), who were Corinthians¹⁶. Paul also mentioned Cenchrea, which was the eastern port of Corinth.

2. The date of writing Romans.

Because Paul wanted to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost¹⁷, he wrote the letter to the Romans in Corinth towards the close of the winter or the beginning of the spring in A.D. 57. It is generally assumed that Phoebe carried Paul's letter from Corinth to Rome¹⁸. His purpose was to teach that *justification is by grace through faith*.

In Romans 15:23-24, Paul said that his missionary work in the eastern part of the Roman Empire was nearing its completion and that he was planning to begin missionary work in the western part of the Roman Empire, especially Rome itself and Spain. In Romans 1:10, Paul said that he felt that *that time had now come*. Therefore Paul wrote Romans towards the end of his third missionary journey.

3. The dates of Paul's third missionary journey.

The dates for the third missionary journey are determined by the times Felix and Festus were governors of Judea. Felix was governor of Judea from A.D. 52-59 and Festus from A.D. 59-61. Acts 24:27 says that Paul had been imprisoned for two years before Festus became governor. Thus, Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea from A.D. 57-59 and the dates for the third missionary journey must have been A.D. 53-57.

D. THE PURPOSE OF ROMANS.

1. Paul desired to have a personal ministry in Rome.

According to Romans 15:23, Paul was nearing the completion of his ministry in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and desired to begin his ministry in the western part of the Roman Empire, especially Rome and Spain. Paul had a humble view of his intended ministry in Rome and said that he expected not only to have a harvest among them, but also to receive personal encouragement from their faith. Nevertheless, he was eager to preach the gospel at

¹⁵ 'Strong Christians' were generally those who did not live by rules (e.g. the Gentile believers) and 'weak Christians' were generally those who lived by all kinds of rules (e.g. the Jewish believers). Read Romans 14.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 1:14; 2 Timothy 4:20

¹⁷ Acts 20:16

¹⁸ Romans 16:1-2

Rome (1:8-15). Paul was however not certain if he would be able to make the trip to Rome, because he had been prevented from doing so before and he was very much aware of the opposition of the Jews, especially in Jerusalem¹⁹.

2. Paul helped the Christians in Rome to defend themselves against the onslaught of the Jews.

The awareness that there was a possibility that he might never see his brothers in Rome caused Paul to write this type of a letter. The style of this letter reminds one of *the way Paul argued with the unbelieving Jews during his missionary journeys* (4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,30). Paul knew that the church at Rome was surrounded by many unbelieving Jews and he wanted to help the church to defend the Christian faith against such opponents and even to win them for Christ. The letter to the Romans is not really a complete compendium of Christian doctrine.

Paul knew exactly what *the church in Rome (with such a strong Jewish background)* needed. Guided by the Holy Spirit, he wrote in chapter 1-8 about the way in which sinners are saved: by grace through faith and not through keeping the law. That was urgently needed by the church in Rome, but also by every church and every person throughout the ages. *In chapter 9-11, he wrote about the place of the Jews after the first coming of Jesus Christ.* In chapter 14 about certain practical aspects of the Old Testament ceremonial law: the food rules and the sabbath.

3. Paul exhorted the Christians in Rome how to behave as Christians.

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire and a very large city with many nationalities living in it. Paul exhorted the Christians how to behave themselves towards one another, towards their opponents and towards the Roman government. He also taught how the strong Christians (generally Gentiles) and weak Christians (those keeping the rules of the ceremonial law) should relate to one another.

4. Paul desired the co-operation of the Christians in Rome for his missionary journey to Spain.

In Romans 15:24 he wrote that he hoped that the church in Rome would assist him on his missionary journey to Spain.

Because Paul had several purposes for writing the letter to the Romans, one could summarise his purpose with his own words in 1 Corinthians 9:22 and 10:31, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" and "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

E. THE TITLE, THEME AND DIVISION OF ROMANS.

The letter to the Romans may be given **the title**: "**Romans - the gospel about God's righteousness**" or "**Romans - a Christian instruction about Gods righteousness.**" The letter portrays Jesus Christ who is our righteousness.

The theme of Romans is written in Romans 1:16-17, "The gospel is the power of God for salvation of everyone who exercises faith ... as it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith'."

The letter to the Romans may be divided into two parts:

1. The doctrinal part: Believe God's righteousness. Romans 1 - 11.

This part may be divided into four sections:

- **Romans 1:1 to 3:20. The need for God's righteousness.**
In chapter 1, by pointing out the gross sins of the Gentiles, Paul shows that the Gentiles need God's righteousness.
In chapter 2, by pointing out the sins of the Jews, he shows that also the Jews need God's righteousness.
In chapter 3:1-20, he draws the conclusion that sin and its condemnation is universal. Pure human righteousness does not exist in the world. God will never justify people by their own so-called righteousness.
- **Romans 3:21 to 4:25. The way to God's righteousness.**
In chapter 3:21-31, Paul teaches that God has revealed his righteousness in the sacrifice of atonement made by Jesus Christ on the cross. Anyone may receive God's righteousness by exercising faith in Jesus Christ.
In chapter 4, Paul proves that *God's righteousness by faith was also the way of salvation in the Old Testament.*
- **Romans 5 to 8. The effects of God's righteousness.**
In chapter 5, God's righteousness produces fruits like peace and assurance of complete salvation.
In chapter 6, justification (God's righteousness) is indissolubly connected to sanctification (living a holy life).
In chapter 7, the Christian has been set free from the law as interpreted by the Jews (7:1-6), every sinner experiences the functions of God's moral law (7:7-13) and every Christian experiences the struggle with the law of sin, which is still a part of his nature (7:14-25).
In chapter 8, the Christian experiences the work of the Holy Spirit (8:1-27) and he is more than a conqueror in all circumstances of life (8:28-39).
- **Romans 9-11. The Giver of God's righteousness.**
In chapter 9, with a view to the unbelief of Israel, the righteousness and faithfulness of God is vindicated. *Israel's unbelief and rejection were not total: there was a remnant* (9:27).
In chapter 10, God's righteousness is available in Christ and is given to everyone who believes, no matter whether he is a Gentile or a Jew. *Israel's unbelief and rejection were not arbitrary: God's invitation to salvation is still extended to the Jews* (10:12-13).

¹⁹ Acts 20:3,22-23

In chapter 11, God uses the fall of Israel to save many Gentiles. At the same time he uses the salvation of the Gentiles to save many of Israel (11:11-24). *Israel's unbelief and rejection were not final*: God will not only save the fullness of the Gentiles, but also the fullness of the Jews, that is, all those he chose and who would certainly believe in Jesus Christ (11:25-32).

2. The practical part: Do God's righteousness. Romans 12-16.

This part may be divided into two sections:

- **Romans 12:1 to 15:13. The demonstration of God's righteousness.**

Chapter 12 teaches the behaviour of the Christian with respect to God, other Christians and opponents.

Chapter 13 teaches the behaviour of the Christian with respect to the government, the neighbour and Christ.

Chapter 14:1 to 15:13 teaches the behaviour of the strong and weak Christians towards one another.

- **Romans 15:14 to 16:27. The co-workers of God's righteousness.**

Chapter 15:14-33 describes Paul's Gentile ministry, policy and plans.

Chapter 16 describes other co-workers of God's righteousness.

F. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF ROMANS.

1. The God of the Bible revealed himself to all people in history.

God has revealed himself to all people through his creation. Romans 1:19-20 says that God has revealed his existence or reality and his power through what can be seen in creation. God also revealed himself through the requirements of his laws written in every human heart. Romans 2:15 says that God has revealed his will how people should conduct themselves through what all people know in their hearts and to which their consciences bears testimony. The other ways through which God reveals himself to man are: according to Genesis 6:5,11-13 through his judgements of people's sin, and according to Acts 14:17 and 17:24-28 through his providential care of people. According to Matthew 24:14 God reveals himself to all nations through the preaching of the gospel. Because God has revealed his existence to all people, no one will be able to make any excuse for not seeking the God of the Bible²⁰.

2. All people in history have sinned.

Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". *To have sinned* means people have missed God's goal for their lives, which is to express God's glorious presence and characteristics. It means people have fallen short of the perfect standard of the God of the Bible. Therefore according to Romans 3:10-11, there is no difference between one nation and another nation. Although some people might be righteous *in their own eyes*, there is not a single natural human being who is righteous *in God's eyes*. Although people understand that the world has problems, there is no one who really understands his own deplorable condition. Although people seek knowledge and answers, there is no one who seeks God, who is the Source of understanding and of salvation. Because all people in history have sinned, all people in history need salvation, that is, they need to *receive* God's righteousness before they can be saved.

3. People are only justified by faith.

No one is justified by his own righteousness. Moses said in Leviticus 18:5 that the man who obeys God's laws would "live by them". Romans 10:2-5 says that the Jews thought that this meant that whoever *tried to keep the law as good as he could*, would be justified and receive eternal life, that is, he would be saved. The Jews therefore tried to establish their own righteousness by obeying all the laws of God as good as they could. They were wrong!

The Jews forgot that what God demanded was not the trying to keep the law, but *perfect obedience* to the law! And no one in the history of mankind was able to perfectly obey God's laws. Everyone in human history falls short of God's perfect standard. Romans 3:19-20 says that no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law as good as he can, because no one observes the law perfectly. Every mouth on earth will be silenced. No one will have an excuse before the God of the Bible. The whole world will be held accountable to the God of the Bible.

People can only be justified by receiving God's righteousness. Romans 10:4 says that Jesus Christ is "the end of the law" so that people may *receive God's righteousness* by believing in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was sinless and perfectly fulfilled all the demands of God's laws. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will receive God's righteousness as a gracious free gift from God. No one can earn his own righteousness before God by keeping God's laws or by doing good works. But everyone can receive God's righteousness by believing that Jesus Christ died in his place to atone for all his sins. Therefore Romans 3:28 says, "A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law."

People living before Jesus Christ were justified only by faith. Romans 4:1-5 shows that the Old Testament also did not teach that people could be justified by doing the works of the law. Genesis 15:6 says, "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Although people might boast before other people about their works of the law, they can never boast before God. People who rely on their works of the law, try to justify themselves before God, but people who believe in Jesus Christ are justified by God himself.

4. People who have been justified through faith have peace with God (5:1)

²⁰ Romans 3:11,19

For the person who believes in Jesus Christ, *peace* means the following.

- Peace means the assurance that his sins of *the past* have been forgiven, that he has been justified before God and reconciled to God (5:1-2,10).
- Peace means that all the evils of *the present* are being overruled by God for the good of the Christian. The suffering he experiences will produce perseverance, Christian character and hope (5:3-5; 8:28). Christus heeft alle dingen met zichzelf verzoend en zo vrede²¹ gemaakt met alle dingen op de aarde en alle dingen in de hemel (universum)²².
- Peace means that *the future* events on earth cannot separate a Christian from God. He is already saved from God's future wrath. And no one and no difficult circumstance can separate him from God's love for him (5:9,21; 8:37-39).

5. Although the Old Testament law does not save, it has important functions.

- Romans 3:28 teaches that *no one will be saved* by observing the law.
- Romans 3:20 teaches that the law functions as *a mirror*, in which people recognise their own sin.
- Romans 5:20 teaches that the law functions as *a magnifying glass*, through which people see the magnitude and ugliness of their sins.
- Romans 3:19 teaches that the law functions as *a judge* who condemns all people to be guilty and holds them all accountable to God.
- Galatians 3:24 teaches that the law functions as *a school teacher* who shows people their need of Christ and Christ's righteousness.
- Romans 13:8-10 teaches that the law functions as *a guide* who shows people how they should live the Christian life.
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11 teaches that the law functions as *a bridle* that restrains all kinds of wickedness among people.

6. Justification is indissolubly connected to sanctification.

Justification means that God regards and treats a person as completely righteous before him on the basis of Christ's atonement for sins, which has been accepted through faith. *Sanctification* in Romans chapter 6 means *holiness*, which is *a state rather than a process*. The emphasis in Romans 6 is not on the process of being made holy more and more, but rather on *the once-for-all break with sin and the commitment to righteousness*.

Romans 6:5-7 teaches that everyone, who through faith has been united with Christ in his death, will certainly be united with Christ in his resurrection. Through faith in Christ his old self was crucified with Christ, so that his physical body is no longer conditioned and controlled by his sinful nature. His involuntary and compulsory slavery to sin has definitely been broken. Paul teaches that the true nature and design of Christianity is to produce a new life. The nature of union with Christ is such that *it is impossible for any person to share in the benefits of Christ's death, without also sharing in the benefits of his resurrection!* Sharing in the benefits of Christ's resurrection primarily means to conform to Christ in a holy life here on earth. Secondly it means to conform to Christ in a life of glorious immortality of spirit and body hereafter (8:11). Both are included in the new life that flows to us from Jesus Christ.

Paul teaches that it is impossible for a person to be conformed to Christ's life, without being conformed to his death! A Christian must be justified and reconciled to God in order to be holy. He cannot be justified and reconciled without thereby becoming holy! He must be justified in order to be sanctified! Just as Christ's death preceded his resurrection, so justification and reconciliation with God must precede holiness of life. The death of Jesus Christ renders the justification of the Christian certain! A Christian shares in Christ's death in order that he may share in Christ's life.

Paul teaches that it is impossible for a person to be conformed to Christ's death, without also being conformed to his life! There is an analogy between Christ's *literal* death and resurrection and the believer's *spiritual* death and resurrection. There is also a causal relationship between the two: Just as Christ's resurrection was the certain consequence of his death, so also *a holy life is the certain consequence* of a Christian's dying with Christ. The resurrection of Christ renders the sanctification of the Christian certain! He shares in Christ's life because he shared in Christ's death.

Thus, the letter to the Romans teaches that *justification and holiness and its consequent sanctification are inseparable!* The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ renders the justification and holiness and its consequent sanctification of the Christian certain. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Christian shares in both Christ's death and resurrection!

7. Christians should live in the Spirit.

Living in the Spirit is not a mystical experience, but is a daily concrete responsibility.

- Romans 8:5 teaches that a genuine Christian sets his mind on what the Holy Spirit desires, that is, he sets his mind on what the Bible teaches²³.
- Romans 8:13 teaches that a genuine Christian puts to death the misdeeds of the body, that is, he puts to death every kind of sin that expresses itself in the human body.
- Romans 6:13 and 19 urges Christians to no longer offer the parts of their body as instruments to do wicked things. Genuine Christians offer every part of their body as instruments to do what is right in God's eyes.

²¹ Peace in the sense of 'making whole, 'restore'

²² Colossians 1:20

²³ John 14:26; 16:13-14; Ephesians 6:17

8. God is sovereign in everything.

- God is sovereign in whom he saves. Romans 8:29-30 teaches that all people whom God elected or chose will be saved.
- God is sovereign in his love. Romans 8:35-39 teaches that nothing that happens on earth can separate a Christian from God or God's love for him.
- God is sovereign in his goodness. Romans 8:28 teaches that everything that happens on earth is used by God for the good of Christians.

God's sovereignty means that God is the King of the universe and that no one can stop him from carrying out his plan for this world and for every Christian, including you²⁴!

9. People become God's children because of what God does.

- Romans 9:6-9 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human descent, but only by God's sovereign promise.
- Romans 9:10-13 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human merit of good works, but only by God's sovereign election and calling²⁵.
- Romans 9:14-16 teaches that people become God's children, not by their human free will, desire or exertion, but only by God's sovereign mercy (9:18).

That is what Jesus Christ teaches when he says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" "All the Father gives me will come to me"²⁶."

10. God's plan is to save both Jews and Gentiles.

Romans 11:11-27 says that the rejection of disobedient Israel led to the acceptance of very many believing Gentiles. And the acceptance of the believing Gentiles leads at the same time to the acceptance of very many believing Jews. Thus, all those whom God elected from the Gentiles and the Jews throughout all generations in history will be saved. Great masses of Gentiles and Jews will be saved²⁷. However, the unbelieving Gentiles and unbelieving Jews will never enter into God's kingdom²⁸.

11. God requires that Christians are transformed.

Romans 12:1-3 and 13:14 teaches that all Christians should continually be transformed to more and more Christlikeness. Although God takes the initiative in their salvation and life, every Christian remains *responsible to respond* to God's initiatives.

The letter to the Romans teaches that there is *no justification without sanctification* and that there is *no divine election without human responsibility*. A Christian can never be sure that he is saved if he continues to live a life of doubt and disobedience. The doctrines of divine election and justification may not be separated in the mind or lives of Christians from the doctrines of human responsibility and sanctification!

12. God requires that Christians submit to all authorities.

Authority is established by God. The question about authority is not answered by any human culture (traditional values or customs) whatsoever. It is also not determined by democratic voting. *The Church is not a democracy, but a theocracy (Christocracy)*²⁹ "Everyone must submit himself to the (governing) authorities³⁰, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted³¹, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves" (13:1-2). All people must submit to the authority of the God of the Bible and to the authority of the Bible. And all citizens must submit to the civil authorities over them unless they clash with God's commandments³².

God instituted seven authority-submission relationships in the Bible:

- *God in Christ* has authority over all and everything³³.

²⁴ Philippians 1:6

²⁵ 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

²⁶ John 6:37,44,65

²⁷ Revelation 7:9

²⁸ Matthew 8:11-12; Revelation 21:8

²⁹ In upcoming democracies women fight for equal rights in every area of life.

³⁰ Greek; *exousia*

³¹ Greek; *diatagé*

³² Acts 4:19-20; 5:29

³³ Psalm 145:13; Psalm 146:10; Mattheüs 28:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18. Also note 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

- *Men and women* have authority over God's creation³⁴.
- *Men* have authority over women in marriage³⁵ and over women in the official meetings of the church³⁶.
- *Parents* have authority over their children that are still under age³⁷.
- *The government* of a country has authority over its citizens³⁸.
- *The employer* has authority over his employees³⁹.
- *The elders* have authority over the members of the congregation⁴⁰.

Romans 13 teaches that all Christians must submit to the authorities that God has set over them.

13. God requires that Christians accept one another.

Romans 14:1-15:13 teaches that the strong Christians must accept *the scruples* of the weak Christians and the weak Christians must not condemn *the convictions* of the strong Christians. Of course, this is only in so far these scruples and convictions do not clash with the truth in the Bible.

³⁴ Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8:4-8

³⁵ Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6

³⁶ Acts 20:17,28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Corinthians 14:33-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6). Study www.deltacourse.org Delta PLUS study 29, detailed explanation of 1 Corinthians chapters 11 to 14.

³⁷ Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

³⁸ Romans 13:3-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; cf. Revelation 13:1-10

³⁹ Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; 1 Peter 2:18-23

⁴⁰ Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17