

The Greatest Letter Ever Written

An Overview of the Book of Romans

Introduction

A. **The author:** Paul (1:1). Tertius is his scribe (16:22)

1. The Apostle to the Gentiles (1:1)
2. The desire to visit Rome (1:8-13)

B. **The readers:** a mix of Gentile and Jewish believers in Rome (14:1-23)

C. **Date:** At the end of Paul's third missionary journey (15:22-28, 31 w/Acts 19:21)

1. A.D. 56 or 57
2. From Corinth (16:1-2, 23)

D. **Major Themes**

1. Righteousness/Justification
2. Jew/Israel and Gentile/Greek
3. Gospel
4. Wrath
5. Salvation
6. Law
7. Flesh
8. Faith
9. Life and Death

E. **Structure**

Romans most simply breaks down into a twofold structure:

Doctrine (1-11)

Duty (12-16)

A more detailed outline:

Justification by Grace through Faith (1-4)

Living Under Grace (5-8)

God's Plan of Grace (9-11)

A Church Shaped by Grace (12-16)

An overview of each chapter:

1: D _____

9: E _____

2: Hypocrisy

10: Gospel

3: J _____

11: I _____

4: Abraham

12: Worship

5: G _____

13: G _____

6: Freedom

14: Unity

7: W _____

15: M _____

8: Assurance

16: Farewell

F. Purposes

1. Theological: to teach the great truths of the Gospel to believers
2. Pastoral: to resolve Jew-Gentile tensions
3. Missionary: to encourage the Roman believers to have the same commitment to missions as him and to partner with him in his missionary trip to Spain

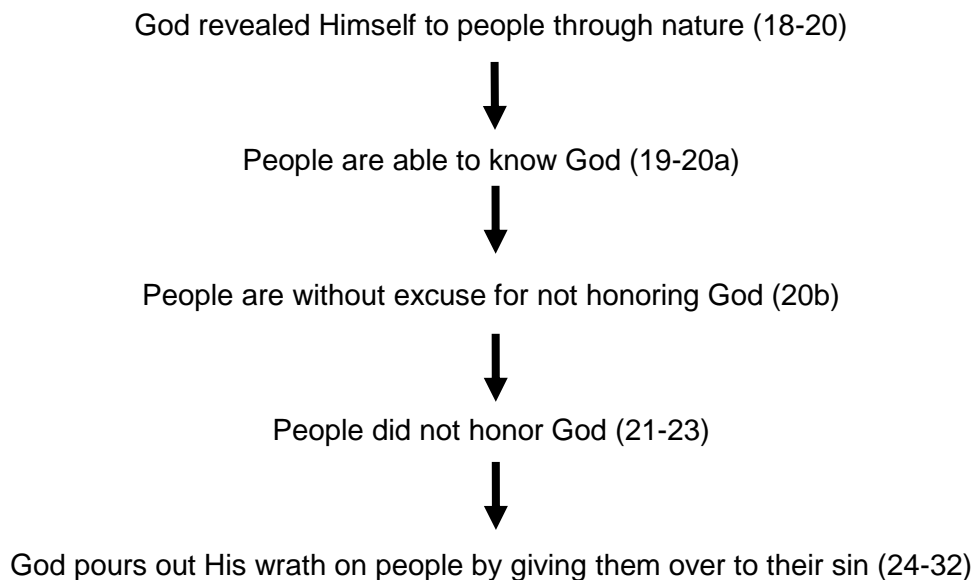
G. Recommended Resources

1. Commentaries
 - a. John MacArthur, *Romans* (2 volumes)
 - b. Douglas Moo, *Epistle to the Romans*
 - c. Christopher Ash, *Teaching Romans* (2 volumes)
2. Sermon series
 - a. John MacArthur, gty.org
 - b. John Piper, desiringgod.org
 - c. Mark Dever, capitolhillbaptist.org

Chapter 1

- A. A Gospel-saturated greeting (1-7)
- B. Paul's desire to see them (9-11; 13)
- C. Theme Passage of Romans (16-17)
 - 1. "For" (16 [x2], 17)
 - 2. The righteousness of God (17)
 - 3. Faith (17)
- D. The Wrath of God Revealed

The Logical Flow of verses 18-32



Chapter 2

- A. Religious Hypocrisy
 - 1. In chapter 1, Paul is speaking mainly to **immoral Gentiles**.
 - 2. In chapter 2, Paul is speaking mainly to **religious Jews**.

B. Key words

1. "Practice" (1, 2, 3)
2. "judge" and "judgment" (1-3, 5)

[Those who *practice* evil will not
escape the *judgment* of God.]

3. God will "render to each person according to his deeds" (6).

Chapter 3

- A. Mankind is universally sinful. (10-18)
- B. The Provision of the Righteousness of God:

Justification: an instantaneous act of God in which He declares us to be righteous in His sight because He forgives our sin and imputes Christ's righteousness to us.

Sanctification: a progressive work of God and of the Christian that makes him or her more and more like Christ.

Justification	Sanctification
Instantaneous, one-time act	Life-long process
God accepts us	God changes us
God's declaration that a sinner is positionally righteous in His sight	The believer actually and experientially becoming more like Christ
God alone plays a role	God and the believer play separate roles

1. comes apart from the Law (21)
2. is by faith (22-23)
3. justifies (24)
4. satisfies God's wrath (25-26)

Chapter 4

- A. An example of justification by faith alone: Abraham
- B. Genesis 15:6 is quoted three times (3, 9, 22)

Chapter 5

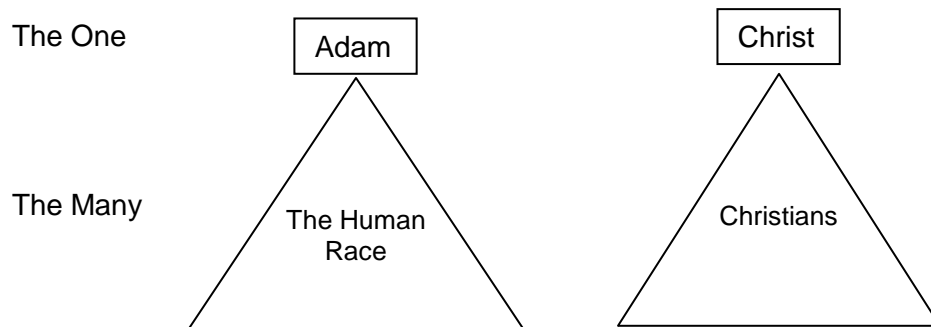
Justification by Grace through Faith (1-4)

Living Under Grace (5-8)

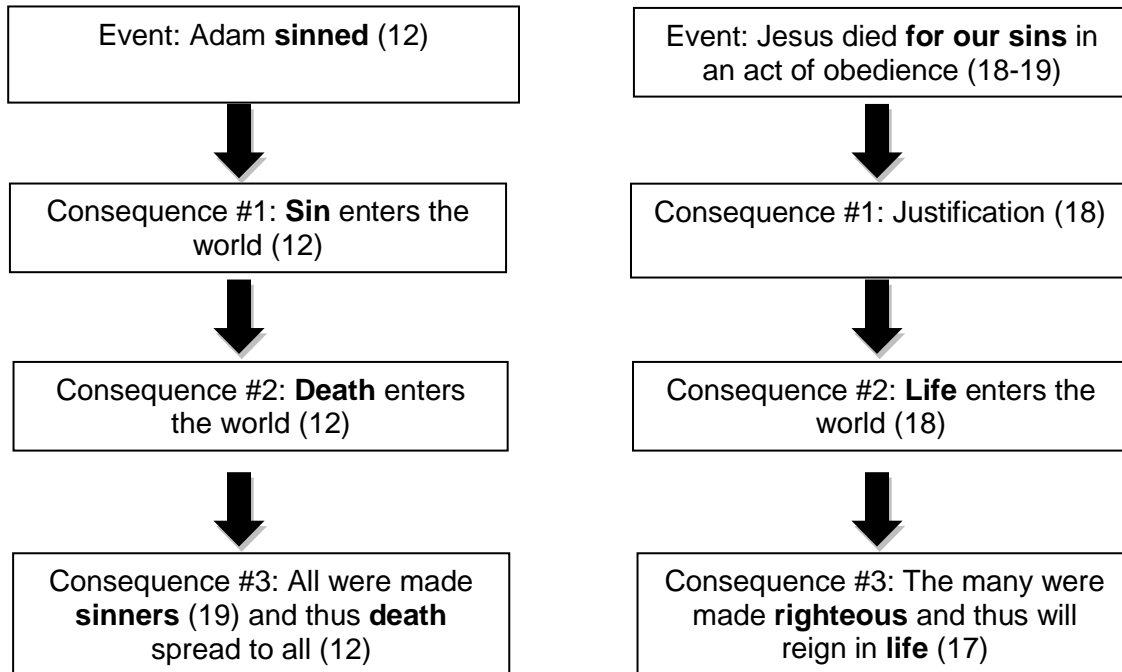
God's Plan of Grace (9-11)

A Church Shaped by Grace (12-16)

- A. The Benefits of Justification
 - 1. Peace with God (1)
 - 2. Access to God (2)
 - 3. Joy in God (2-5)
- B. The Love of God (6-11)
- C. The Power of One (12-21)



- 1. Adam: Death reigns because of one man's sin
- 2. Jesus: Grace reigns because of one man's righteousness
- 3. Adam is a type of Jesus



4. Paul's description of grace is different than his description of sin.

Grace > sin

Chapter 6

A. Two important images

1. life and death
2. slavery and freedom

B. **The Objection:** Grace encourages Christians to sin (1)

1. **Answer #1:** Christians have died to sin and walk in newness of life (2-11)
2. **Answer #2:** Christians are no longer slaves to sin (6-7)
 - a. The two analogies of death/life and slavery/freedom give the full picture: Christians are dead to the slavery of sin. Sin as a slave master has been killed.

- b. In our newness of life, we have the ability to say “no” to sin
- 3. Therefore, we should think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God (11)

Chapter 7

- A. The Law is holy, righteous, and good. (1-13).
- B. The War Within (14-25)

- 1. **The debate:** Is Paul speaking as a believer or an unbeliever?

Believer	Unbeliever
v. 18, 21: A desire to do God’s will	v. 14; 23: Description of himself as a slave/prisoner (cf. 6:6-7)
v. 15: A hatred of sin	v. 17; 20: Paul seems to be overtaken and controlled by sin
v. 18: Nothing good dwells in his sin nature	v. 18: Nothing good dwells in him
v. 22: A joyful agreement with God	v. 24: Designation of himself as a wretched man (present tense)
v. 24: A distinction between himself and his flesh/body of death	v. 24: The need to be freed from his body of death
v. 25: Serves the law of God with his mind	v. 25: Serves the law of sin with his body
The chronological flow of the chapter. From Paul’s past (7-13) to his present (14-23) to his future (24-25). The verb tenses are consistent with each section: past, present, and future.	
Paul’s description of an unbeliever in 3:9-20 is drastically different from his description of himself in 7:14-23.	

- 2. The Christian’s battle with sin will be won by Jesus Christ (24-25)

Chapter 8

- A. Assurance in Christ (1-4)
- B. Assurance in the Holy Spirit (5-17)
- C. Assurance in Salvation (28-30)
- D. Assurance in the Love of God (31-39)

Chapters 9-11

Justification by Grace through Faith (1-4)

Living Under Grace (5-8)

God's Plan of Grace (9-11)

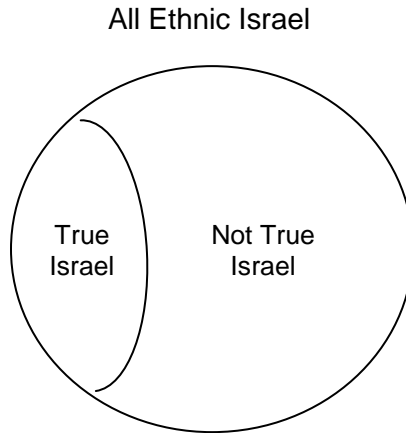
A Church Shaped by Grace (12-16)

- A. Outline of Romans 9-11
 - 1. **The Question:** Does Israel's rejection of Jesus mean that God's Word has failed? (9:1-5)
 - 2. **The Answers** (9:6-11:33)
 - a. No, because God elects a portion of Israel to be saved (9:6-11:10)
 - b. No, because God saves the Gentiles to provoke Israel to belief (11:11-24)
 - c. No, because God will save Israel in the future (11:25-36)

<p><u>The Question</u></p>

<p>Does Israel's rejection of Jesus mean that God's Word has failed?</p>
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- B. **Answer #1: No, because God elects a portion of Israel to be saved (9:6-11:10)**
 - 1. **Key Verse:** "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel" (9:6).



2. God saves a remnant of Jews (9:27)
3. The example of Paul (11:1)
4. The remnant in Elijah's day is like the remnant of saved Jews in Paul's day (11:2-7)

C. Answer #2: No, because God saves the Gentiles to provoke Israel to belief (11:11-24)

1. Imagery of grafting in the Gentiles
2. Jews should want to be grafted back in

D. Answer #3: No, because God will save Israel in the future (11:25-36)

1. The partial hardening over Israel will end (11:25)
2. God will save the nation of Israel around the time of His second coming (11:26-27)
3. Paul's response is worship. God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles displays His great wisdom and mercy (11:33-36)

Chapter 12

Justification by Grace through Faith (1-4)

Living Under Grace (5-8)

God's Plan of Grace (9-11)

A Church Shaped by Grace (12-16)

A. The Hinge Passage (1-2)

1. "By the mercies of God" (1): Being shown mercy is the motivation for doing the commands in the rest of the book

2. "Present your bodies" (1)
3. But you can only present your bodies if you are "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (2)

B. Responses to the mercy of the Gospel

1. Humility (3)
2. Service (4-8)
3. Love (9-21)

Chapter 13

A. Be Submissive to Your Government (1-7)

B. Exception: Acts 5:29

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

C. John MacArthur writes:

Believers are to be model citizens, known as law abiding not rabble-rousing, obedient rather than rebellious, respectful of government rather than demeaning of it. We must speak against sin, against injustice, against immorality and ungodliness with fearless dedication, but we must do it within the framework of civil law and with respect for civil authorities.

Chapter 14

A. **Key Phrases**

1. "judge" and "pass judgment"
2. "regard with contempt"

	Strong	Weak
Group	<u>Those who understand the full implication of the Gospel</u> 1. Most Gentiles 2. Mature Jews like Paul	<u>Those still underdeveloped in their understanding of the implications of the Gospel</u> 1. Most Jews 2. Recently Converted Gentiles
Food	Everything	Only vegetables, nothing unclean
Calendar	Every day is the same	Some days are more sacred than others
Guilty of	Judging/contempt and causing the weak to stumble	Judging/contempt

B. Disunity and contempt are inconsistent with the Gospel (15)

Chapter 15

A. Paul's Next Mission Field: Spain (14-21)

B. Paul's hope for:

1. financial support (24)
2. prayer support (30)
3. encouragement support (24; 32)

Chapter 16

A. What is the church? Those who are:

1. In Christ (9, 10, 11, 12)
2. Diverse
 - a. 15 men, 9 women
 - b. Greek, Latin, and Jewish names
 - c. Different occupations
3. Faithful (1-4, 7, 12)

B. Why the Church? When God makes the Gospel known to all nations, and people in all nations believe in Him and obey His commands, He is glorified (26-27).

Summary of the Book of Romans

Justification by Grace through Faith (1-4)

God reveals His wrath toward those who do not believe in Him (1), including those who have the Law (2). But He reveals His righteousness toward those who believe in Him (3), as seen in the example of Abraham (4).

Living Under Grace (5-8)

Living under grace means that you are loved by God (5), you are dead to sin and alive to God (6) though you still struggle with sin (7), and you have a future hope and a present assurance in God (8).

God's Plan of Grace (9-11)

Even though Israel has rejected Christ, God did not break His promise to show grace to them because He elected a remnant of Jews in Paul's day (9) who confessed Christ as Lord (10), and He will save the nation of Israel in the end times (11).

A Church Shaped by Grace (12-16)

A church shaped by grace is full of people who offer themselves as sacrifices to God (12), submit to the government (13), lovingly accept and edify one another in unity (14), support the spread of the Gospel (15), and faithfully serve to the glory of God (16).