

Epistle to the Romans



Romans

- Romans 1—Summary of Gospel
 - The Human Condition described and explained
 - Minds Darkened → Hearts hardened
 - JUDGMENT (21-25)
 - HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONS—demonstration/example of “natural” relations EXCHANGED FOR “unnatural” (para physin).



Romans

- **1. Rom 1:16–17.** The central argument of the epistle begins with a thematic statement (1:16–17) that picks up on the notion of proclamation from v 15, where Paul has expressed his “eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome” (NRSV).
- The theme is introduced “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (1:16 NRSV).



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- **2. Rom 1:18–3:20.** In the first part of the argument in chaps. 1–4, Paul portrays human dilemma...
 - both Greek and Jew deserve divine condemnation and punishment when judged on the basis of their “works.”



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- **3. Rom 3:21–4:25.** In the second part of the argument in chaps. 1–4, Paul presents God’s response
- First comes the divine solution to the human predicament (3:21–26); Paul states that God has now revealed (“apocalypsed”) the way of salvation/wisdom. It has nothing to do with (works of) the law (= “apart from law,” 3:21a)—topic of 3:22–30. Nevertheless, this way “is attested by the law and the prophets”], the topic of 3:31–4:25.

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- **4. Rom 5:1–8:39.** This new life presupposes God’s act of justification by grace as a gift (5:1a, which recalls the conclusion reached in 3:28). This act, achieved by God giving up his own son on behalf of those who were “weak” (5:6), “sinners” (5:8), and “enemies [of God]” (5:10), “proves his love for us” (5:8).
- The result of God’s act in Christ, which is received by faith, is “peace with God” (5:1), “freedom from the wrath [of God]” (5:9), and “hope of sharing the glory of God” (5:2).

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- Paul then uses two analogies in 6:15–7:6 to demonstrate that sin and the law have no power over ones who have been “baptized into [Christ’s] death.”
- Slavery illustration (6:15–23)
 - slave is bound to a single master for life. Death, however, discharges one from servitude to one master and thereby allows one to be enslaved to another. Disciples who were at one time “slaves of sin” (6:17), through baptism have “been set free from sin” (6:18) and have now become “enslaved to God” (6:22a),

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- Marriage illustration (7:1–6) Paul notes that the wife is legally bound to one husband for life. With death, however, she is “discharged from the law” (7:2) and may legally marry another.
- So, followers who have “died to the law” (7:4) through baptism into Christ with the result that “now we are discharged from the law” (7:6).



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- Although “law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied” (5:20a), Paul asserts that the law is not sin (7:7, 12).
- Rather the law makes obvious the power of sin which manifests itself in “trespass” and “transgression.”
- Sin uses, exploits the good law to take advantage of the weak flesh. *The function of the law is to drive people to the point of seeing that there is no way out except through the gift of God’s grace (7:24–25).*

Romans 8

- NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT--Spirit has a twofold function.
- the Spirit makes believers aware that at present they are not what they should be. Present life is filled with suffering (8:18), weakness (8:26), and decay since Adam's fall (see Gen 3:17).
- Believers are not above this condition, but must identify with the rest of creation as they "groan inwardly" (8:22–25).

Furthermore, the Spirit intercedes on their behalf, because their prayers are not adequate (8:27).



Romans 8

- But those who have the same have a glorious future: The Spirit is the “first fruits” or down payment of future redemption (8:23) as adopted children of God. When believers themselves (18:24) are conformed to the image of God’s son then they will be brothers of the firstborn son (8:29).



Romans 9

- **Rom 9:1–11:36.** The solemn oath in 9:1–5 stands in stark contrast to the end of chap. 8 where Paul ponders whether anything is able to separate God’s chosen people from God’s love in Christ (8:35–39).
- In chaps. 9–11 Paul ponders the one “exception” that threatens to undermine his confidence, namely, the faithlessness of God’s chosen people. Paul expresses deep sorrow:
- “I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh” (9:3 NRSV), because of Israel’s unbelief in Christ.



Romans 9-11

- The unbelieving state of Jews does not mean God's promises are forgotten. According to Hosea (2:25; 1:10), gentiles would be called "children of the living God" (Rom 9:25–26), whereas Isaiah (10:22; 1:9) states that only a remnant of Jews will be saved (Rom 9:27–29).



Romans 11

- To the question, “Has God rejected his people?” Paul gives a negative answer (11:1). Paul then goes on to show that the rejection of Israel by God is partial (11:1–10), temporary (11:11–27), and has had a deeper purpose (11:28–36).
- Paul points to his own Christian existence as proof that the Jewish people as a whole have not been rejected.



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- 11:25–32 Paul reveals an eschatological mystery (11:25). The hardening of Israel is limited in extent (“a hardening has come upon part of Israel”) and in duration (“until the full number of the Gentiles has come in”) (11:25b NRSV).



Romans 12:1-15:13

- Life within the body of Christ is the subject of the first half of this section (12:3–14 [16a]), whereas relationships with those outside the Church are considered in the second half (12:15 [16b]–13:7).



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- In Rom 14:1–15:13, Paul considers the tensions that are present within the believing community between the “weak” and the “strong.”
- Paul describes those whom he calls “weak in faith” (14:1) as ones who “eat only vegetables” (14:2b) and also “judge one day to be better than another” (14:5a).
- The “strong,” although not mentioned as such until 15:1, are surely those who “believe in eating anything” (14:2a) and “judge all days to be alike” (14:5b).
- The “weak” may refer to overly scrupulous Jewish-Christians-- consider diet, festal observance matters of major concern. Paul has to counsel the so-called “strong” not to “despise those who abstain” and the so-called “weak” not to “pass judgment on those who eat” (14:3)—in other words, MUTUAL CONSIDERATION.
- But Paul states that “God has welcomed” (14:1) members of both groups into the fellowship and all are advised to “Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you” (15:7).

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- “Live in harmony with one another” (15:5) and thereby “with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:6).
 - This is the purpose of God’s act in Christ: to unite Jew and gentile in the praise of God (15:7–13).
 - Also explains why Paul writes to the Romans (15:14–17), why Paul wants to go on to Spain via Rome (15:18–24, 28–29), why Paul is about to go to Jerusalem with the gentile offering (15:25–27), and why Paul is concerned about the acceptability of his service for Jerusalem (15:30–31).