

Introduction to Romans  
John Hannah

If you are new or visiting; a special warm welcome to you. We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

**OVERVIEW to the BOOK of ROMANS**

(Romans 1: 1-7)

This epistle has probably played a more important part in church history than any other single book in the New Testament (NT). It was this book:

That led directly to the conversion of St Augustine of Hippo about 390 AD.

The Pelagian heresy of the day was refuted and demolished by Augustine through the exposition of this epistle.

That was used of God in the conversion of Martin Luther, which then led to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

That together with the Epistle to Galatians and Martin Luther's commentaries led to the conversion of John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's progress.

That the Scotsman, Robert Haldane, expounded to start a remarkable evangelical movement at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that swept through Switzerland, France and Holland.

It has been said that if Galatians is the magna carta of the gospel, Romans is its constitution. It is a book, once described by Martin Luther as, "*The chief book of the NT --- It deserves to be known by heart, word for word, by every Christian*".

**The Author:** Ch. 1:1 – the Apostle Paul.

**Time and Place of Writing:** During AD 57 or 58, while Paul was in Corinth during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. For the context, see Acts 19:21; 20:1-5. Paul is on the eve of his departure for Jerusalem. Why Corinth?

Note the special mention of Phoebe (Ch.16), a deaconess at Cenechrae – the east harbour of Corinth.

In Rom 16:23, Gaius and Erastus are mentioned, both residents of Corinth (c.f., II Tim.4:20 and I Cor.1:14).

**Purpose in Writing:** Not mentioned explicitly although the context suggests three reasons.

To let the church in Rome know of his intention to come (1:10-15; 15:22-33) and urge their support

To address crucial issues in the Jew versus Gentile debate.

Possibly to lay a theological foundation for a church that was becoming the gateway to the westward spread of the gospel.

**The Theme:** The phrase in Habbakuk 2:4, "*The righteous shall live by faith*" is the key to 3 NT books:

- Romans - where the theme = "righteousness"
- Galatians - where the theme = "faith"
- Hebrews - where the theme = "living"

**Structure:**

Introduction (1:1 – 17)

Righteousness – Revealed in Salvation (1:18 – 8:39).

Doctrinal in emphasis.

Righteousness – Revealed in Sovereignty (9:1 – 11:36) National in emphasis

Righteousness – Revealed in Service (12:1 – 15:13)

