

## Rooting Through Romans Pt 1 Romans 1:1 Introduction

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney at Porchlight Baptist Church, Started on October 25, 2020

**Romans 1:1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

As we begin this Sermon Series through the Book of Romans, in this message I want to first have an introduction and cover a basic overview of the Book of Romans. But first let me say a few things about this series.

### 1. A have named the series “Rooting Through Romans.”

That may seem strange to some but if you grew up here on a farm in East, TN like I did then you are real familiar with the term “rooting” My daddy raised hogs and every time he would get a new one he would put a ring in it’s nose (similar to these rings that young women are putting in their noses these days) and the purpose of this was to keep the hog from “rooting” underneath the fence or stall that they were being kept in. The word “rooting” means “digging, grubbing, delving.” The idea is that you are really digging into something for a purpose. For a hog they root beneath the fence to try and escape being turned into bacon and sausage.

But, for us today, we want to really root or dig into the Book of Romans with a purpose. It’s not just so Bro. Byron can brag about preaching through another book of the Bible. I’ll be honest and tell you that at first, I didn’t want to preach this sermon series. When the Lord first laid it on my heart to preach through it, I was like “nope, I’ll preach through an easier book.” It is not going to be easy to teach and preach this entire book. There is so much in here that it will be impossible for me to clearly cover everything in this lifetime. But the Lord kept dealing with me on it and I know following His will is much better than following my own so I said “okay Lord, I’ll preach it.” And, here we are.

2. Having said that, **I don’t know how long it will take us** to get through this book. Just as with the Gospel of Mark that we just finished up, there are only 16 Chapters all together; however, each chapter is jam packed full of doctrine, and theology. With 433 verses and 9,422 words, it is the second longest letter of the Apostle Paul’s with 1 Corinthians being the longest by only 4 more verses.

It took us close to 2-years to go through the Gospel of Mark and if the Lord delays His coming, I suspect it is going to take us that long or longer to go through Romans.

3. So, let’s get started with the **WHO** of the Book of Romans.

**1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,**

This letter begins by the author signing his name – Paul. We know that Paul is the Roman name of a man named Saul of Tarsus.

Contrary to what you may have heard and what some people believe, God did not change Saul’s name to Paul. There is absolutely no biblical evidence of that. In fact, after Paul was saved in Acts chapter 9, the Bible continued referring to him as Saul all throughout the rest of that chapter. It wasn’t until we read in **Acts 13:9** **Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.** And although it continues calling him Paul from there on out, it doesn’t mean God changed his name. It simply means because he was an Apostle to the Gentiles (which were mainly Romans) that Luke, the human penman of the Book of Acts, began referring to him by his Roman name of Paul, which is a shortened form of Paulus.

Paul had dual citizenship. He was Jewish citizen but he was also a Roman citizen. We see that in the Book of Acts when Paul and Silas get put in prison in Philippi, the

Bible says:

**Acts 16:37** But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

We also see that Paul’s Roman citizenship was not bought or bargained for, but he was born a Roman citizen.

### **Acts 22:25-29**

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

There are a couple of theories on how Paul was born a Roman citizen.

- Some believe that his father was rewarded with Roman citizenship for helping fight with the Romans in the war.
- Some believe that all citizens of Tarsus were Roman citizens because Mark Antony declared Tarsus to be a “free city” and when he did, they all became Roman citizens.

I don’t know how Paul became a Roman citizen by birth but I believe what the Bible says and it says he was born free, a Roman citizen.

What is interesting is that even though Paul was a Roman citizen, spent time in Roman cities, and Roman jails, he had never actually visited Rome. He longed to go there but had never been yet.

Not only was Paul a Roman citizen but he also says in verse 1, he was **called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,**

We all know Paul’s story of being saved on the road to Damascus where he had legal papers to find Christians and drag them out of their homes, arrest, beat, and imprison them.

The Lord Jesus personally appeared unto Paul and made him an Apostle. He explains his apostleship in **1 Corinthians 15:8-10** **And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

Just as Paul said, he was called to be an apostle for a specific purpose – “**separated unto the gospel of God.**” Once Paul was saved, he had no other purpose but the Gospel. Sure he could sew tents and teach history and all manner of things but his one and only purpose was to teach and preach the Gospel. He himself said to the **Galatians 6:14** **But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.** So, WHO wrote Romans was the Apostle Paul, but **WHO** Romans was written for is exactly what Paul writes in verse 7 **To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints:**

We would refer to these folks as “**The Church in Rome**.” In other words, this is to saved people because you are not considered a “Saint” or a “Church member” unless you are saved.

An interesting thing to note; The Church at Rome was made up mostly of Gentiles. There were not that many Jews in Rome. Naturally, some of the Jewish converts had left Jerusalem and traveled to live in Rome. Paul lists 29 different people by name in the last Chapter of Romans and out of those only 7 of them have Jewish names, the rest are all either Greek or Latin names. Which was suitable since according to **Acts 9:15**, the Lord called Paul to be a **preacher unto the Gentiles**.

Among those Jews mentioned though, we find a lady named Phebe, who was actually the one that brought Paul’s letter to the Church at Rome, and he also mentions Priscilla and Aquilla, the husband and wife team that he met while in Corinth in one of his missionary journeys were now living in Rome and had a church in their home. – On a related note: It is believed to be from Corinth that Paul penned down this letter to the Romans and it is believed to have been in the year 57 AD which was around 25-years since Jesus was crucified.

4. Which brings us to the **WHAT** of Romans. -- If you do much studying at all from other sources such as commentaries, study Bibles, or sermon books, then you have probably heard that the Book of Romans is the most important book of all times:

- The Layman’s Bible Book Commentary on Romans says the Book of Romans **from a Christian viewpoint many would classify it as the greatest letter of all time.**<sup>1</sup>
- The Shepherd’s Notes Roman Study Guide says: “**By every measurement, Paul’s letter to the church at Rome is one of the most important ever written. Indeed, from a Christian viewpoint, many would classify it as the greatest letter of all time.**”<sup>2</sup>
- Verse By Verse Ministry International says this in their commentary on the Book of Romans: **Paul’s letter to the Romans is widely acknowledged to be the single most important theological essay ever written. Romans is literally loaded with essential Christian doctrine, and no Bible education is complete without a thorough examination of this book.**<sup>3</sup>
- Martin Luther, in his Preface to Romans, writes: “**This letter is truly the most important piece in the New Testament. It is purest Gospel. It is well worth a Christian’s while not only to memorize it word for word but also to occupy himself with it daily, as though it were the daily bread of the soul. It is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well. The more one deals with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.**”
- Speaking of Martin Luther – he gives the account of when he was truly saved and says it was reading Romans 1:17 which says: **Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.** Luther said when he read that and realized that the righteousness in which men are saved is not their own but it is God’s righteousness, and he said “*When I discovered that, I was born again of the Holy Ghost. And the doors of paradise swung open, and I walked through.*”<sup>4</sup>

I would have to agree with all these opinions on the Book of Romans, it truly is one of the most important Books for any Christian because it contains so much doctrine and theology. It is the New Testament revelation to the Old Testament types and shadows.

That is why you can take the Gospel of John and bundle it with the Book of Romans and hand them out to sinners and after reading and being under conviction by the Holy Spirit, they can be saved and disciplined afterwards.

#### 5. The **MAIN** theme?

Paul covers a variety of theological subjects in his letter and most would say the main theme was the righteousness of God, and while that is a major theme (he uses some form of the word righteous 51 times throughout the letter, I wouldn’t call it the main theme, I would say the main theme is the importance of the Gospel, which includes God’s righteousness.

You’ve heard me say this over and over in my teaching and preaching but Paul’s number one desire and purpose was the propagating, the teaching, the preaching, the heralding, the publishing of the Gospel. That is why he says this down in verses 15 and 16: **Romans 1:15-16 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

I mentioned this last week in the message but if you want to see how focused in on the Gospel that Paul was, all you have to do is read what he says in **1 Corinthians 1:17-18 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.**

He wasn’t trying to win Preacher of the Year awards, a popularity contest, or to show off his great wisdom or oratory skills, no, he even said this to the Corinthians: **1 Corinthians 2:1-2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**

6. As we have already covered, the **WHERE** is in Rome. -- Rome was the capital city of the Roman empire. It was the largest and most influential city in all the world. Paul always longed to go there – but not to see it’s fine Roman architecture or to study in their prestigious colleges and libraries, but to preach the Gospel to as many lost people as he could, and he knew the city of Rome was the best place to do that.

It wasn’t until very late in Paul’s life that he was able to finally go to Rome but he went there as a prisoner after appealing his sentence and in AD 61 he finally made it, only to spend the next 2-years in Prison there. But, Paul didn’t waste time while in prison, he wrote the Epistles of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon while he was there.

He was finally released and went on a 5<sup>th</sup> missionary journey but found himself back in the Roman prison just a year later. This time Paul would die while a prisoner in Rome. Most believe in AD 67 or 68

<sup>1</sup> Pg. 1, Paragraph 1: Layman’s Bible Book Commentary, Romans, 1 Corinthians. J.W. MacGorman. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee © 1980

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd’s Notes – Romans. © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN

<sup>3</sup> Verse By Verse Ministry International – Romans. © 2017.

<https://www.versebyverseministry.org/bible-studies/romans-2017>

<sup>4</sup> Luther’s Works Volume 34, Career of the Reformer IV (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1960)