

17. Letter to the Romans Righteousness by Faith Revisited (Romans 1:1–7:25)

*Written to a Christian congregation that Paul had not yet visited,
Romans represents perhaps the most comprehensive Pauline treatment
of the gospel of Jesus Christ*

“Come, We That Love the Lord” (hymn no. 119)

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

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| <p>1. Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known.
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And worship at his throne.</p> | <p>3. The God who rules on high
And all the earth surveys—
Who rides upon the stormy sky
And calms the roaring seas—</p> |
| <p>2. Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God,
But servants of the heav’nly King
May speak their joys abroad.</p> | <p>4. This mighty God is ours,
Our Father and our Love.
He will send down his heav’nly pow’rs
To carry us above.</p> |

Occasional Situation of Romans

“FOR GOD IS MY WITNESS, WHOM I SERVE WITH MY SPIRIT IN THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON, THAT WITHOUT CEASING I MAKE MENTION OF YOU ALWAYS IN MY PRAYERS; MAKING REQUEST, IF BY ANY MEANS NOW AT LENGTH I MIGHT HAVE A PROSPEROUS JOURNEY BY THE WILL OF GOD TO COME UNTO YOU.” (ROMANS 1:9-10)

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History of the Roman Church

- Claudius expelled Jews from the city in A.D. 49 over disturbances over “Chrestus” (Suet. *Claud.* 25.3)
 - Paul met **Priscilla and Aquila**, Jewish Christian refugees from Rome, in Corinth (Acts. 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-4) and had relatives there (Andronicus and Junia, 16.7).
- After the death of Claudius in A.D. 54, Jews and Jewish Christians were allowed to return to Rome
- In the meantime **the Church had continued to grow among Gentiles**
- **There may have been some tension between them and the returning Jewish**
- Rome had a large Jewish community (40,000-50,000 in the first century A.D.)
- Jewish Christians may have arrived in Rome in the 40's
 - *Acts 2:10 mentions “strangers from Rome, Jews and proselytes”*
 - **Returning to the capital, they may have spread the gospel message with other Jews**

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Occasion of Romans

• Paul's Plans

- Paul felt that his work was finished in Greece, Macedonia, and Asia (15:23).
- Before leaving Corinth on his final trip to Jerusalem, Paul sent this letter to the Romans with Phebe.
 - *Because Paul planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain and the west, he wanted to better "introduce" himself and familiarize them with "his" gospel, perhaps anticipating that his views had been incorrectly represented by others*

• Purpose of the letter

- Romans addresses **many of the same issues as Galatians**, but here the situation is **reversed**.
 - In Galatians a Christian congregation that Paul had founded had been infiltrated by Judaizers who had brought them under some old practices of the Mosaic law.
 - **In Romans, Paul is addressing a church founded by others and one where Jewish Christians had been significant.**
 - *As a result he is less strident about some of the same principles*
- Tensions between Jewish and Gentile Christians also led him to address what **the continuing role of Israel was in God's plan.**

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Overview of Romans

- **Date: Winter of A.D. 57/58 from Corinth**
 - Paul sent the letter with Phebe, a "deaconess" (*diakonos* m/f, "servant," perhaps here the equivalent of a relief society president?) from Cenchræe, the port of Corinth.
- **Audience: Roman Christians**
 - *a church where Paul had not yet visited, although he knew individual members*
- **Unity and Integrity:** A minority of scholars believe that the commendations of 16:1–23 were added later
 - it is just as possible that the absence of this section in some mss. reflects later editing when the letter was adopted for general use
- **Purposes**
 - **Explain justification—all must live by faith**
 - **Demonstrate that current Jewish rejection of the gospel has not annulled its election**
 - there is one gospel for all mankind, *although God's promises to Israel required that it come "to the Jew first"*

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Literary Questions about Romans

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 WHAT KIND OF LETTER IS IT? WHAT KIND OF WRITING AND
 RHETORIC DOES PAUL USE IN IT? HOW IS THE LETTER
 STRUCTURED?

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Theme and Style

- **Theme**

- “*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.* For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **“The just shall live by faith.”** (1:16–17)

- **Style**

- Behind Romans is over a decade of Paul’s preaching, including the letters to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, and perhaps to the Philippians and to Philemon.
- A “fancy” kind of oratory called “**display**” (**epideictic**) **oratory**
- Meant to be persuasive, Romans relies heavily on Greco-Roman rhetorical techniques, especially **the diatribe format**
 - *pedagogical discourse consisting of conversational style that includes rhetorical questions and strong rebuttals (“Shall x be? God forbid!”)*
- Paul also **uses Jewish exegetical methods**, relying heavily on **the Old Testament** and **alluding to the Jewish temple liturgy**
 - *Exegesis means “leading out the meaning” of a scriptural text, i.e., a close reading and analysis of a passage*
- “Romans was in a way **a summary of Paul’s thought**, phrased with an air of finality as he pulled together his ideas before going to Jerusalem where he would have to defend them.” (R. Brown *INT*, 563)

Structure of Romans

- **Opening Formula (1:1–7)**
- **Thanksgiving (1:8–10)**
- **Paul’s Desire to Visit Rome (1:11–15)**
- **Body (1:16–15:33)**
 - **Doctrinal Section (1:16–11:36)**
 - Theme (1:16–17)
 - Part I: God’s Righteousness (1:18–4:25)
 - Part II: Salvation for Those Justified by Faith (5:1–8:39)
 - Part III: God’s Promises to Israel (9:1–11:31)
- **Doxology (11:32–36)**
- **Hortatory Section (12:1–15:13)**
 - Christian Ethics (12:1–13:14)
 - Relations Between the Strong and the Weak (14:1–15:13)
 - Paul’s Plans (15:14–33)
- **Conclusion (16:1–27)**
 - Commendations and Greetings (16:1–23)
 - **Doxology (16:25–27)**

[Doxology: an expression or hymn of praise]

Teachings and Admonitions in Romans 1:1–7:25

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“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. FOR THEREIN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH: AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” (1:16–17)

Part I: God's Righteousness (1:18–4:25)

- **The World's Unrighteousness (1:18–3:20)**
 - Guilt of the Gentiles (1:18–23)
 - God's Judgment on the Gentiles (1:24–32)
 - The Righteous Judgment of God (2:1–16)
 - Failure of the Jews and the Law (2:17–29)
 - God's Righteousness Contrasted with the World (3:1–8)
 - None Is Righteous (3:9–20)
- **God's Justifying Righteousness (3:21–4:25)**
 - Righteousness Through Faith (3:21–31)
 - Abraham Justified by Faith (4:1–12)
 - God's Promises Realized Through Faith (4:13–25)

God's Righteousness and the World's Unrighteousness (1:18–3:20)

- **Guilt of the Gentiles**, especially because of idolatry (1:18–23)
- **God's Judgment on the Gentiles** (1:24–32)
- **The Righteous Judgment of God** (2:1–16)
- **Failure of the Jews and the Law** (2:17–29)
- **God's Righteousness** Contrasted with the World (3:1–8)
- **None Is Righteous** (3:9–20)
- **Exegetical proofs from the Hebrew scriptures:** “we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin**; As it is written . . .” (3:9–10)
 - “There is none righteous, no, not one.” (3:10; cf. Eccl. 7:20)
 - “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (3:12; cf. Psalm 14:2–3)
 - “. . . With their tongues they have used deceit . . .” (3:13; cf. Psalm 5:9, 140:3)
 - “Whose mouth is full of bitterness” (3:14; cf. Psalm 10:7)
 - “. . . The way of peace have they not known” (3:17; cf. Isaiah 59:7–8)
 - “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified . . .” (3:20; cf. Psalm. 143:2, or Gal. 2:16)

“Law” in Romans (exegesis)

- In Galatians, law had referred **almost exclusively to the Mosaic Law**
 - “*works of the law*” consisted of the ceremonial observances of the law
- In Romans, the ethical purpose of the law is established: law “defines” righteousness by providing a benchmark on behavior
 - “. . . **By the law is the knowledge of sin**” (3:20; cf. 2 Nephi 2:5–8)
 - Consequently, for Jews the Law of Moses is about its ethical precepts as well as its ceremonial requirements
 - **Failure of the Jews to keep Law and be righteous (2:17–29)**
 - Gentiles, on the other hand, have “**natural law**” or **conscience** (inspired by the light of Christ?)
 - “Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, **do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves**, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them . . .” (2:14–15 NIV)
 - **Hence Gentiles too are condemned**
 - Later, following his discussion of justification, Paul talks about “**the law of God**” or “**the law of the Spirit**” (e.g. 7:22 and 8:2) which Christians do need to follow

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Possible LDS Implications for Paul’s Teaching on Law and Justification (exposition)

- **Breaking the ethical precepts of the Law of Moses and the natural law of conscience of Gentiles put one in “the power of sin”** (sc. “a fallen state”)
 - The kind of infractions that the law and Paul mention are similar to those that characterize those who inherit the **terrestrial** kingdom (see D&C 76:103–106)
 - These laws are “**terrestrial**” in the sense that they divide wicked from those who would otherwise be **righteous** (i.e., **terrestrial** from **terrestrial**)
 - Since all have sinned, the atonement of Christ must **justify** those who come to him
- **Those who are justified are bound by “the law of God” or “the law of the spirit”**
 - This law is “**celestial**,” dividing those who are **merely righteous** (i.e., in harmony with ethical law; see D&C 76:71–79) from **those who are holy and like God** (i.e., **terrestrial** from **celestial**)
 - The atonement of Christ **sanctifies** those who press forward in Christ, giving them **eternal life** and **exaltation** (see 2 Nephi 31:20; D&C 76:51–70)

Celestial
“In God”

Law of
the Spirit

Terrestrial
“In Christ”

Ethical
Law

Telestial
“in the power
of sin”

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Pauline Salvation Models

- **Judicial** (8:30-33, God justifies)
 - Also, God “declares” righteous or imputes Christ’s righteousness to men and women (Abraham’s faith was “reckoned” as righteousness, 4:1-12)
- **Participation** (e.g., 6:3-11; 8:14-17)
- **Expiatory** — Sacrificial model: sin is uncleanness, which must be washed or covered in the blood of Christ (also **propitiatory**) (e.g., 3:23-25, 28; 1 Cor 15:3)
- **Substitution** (e.g., Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)
- **Reconciliation** (e.g., 5:6-10)
- **Rescue** (1 Tim 1:15, save sinners)
- **Redemption** — literally “buy back” (Gal 4:5; Tit 2:14)
- Modern LDS Models
 - **President Packer’s Debtor Model**: a man owes a debt he cannot pay, a friend intercedes and pays the debt for him, imposing a few requirements in return (representing the principles and ordinances of the gospel)
 - **Brother Robinson’s “Parable of the Bicycle”**: a young daughter does everything she can to save for a new bicycle but falls ridiculously short of having enough money; her father takes what she has, pays the large difference, and asks “for a hug and a kiss” in return (representing the love and faith we offer the Savior in return)
 - **Brother Huntsman’s “Come and Get a Free Gift”**: A friend has a gift of a large check, which he has waiting for you but you need to come and get it (in other words, you need to put yourself in a position to receive it); Jesus’ admonition, “Come Unto Me”

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Righteousness Through Faith (3:21-31)

- “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God . . . Therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**” (3:23-25, 28, expiation)
 - The first of some 17 passages in Romans **where grace is clearly associated with justification** and, more broadly, salvation
 - The word “**propitiation**” (*hilastērion*) here is the same word translated “mercy seat” in Hebrews 9:5
 - **Probably best associated with the expiation model, where the blood of Christ covers and washes away sins**

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Abraham Justified by Faith (4:1-12)

- “. . . does not scripture say: **Abraham put his faith in God and this was reckoned to him as uprightness?** Now, **when someone works, the wages for this are not considered as a favour (*charis* or “grace”) but as due**; however, **when someone, without working, puts faith in the one who justifies the godless, it is this faith that is reckoned as uprightness.**” (4:2-5 NJB, judicial)
 - Reckoned = KJV “imputed”
 - “Now **to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**” (4:4) — wages are not a gift (grace) but what is due
 - **God as judge considers a person just or righteous (i.e. in harmony with law) because of his faith, not his works**

God's Promises Realized Through Faith (4:13-25)

- “**Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations**, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: **He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**” (4:18-21)
 - Emphasis not just on the faithfulness of God/Christ (as in Galatians) but **in Abraham's response or trust in God**

Part II: Salvation for Those Justified by Faith (5:1–8:39)

- **Reconciliation through Christ by Faith (5:1–11)**
 - Adam and Christ, Death and Life (5:12–21)
 - **Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ (6:1–14)**
 - Analogy from Slavery (6:15–23)
 - Analogy from Marriage (7:1–6)
 - **The Law and Sin (7:7–13)**
 - **The Spirit and the Flesh: the Inner Conflict (7:14–25)**
- Next Lecture:
- Life in the Spirit (8:1–13)
 - Future Glory as Joint Heirs with Christ (8:14–30)
 - God's Love in Christ Jesus (8:31–39)

Reconciliation through Christ by Faith (5:1–11)

- **“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.** Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. **But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.** Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. **For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.”** (5:6–10 NRSV, **substitution, reconciliation**)
- **“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received *the atonement*.”** (5:11)
 - Frequent in the Old Testament, **“atonement”** occurs in English only here in the New Testament of the KJV (although forms of the Greek *katallagē* and the verb *katallassō* appear a more frequently)
 - **Atonement (OT sacrificial model) = expiation** [ritual uncleanness covered or washed away by blood]
 - **Atonement (NT mediation model) = reconciliation** [estranged parties brought back together]
 - **“Atonement” is the preferred expression in the Book of Mormon!**

Adam and Christ, Death and Life (5:12–21)

- “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and **death by sin**; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . But not as the offence, so also is **the free gift**. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more **the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.**” (5:12–15; cf. 1 Cor 15:22)
- **death by sin**: here spiritual death (separation from God) as much as physical death (cf. 8:6; also 2 Nephi 2:19, 27, 9:10–12)
 - Adam and Eve were literally separated from God by the Fall, we from our heavenly parents by birth
 - **In mortality we live in a fallen state with a propensity to sin**
- **the free gift . . . by grace**: again, Paul is increasingly overwhelmed by the miracle of the Atonement, that its effects are offered to us freely

Grateful for Grace: Paul’s Developing Understanding of Justification

- Paul’s use of some words—such as “faith,” “sin,” “law,” “adoption,” etc.—is a moving target
 - *Their nuances and application sometimes change from letter to letter*
- Galatians
 - Justification is by **the faith/faithfulness of Christ** and not the works of the [ceremonial] law [of Moses]
 - “**Grace**” used 7 times, **only twice clearly in connection with justification**
 - “**Sin**” refers to **our fallen, natural state** and our propensity to sin
- Romans
 - Justification is by **faith, increasingly in Jesus Christ**, and it comes **by grace or “as a free gift”**
 - “**Grace**” used 24 times, **17 clearly in relation to justification**
 - Law, both Mosaic and “natural” is increasingly discussed in terms of ethics
 - **Law of Moses = law of sin**, law of the flesh but there are new references to **the law of the spirit, law of God, law of Christ**
 - Still refers to “**Sin**” but sometimes to “**sin**”

Dead to Sin, *Alive* in Christ (6:1-14)

- Example of diatribe format: “What shall we say then? ***Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!*** How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (6:1-2, diatribe)
- “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore **we are buried with him by baptism into death**: that **like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (6:3-6, participation)
 - **Old man of sin dies, the new man or woman in Christ rises alive** [exegesis]
 - **Baptism symbolism** [exposition]
 - Sign or ratification of a covenant of obedience (2 Nephi 31:7)
 - **New birth with Christ as father** (see Mosiah 5:7)
 - *In a real sense, Paul saw those who were justified as being “in Christ” (sc. in a “terrestrial state”), looking forward to the end when they would be “in God” (sc. in a “celestial state”)*
 - **A symbol not only of salvation from sin (“washing” image) but also of salvation from death (death, burial, and resurrection image)!**

Two Analogies

- **Analogy from Slavery (6:15-23)**
 - “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, **you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?** . . . and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” (6:16, 18 NRSV; “slaves” is stronger than the KJV “servant”)
- **Analogy from Marriage (7:1-6)**
 - “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but **if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband** . . . Wherefore, my brethren, **ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.**” (7:2, 4)
 - Now that the law has died, **Christians are free to marry another, even Christ**
 - Jews were not bound by the Mosaic Law when dead; **sharing in Christ’s death frees us from the Law** and allows us **new life in the Law of the Gospel**