

Acts to Revelation: Handout on Romans

The Book of Romans

God's Plan for Man's Righteousness

Writer: Paul

Date: AD 56-58

Place Written: Corinth

Purpose: To make a comprehensive statement of God's plan for man and to correct some problems between Jews and Gentiles in Rome. A possible minor purpose is to prepare the church in Rome for Paul's coming visit.

Emphases: Grace, faith, righteousness, justification

Outlines:

1. Sin (1-3)
2. Salvation (4-8)
3. Sovereignty (9-11)
4. Service (12-16)

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. Need for Redemption (1:18-3:20)
3. Manifestation of Redemption (3:21-8:39)
4. Redemption and the Jew (9:1-11:36)
5. Practical Aspects of Redemption (12:1-15:13)
6. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

Other Points:

1. We don't know anything about the establishment of the church in Rome. However,
 - a. It seems fairly certain that an apostle did not establish the church there (15:20).
 - b. Acts 2:10-11 mentions visitors from Rome (both Jew & Jewish converts) at Pentecost. It is likely that Jews who were converted at Pentecost returned to Rome and established the congregation. However, that is not certain.
2. Paul wrote to a mixed audience (i.e., part of the audience was Jewish and another part was Gentile).
 - a. Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2).
 - b. It seems that prior to this expulsion there were many Jewish Christians in the church.
 - 1) When the Jews were forced to leave, the Gentiles then took over.
 - 2) The expulsion did not last long; Claudius died a few years after he issued the edict, and by Roman law, the edict was no longer valid.
 - 3) Upon Claudius' death, many Jews returned to Rome and rejoined the congregation there.
 - 4) That seems to have been a period of extreme tension in the congregation, for Paul spends the first three chapters demonstrating that both Jews and Gentiles are sinners (1:21-23; 2:17-24; 3:9-12).
3. Characteristics of Romans:
 - a. This is the most formal of all Paul's epistles.
 - b. It is universal in its scope; i.e., it discusses both Jews and Gentiles at length.
 - c. The book is systematic and logical in its arrangement.

- d. Language: great energy, but without vehemence.
- e. The book is profoundly doctrinal—but it's mostly about salvation, not so much about Christ, or the church, or last things.
- f. More quotations from Old Testament than in other epistles; someone said there were 61 OT quotations from 14 different OT books.
- g. Throughout Christian history, it has been regarded as the cornerstone of Christian theology.
 - 1) Luther, for example, is quoted as saying, “If you get Romans, God gets you.”
 - 2) It is often thought of more as a theological “treatise” or “tractate” than a letter.

This handout includes material from, Kippy Myers, PhD, professor at Freed-Hardeman University, Coy Roper, PhD, retired professor from Heritage Christian University, and some material I have developed.