

## INTRODUCTION

### *Why Study Romans?*

Romans has been called “the Constitution of Christianity.” But why should we study this letter? What reasons compel us to devote a year to one single letter in the Bible? David Jeremiah has argued that there are at least four reasons for studying Romans.

*First, there is the intellectual reason.* Romans logically works through some of the toughest and deepest challenges of the Christian life. If you want to challenge your mind with good theology, open Romans and read.

*Second, there is the doctrinal reason.* Many of the doctrines we explore in worship and live out each day emerge in Romans. For example, Romans explores justification by faith, reconciliation with God, faith, sin, grace, eternal life and the Lord’s Second Coming.

*Third, there is the spiritual reason.* Romans shows us how to come to faith in Jesus. Romans comforts us with the Lord’s everlasting presence (see Romans 8). The name Jesus appears in every chapter and about 70 times throughout the book. We meet our Savior in ways that complement the gospels.

*Fourth, there is the practical reason.* Romans helps us to understand, organize and explain the basis for the faith we have in Christ. Romans helped to fuel the fires of the Reformation that turned the church toward embracing faith and grace above works.

Romans was likely written around 55-60AD from the city of Corinth near the end of Paul’s third missionary journey. Paul’s claim for author-ship was established early on in Romans 1:1. No one has ever challenged this claim. Romans is loaded with doctrine and theology. Paul had several purposes in mind for this letter. He wanted to visit Rome. He wanted to engage in evangelistic work there. He desired to know and enjoy fellowship with the Christians in Rome. He coveted their prayers and support for His work. Frederic Godet has written that “*the probability is that every great spiritual revival in the church will be connected as effect and cause with a deeper understanding of this book.*”

Applications...

1. Remember that all Scripture is given by the Lord (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). *Recommit yourself to seeking the Word of God each day in 2010.*
2. Paul was an ordinary man used by God to produce a letter like Romans. *Ask God to use your life in 2010 to bring glory to Him and to bless those around you.*
3. Pray for the message of Romans to illuminate and enlighten your life each day. *Ask God to use this letter to bring encouragement and inspiration to your life each day.*

Donald Grey Barnhouse once observed about the life of Paul that, *“Paul could never forget the pit from which he had been dug out. He always maintained a realistic and humble perspective on his work and on himself.”* Romans shows us with vividness and great depth just how far from God we have fallen and the lengths to which God went to claim, to restore and to redeem us.

Max Lucado has argued that Romans shows us four possible ways for humanity to live...

- as a Hedonist...living only for pleasure (Romans 1:18-32)
- as a Judgmentalist...comparing ourselves to others (Romans 2:1-11)
- as a Legalist...working feverishly to save ourselves (Romans 2:17-3:20)
- as a Grace-Driven Christian...entrusting ourselves to Christ alone (Romans 3:21-25)

Romans rebukes the self: self-satisfaction, self-justification, self-sufficiency and self-salvation. Lose yourself for the sake of Christ!