

Verse by Verse Ministry
A Study of the Book of Romans
Listening Guide – 1A

1. The book of Romans is unique in the New Testament.
2. It's a _____
3. But it's not an _____
4. It's a theological _____
5. It was written principally to raise _____ for the church at Rome
6. Written to a group that did not _____ him personally.

7. It's going to be a place where Paul is going to have to work carefully to gain their _____ because of the _____ between him and the church at Rome.

8. By the time Paul wrote this letter, the Roman church was very well _____ and was renown for its _____.

9. It took a measure of pride for _____ it was and _____ it was.
10. In some ways it even _____ Paul himself
People knew him well.
He was considered the church's chief evangelist.
He was the least of the apostles.
He had now become the most prominent of the apostles.

11. Compare that to the church at Rome.
Pulled itself up by its bootstraps.
Founded by lowly Christian immigrants from Judea.
It took a prominent position in the church globally.
It resided in Rome, the empire, the power seat.
Renown for the strength of their faith.
Learned and obedient of the word, and taught others.

12. (A discussion of Paul's travels)

13. After years of waiting, the church at Rome begins to feel _____ because Paul keeps going back to the churches he founded. Gentile churches.
This church is _____.

14. Paul's got a challenge. He's going to go visit them, but He wants to go on his own _____, and his reason for going to Rome is, ironically to go to _____.

15. Paul needs Rome to become his new base of operations and they have to be prepared to _____ him.

16. This church has a wounded _____ and a bit of self-_____.

17. So Paul writes the single greatest theological explanation of righteousness and _____ ever penned.

18. He provides a church of intellectuals a religious master-_____ unrivaled by anything else in _____ or elsewhere.

19. In doing so he provides this church, which resides at the center of the known world with a foundation from which the _____ can spread to the whole world.

20. He's going to further explain his _____ and his _____ for the church and at the very end he's going to ask for _____.

Romans 1

Salutation

21. This is the _____ salutation of any of his letters.

22. Identifies himself as a _____ of Christ, serving the Lord without _____ or _____ but with joy and personal commitment, not against his _____.

23. He moves into a defense of his authority to _____.

24. Built in to his commission was not only what to say, but _____ to say it to. Paul says...

I have the _____.

He is descended of _____.

Makes an overt appeal to the Jewish mindset and their common background.

Vs. 5 – Building a bridge with the people.

25. Through Jesus _____...

Vs. 1

26. Apostle = someone sent with a _____

Vs. 5

27. Apostleship = _____

28. For what purpose, for what audience? _____

29. He's artfully drawing them to his side by saying, "we have a shared _____ and we have a shared _____".

He continues the charm offensive.

Vs. 8

30. He's working very hard to _____ himself.
-Thanks them
- Says this church's faith is legendary
- Says he's always wanted to be with them
- Says they are not a _____ class church
-He wants to impart a _____ gift
- That his presence and teaching would edify the church

The elephant in the room...

-He has not come.

Vs. 13

31. What prevented Paul from coming? _____ prevented it.
32. He was under obligation to preach to _____. Greeks and Barbarians.
33. He is not _____ of the gospel.
34. **Salvation** = _____ for those by the power of God.
35. The words of the gospel hold the power to _____ men.
36. Save = delivered from the _____ of sin.
37. What is the requirement to be saved from sin? To _____ the gospel (of Christ). No _____.
38. The message must go to the _____ first and then to the Gentiles.
39. First in _____ respects.
a. The Jews were _____ first through Abraham.
b. They _____ it first through the prophets.
c. They _____ it first through Christ into the line of David.
d. They _____ it first through the preaching and life of Messiah.
e. They _____ it first
f. They _____ it first through the apostles.
g. They _____ it first through the Jewish church that originated in Jerusalem.

Chapter 15

40. Conclusion and wrap up returns to the bridge-building attempt to bring the church to understanding his mission and _____ him.

41. Chapter 12 through 14 Paul spoke of righteousness lived out in the life of a Christian. This church has developed itself to the point where they are in a remarkable state of _____ excellence and exemplary _____ and are even able to admonish one another.

Vs. 15

42. Paul returns to his defense of why he's waited so long.

- a. He was first and foremost an apostle to the _____.
- b. It is his only _____.
- c. It is the basis of his _____ pertaining to God.

43. This is Paul's boast; the spread of the gospel into all the world. It stood as a _____ of his work according to God's will. It validates his ministry.

Vs. 20

44. I can come to you now because I'm _____.

Leader Notes – This first Leader’s Guide will be longer than most because it contains an outline of the historical context during the time in which Paul writes this letter, and several handouts which will not be the norm. You can choose to skip the historical context portion of the material during your group time, but you may want to consider printing that portion with the maps and distributing it to your group as handouts if you decide not to discuss it. It is a fascinating backdrop to the letter and an understanding of the context will add a lot to Paul’s message. If you choose not to discuss this portion of the lesson during your group time, skip down to the section heading, **When, continued...** and begin there after the **Lead In**.

Overview

We heard much of the background material for the book of Romans in Stephen’s audio lesson, but in our discussion today let’s take it a little further. We want to understand the historical context surrounding Paul and the time of this writing, and then we want to understand Paul’s mission and how it relates to us.

1. When was the letter written and how does the historical context affect the way we understand it? (**Handout – Timeline to be completed as Leader reads the information below and guides the recording of information. This section can alternately be cut/pasted/printed and sent home with group members.**)

Timeline discussion

A Brief History of Rome at the Time of Paul

At the time of Paul’s conversion in approximately AD 35, Caesar Augustus Tiberius ruled the Roman Empire. After Tiberius’s death in AD 37, Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, more commonly known as Caligula, became emperor.

Take a moment to record these names on your timeline at the correct dates.

Caligula was a friend and peer of Herod Agrippa. This is the same Agrippa named in the book of Acts as the one responsible for the martyrdom of James and the imprisonment of Peter.

Record Herod Agrippa’s name at the same point on your timeline as Caligula’s.

Caligula sent Agrippa to Alexandria, Greece on a mission that was met with contempt by the Greeks who saw Agrippa as a king of the Jews. The governor of the area, in order to balance the scales, decided in response to have a statue of Caligula erected in the Jewish synagogue. As a result of that decision a riot broke out and Caligula responded by removing the

governor and executing him. But as a further result of the unrest in the area, in AD 38 Caligula ordered Jews to be confined in Alexandria to the world's first recorded ghetto.

Record this on your timeline.

In AD 40 riots again erupted in Greece between Jews and Greeks when Greeks accused the Jews of not honoring the emperor. Greeks were further outraged when Jews destroyed an altar in the city of Jamnia. In response, Caligula ordered a statue of himself to be erected in the Temple in Jerusalem, but because his advisors warned of the possibility of civil war, the order was delayed a year and by then Caligula had been assassinated.

Record the date of Caligula's death on the timeline at AD 41.

In AD 41 Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Claudius) became emperor, and after the rule of the crazy Caligula, Claudius's goal first and foremost was peace. He opposed proselytizing of any kind and detested the unrest that had arisen as a result of the instigator "Chrestos" – who was Christ- (a derogatory name that connotes a common slave*). Keep in mind that at this time, there was no distinction between Jews and Christians; Rome saw them as one and the same since the "Chrestos" had arisen within the Jews and it was the (former) Jews (now Christians) who were perpetuating unrest in the empire. Because of his desire for peace in Rome in particular, Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 49.

Record the beginning of Claudius's reign at AD 41 on your timeline, and the expulsion of the Jews from Rome at AD 49.

Despite Claudius's decree, Christian Jews remained in Rome secretly, and grew in number during the reign of the next emperor, Nero, which began in AD 54. By the time Paul writes to the church in Rome in AD 57, a healthy, growing Christian community is thriving there.

Record the beginning of Nero's reign at AD 54.

Now **look at the map** that shows the expanse of the Roman Empire at the time of Paul's writing in approximately AD 57. (*handout- Map 1*)

Compare this map briefly to the maps of Paul's missionary journeys (*handout- Maps 2-4*) and notice that Paul never went beyond the boundaries of the empire. One reason for that is the simple irony that Roman advancements in the construction of roads, and their trade throughout the world, helped to facilitate Paul's travels within the kingdom.

Nero's reign in the Roman Empire was infamous and nefarious, and as is true in most things historical, we remember his failures more than his successes, in this case because the former far outweigh the latter. Though the timing goes beyond our current study, it should still be noted that under

Nero we have the first documented record of Christian persecution. It is helpful first, to understand that this is the Caesar to which Paul makes his appeal (Acts 25) after he is imprisoned in Caesarea Philippi in AD 58-60. And it is under Nero that Paul is imprisoned in Rome in AD 61 to approximately AD 63 (ironically, his only recorded journey to the city).

In AD 64, shortly after Paul is released from prison, there was a great fire in Rome, the cause of which remains hotly disputed in historical commentaries. Regardless of the true cause of the fire, unpopular Christians were made the scapegoat, and the persecution of Christians began in earnest. Paul was subsequently rearrested and remained in prison (as is recorded in 2 Timothy) until near the end of his life, when tradition has it that he was released in AD 67-68 but beheaded on the side of a road leading out of the city. It is also under Nero that Peter is historically reputed to have been crucified.

Record on the Great fire on your timeline the fire.

And there you have a brief, one-dimensional, overview of the historical setting of our study. The impact of this short background is sweeping as you consider the affect the historical goings-on would have had on Paul and his ministry. Solidify these events in your mind to apply to your personal Bible study going forward.

(Alternate beginning point.)

1. When, continued... We know that the letter to the Romans was written in the midst of Paul's third missionary journey – approximately AD 57.
2. Though Paul has never visited Rome to this point, it should be noted that Paul did have a relationship with some of the believers in Rome as indicated in Romans 16.
3. Read Romans 16:3. Who does Paul mentions there?
4. If your Bible has a cross-reference in this passage it probably takes you to Acts 18. Read Acts 18:1-2. Who does Paul find in Corinth?
5. From where had they come?
6. Look at one last bit of information about these two friends of Paul's before leaving them. Read Acts 18:26.
7. Isn't that interesting? It alludes to the fact that Priscilla and Aquilla were well versed in Christian doctrine long before coming to Greece from

Rome. That further hints that the church in Rome was already flourishing! We know from the context of Romans 16 that Priscilla and Aquilla returned to Rome at some point and Paul uses them for some collateral with the church at Rome as he writes.

8. Where is Paul as he writes this letter? You can find a veiled answer in Romans 16:1 where he commends the church at Rome to Phoebe, a servant in the church Paul is currently visiting.

9. Read Romans 16:1

10. Locate Cenchrea - a port city just outside Corinth in Greece on ([handout - map 5](#)).

11. Now look at the last and larger map ([handout - map 6](#)) and find the location of Corinth as it relates to the location of Italy with Rome as its capital.

12. As you consider their relational distance, read Romans 15:25. Where is Paul going *before* he comes to Rome? (Check the map again for the location of Jerusalem and its distance from Corinth.)

13. How would you feel if you were in Rome, Paul was just over the bay in Corinth, and he intended to go back to Jerusalem before coming to visit you (on his way to Spain)? The answer to that question helps to set the stage for Paul's letter.

14. Paul tells the church at Rome, as Stephen taught, that he was compelled by God and that is why, in part, he had not yet been to visit them.

15. Paul says that he was *called* and *set apart* for the gospel. What does he mean? Read 2 Corinthians 5:20 and discuss how the verse defines Paul's job, our job, and the message we carry.

16. What is the gospel? Follow the Roman Road with the group using the ([handout](#)). Read Romans 3:10, 3:23, 6:23, 10:9-10 and 13. (We will cover more of this in other weeks...stick with these verses for now to establish a foundation of understanding.) We will need to understand these truths as we go through the weeks, so begin to work on committing them to memory. Even though we have not read these chapters, Paul will dive right into the first principle before long and will begin to build on that truth.

Summary

We are on mission with Paul. Though we have been called and set apart in ways different from his dramatic experience, we are no less responsible for being at work in spreading the good news. We have to know the good news in order to share it, and we have to be bold in the context of our own history. Despite the political environment, or social pressures, we endure to bring our message of reconciliation to the world just as Paul did.

**Verse by Verse Ministry
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Discussion Lesson 1 A
Handout – Maps**

1. Expanse of the Roman Empire in AD 57



2.

Paul's First Missionary Journey, with Barnabas to Cyprus and Asia Minor c AD46-48 and Its Sequel, the Council at Jerusalem c AD49



3.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey, with Silas returning to Asia Minor and on into Europe c AD49-52



4. Paul's Third Missionary Journey, returning to Asia Minor and Greece c AD53-58

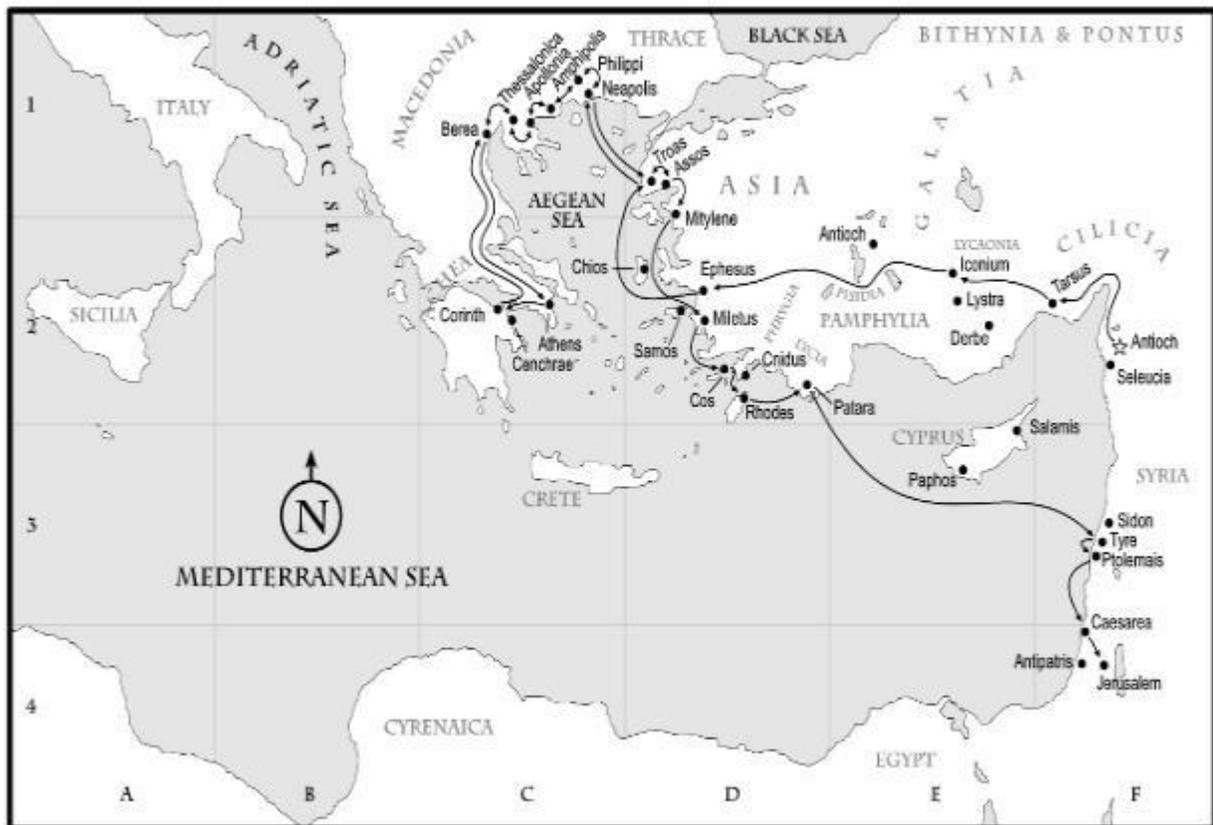


Maps by Gordon Smith can be used without further permission. Please quote <http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/JBPhillips.htm>

5. Paul's location at the time he writes the letter to the Romans



6. Paul's third Missionary Journey, showing Corinth and Italy



The Roman Road (part 1) Defining our Gospel Message

Romans 3:10

"There is _____ righteous, not even _____."

Why is there not even one righteous?

Romans 3:23.

"...for _____ have _____ and fall short of the _____ of God."

According to this verse, what is our standard – compared to what standard do we fall short?

What's it called when we fall short of that standard?

Romans 6:23.

What wage does our sin earn?

But what is the *good news*?

"But the _____ of God is _____
life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

How do you get the gift and not the wage?

Romans 10:9, 10 and 13.

Name the three ways (verbs) listed in these verses in which we can accept the gift of the gospel.

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