

The Power of Romans in the Reformation

It was the Epistle to the Romans that persuaded *Martin Luther* unto personal faith, planting within his heart the seed that brought forth the mighty work of the *Reformation*. Through Luther's commentary upon this Epistle, the life of *John Wesley* was also transformed; for by reading thereof he came to receive *Christ* as his personal Saviour and Redeemer.

The Nature of the Epistle

Among all the writings of the Apostle *Paul*, the Epistle to the Romans is the longest and the most deeply *theological*. *Martin Luther* declared, saying: "*It is the purest form of the Gospel.*"

In this letter is revealed *the righteousness of God*,—that righteousness which is obtained only by *faith*.

Hence the chief theme of the first great section is "*The Righteousness of God Revealed through Faith*" (Romans 1:18–4:25).

The Necessity of Divine Righteousness

The Apostle Paul doth make it plain why it was needful that God should reveal His righteousness, and why man can obtain it only through faith.

He proveth that *sin hath laid hold upon all mankind*, and that none can break free thereof save by the act of God, which is experienced through faith (Romans 1:18–3:20).

The Wrath and the Grace of God

For *the wrath of God* is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18–19).

Both *Jew and Gentile* alike are under this judgment (Romans 3:9–20).

Yet God hath not left man in peril; by the *sacrifice of His Son* He hath made a way of righteousness (Romans 3:27–31).

The Gospel as the Power of God unto Salvation

(*Romans 5:1–8:39*)

Having shown in the first portion that man is justified by faith, Paul proceeded in the second great division to declare the meaning of such justification.

To be justified meant *to be reconciled unto God*, to enjoy peace with Him, and to possess a sure hope of salvation in the Day of Judgment (Romans 5:1–11).

This hope rested upon the believer's *union with Christ*, whereby sin no longer reigned over him (Romans 6:1–14).

Henceforth, *God is our Lord*, and our lives are to reflect His glory.

The Gospel and Israel

(*Romans 9:1–11:36*)

Throughout the earlier chapters (Romans 1–8), Paul had raised the question concerning *Law and Gospel, Jew and Gentile, the people of the old covenant and those of the new*.

This matter becomes the central theme of the third great section:
Hath God cast away His people? Have His promises unto *Israel* failed (Romans 9:1–6)?

The Apostle answered thus:

First, the promises of God were never a guarantee of salvation to every descendant of Israel according to the flesh.

Secondly, Israel is at fault, for they received not *the righteousness of God* revealed in Christ, though unto them the Word of God had been given (Romans 9:30–10:21).

Yet even now *a remnant of Israel* is being saved, and in them the promises of God are being fulfilled (Romans 11:1–10).

Moreover, Paul rebuked the pride of certain Gentile believers, reminding them that *salvation came to them through Israel*, and that the day shall come when *God will again turn unto Israel*, and *all Israel shall be saved* (Romans 11:12–36).

The Gospel and the Transformation of Life (Romans 12:1–13:15)

The Practical Outworking of the Gospel of Grace

In the final great portion of this sacred Epistle, the Apostle Paul declared the practical outcome of the grace of the Gospel.

Having expounded the doctrines of *righteousness, faith, and redemption*, he now exhorted believers unto the *holy living* which becomes them who have received mercy.

[Distinctive Doctrines of the Epistle to the Romans](#)

Through the Epistle to the Romans we learn several key truths concerning *salvation in Christ Jesus*.

1. Justification – The Righteousness of God Declared

(Romans 4:25–5:18)

Justification is that divine act whereby God declared a sinner *righteous* upon the ground of the *perfect atonement* accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross.

It is not earned by works, but received by faith alone, for “*the just shall live by faith.*”

2. Atonement – The Removal of Sin’s Penalty

(Romans 3:24–25; 5:23)

Atonement is the holy work whereby God removed the punishment of sin through the *sprinkling of the blood of Christ*.

By this act, the guilt of the sinner is covered, and fellowship with God is restored.

3. Redemption – The Purchase of Our Freedom

(Romans 3:24; 8:23)

Redemption is that gracious work wherein Jesus Christ paid the debt that was against us, delivering us from the bondage of *sin and death*.

He is our *Redeemer* who hath bought us with His own precious blood, setting us free unto newness of life.

4. Sanctification – The Working of the Holy Spirit

(*Romans 6:15–16*)

Sanctification is the process by which the Spirit of God bringeth the believer's *experience* into harmony with his *position in Christ*.

It is the practical outworking of the atonement within the life of the redeemed, whereby the believer is conformed to the image of Christ Jesus.

5. Glorification – The Completion of Salvation

(*Romans 8:18–19, 30*)

Glorification is not a process, but a divine act of God, wherein the believer received *the full redemption*—spirit, soul, and body.

In that day, all the effects of sin and death shall be overthrown, and man shall reign in the likeness of Christ's glory.

[The First Epistle of Saint Paul the Apostle unto the Corinthians](#)

The City of Corinth

The city of *Corinth* was destroyed in 146 B.C., yet restored a century later by *Julius Caesar* in 46 B.C.

When the Apostle Paul came there to preach the Gospel, it was a great *commercial centre*, wealthy and powerful, and the chief city of the Roman province of *Achaia*, situated in the southern part of Greece.

It was also famed for its *athletic contests*, among which the *Olympic Games* held high honour. Hence, multitudes from many lands resorted thither.

Yet morally the city was deeply corrupt; it became a proverb for *vice and impurity*.

The Moral Corruption of Corinth

Paul described in *1 Corinthians 6:9–10* the catalogue of sins that defiled the people, and grievously some of these had entered even into the church (1 Corinthians 5:1).

Upon a high place in Corinth stood the *Acropolis*, used both for defence and idolatrous worship.

There was a temple of the goddess *Aphrodite*—the so-called goddess of love—wherein about *a thousand priestesses* (who were but temple harlots) served in the name of religion.

At even, these women would descend into the city, offering their vile services unto the visitors of the temple.

The Meaning of “Corinthian”

The very word “*Corinthian*” came to signify *luxury and wantonness*.

To live as a Corinthian was to live in self-indulgence and immorality (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9–

11).

Many of their pagan rites included drunken feasts and unclean revelry, showing how far men may fall when *the knowledge of God* is forsaken.