

Paul's Third Missionary Journey – Third Visit to Corinth (Winter 54/55)

Acts 20:2b–3a

2b he [*Paul*] came to Greece,
3a And *there* he spent three months, [*at Corinth*].

Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 1 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 1–4

Introduction and Greeting

1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,
3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,
4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;
7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Occasion—Paul's Burden for Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you,
10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.
11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;
12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Theme Statement

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." [[Hab 2:4](#)]

The Gentiles are Without Excuse

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,
29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;
 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

The Jews are Also Accountable—There Is No Partiality With God

2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?
 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: [[Ps 62:12](#)]
 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;
 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.
 9 *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,
 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 11 For there is no partiality with God.
 12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
 13 for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.
 14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

The Jews' Misplaced Trust in Their Heritage

17 But if you bear the name "Jew " and rely upon the Law and boast in God,
 18 and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,
 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,
 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?
 24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written. [[Isa 52:5](#)]
 25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.
 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?
 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?
 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Paul Answers the Objections of the Jews

3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?
 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written,

"THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS,
 AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED." [[Ps 51:4](#)]

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not

unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

8 And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.

The Scriptures Confirm That Both Jew and Gentile Are Guilty Before God

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
10 as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.” [\[Ps 14:1–3\]](#)

13 “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” [\[Ps 5:9\]](#)

“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; [\[Ps 140:3\]](#)

14 “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; [\[Ps 10:7\]](#)

15 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” [\[Isa 59:7–8\]](#)

18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” [\[Ps 36:1\]](#)

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; [\[Ps 143:2\]](#) for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

God’s Righteousness is Available to All Who Have Faith in Jesus Christ

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Claim—We are Justified by Faith Apart from Works

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

29 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Faith, Not Works

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” [\[Gen 15:6\]](#)

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.” [\[Ps 32:1–2\]](#)

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Grace, Not Law

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

[[Gen 15:6](#)]

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, [cf. [Gen 17](#)]

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") [[Gen 17:5](#)] in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Divine Power, Not Human Effort

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." [[Gen 15:5](#)]

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Luke tells us that Paul spent three months in Greece before beginning his homeward journey (Acts 20:2b–3a). We surmise that during his stay in Greece (most likely at Corinth, see 2 Cor 13:1, 10), Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. This is suggested by the fact that Paul commends to the Romans a woman, Phoebe, from Cenchrea, a seaport adjacent to Corinth (Rom 16:1–2). Moreover, the Gaius with whom Paul is apparently staying (Rom 16:23) is probably the same Gaius whom Paul baptized at Corinth (1 Cor 1:14). It is also likely (while by no means certain) that "Erastus the city treasurer" (*polis oikonomos*) is the same Erastus who is identified in an inscription as an *aedile* [city commissioner] at Corinth (Rom 16:23).¹

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): pp. 2–3.