

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

ST. CLOUD CHURCH OF GOD
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ROMANS 1:1-7

Who?

- **From Paul: bondservant, apostle**
- **To believers (saints)**

Where?

- **Paul writing from Corinth**
- **To church in Rome**

When?

- **c. 57 AD**

Paul begins his letter by:

- Introducing himself, who he is in Christ, and his mission
- Acknowledging the Roman church's position in Christ
- Giving a brief blessing



Source: <https://www.enterthebible.org/resourcelink.aspx?rid=1110>

EMPEROR NERO (R. 54-68 AD; B. 37 AD)

- **BORN 37 AD**
- **REIGNED 54-68 AD**
- **ADOPTIVE FATHER: EMPEROR CLAUDIUS (R. 41-54 AD)**
- **MOTHER: AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER**

In AD 57, Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus was emperor:

- b. AD 37
- Father (Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus) died when Nero was about 2 or 3, was a former Roman consul (during Roman Republic, 2 consuls with absolute power elected at a time for one-year term, responsible for war, justice, finance)
- Took throne at age 17 when his mother, Agrippina, murdered Emperor Claudius (r. 41-54 AD, nephew of Tiberius). Agrippina was Claudius's third wife (he was also her uncle)
- Due to his youth, first five-eight years of rule he was advised by Seneca the Younger (Nero's tutor) and Burrus (prefect of Praetorian Guard), which established a strong and stable government
- Nero had his mother killed in 59 AD
- 62-63 AD began decline of Nero's rule: claimed equality to gods, encouraged emperor worship, erected huge statue of himself in Rome
- 64 AD July, 9-day fire burns nearly half of Rome. Followed by active persecution of Christians as scapegoats for the fire to allay rumors that Nero burned the city to make way for his own building projects
- 66 AD – Jewish revolt in Judea begins (results in destruction of Temple by Romans in AD 70)

- June 9, 68 AD – due to revolts around the empire and dissatisfaction of the Roman Senate and others, Senate declared Nero a public enemy. Rather than be arrested and flogged, Nero commits suicide

Source: <https://www.livescience.com/40277-emperor-nero-facts.html>

<https://www.bible-history.com/nero/>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nero-Roman-emperor>

ROMANS 1:8-15

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

HOW DOES PAUL VIEW THE BELIEVERS IN ROME (V 8)?

v. 8 – Paul mentions that the faith of the Roman believers is spoken of outside of Rome. Acts 18 tells us that when Paul went to Corinth as a part of his Second Missionary Journey, he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla who had recently come there from Rome as a result of Emperor Claudius’s command expelling Jews from Rome (49-50 AD). Since they were tentmakers as was Paul by trade, he stayed with them and they worked together during his time in Corinth. Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth teaching the word of God. When Paul left there to sail for Syria (Acts 18:18), Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He leaves them in Ephesus where the church meets in their home (1 Cor. 16:19). While in Ephesus, Acts 18 describes a time when they explain more fully the way of God to Apollos who was speaking and teaching but knew only of the baptism of John. At some time they return to Rome, which is their home, and they are living there when Paul writes the letter to the Romans in c. 57 AD.

In Romans 16:3-4, Paul greets Priscilla and Aquila: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.” (NKJV)

From this it is apparent that the couple risked their lives for Paul at some point in

their acquaintanceship, but Scriptures do not record what happened, nor where or when it happened.

Chapter 16 of Romans also indicates Paul is familiar with many other believers who live in Rome when he writes to them. From all these people, Paul has learned of the faith and faithfulness of the saints in Rome.

Source: F.F. Bruce, Romans, p. 16

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2013/06/12/aquila-and-priscilla-a-godly-marriage-for-ministry.aspx#Article>

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/expulsions>

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

HOW DOES PAUL VIEW THE BELIEVERS IN ROME (V 8)?

WHAT ACTION DOES THEIR FAITH LEAD PAUL TO TAKE (V 9)?

v. 9 – Paul goes on to say that he is in regular prayer for the Roman church. He has personally brought faith to and established churches in many locations in Asia Minor. In spite of the demands that such work makes on him and his continued teaching and concern for those groups, Paul makes time to pray for the believers at another church location as well.

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

HOW DOES PAUL VIEW THE BELIEVERS IN ROME (V 8)?

WHAT ACTION DOES THEIR FAITH LEAD PAUL TO TAKE (V 9)?

WHAT DOES PAUL WISH TO DO (V 10)?

v. 10 – Paul states that he is praying for the chance to visit the believers of Rome, that it be God's will for him to visit there.

ROMANS 1:11

**FOR I LONG TO SEE YOU,
THAT I MAY IMPART TO YOU SOME SPIRITUAL GIFT,
SO THAT YOU MAY BE ESTABLISHED—**

v. 11 – Paul uses the Greek *epipotheó* (ep-ee-poth-eh'-o) meaning “long for, strain after, desire greatly, have affection for” to describe his wish to visit the Roman church. Although he has not met many of the Roman believers, Paul uses very affectionate and strong language to describe how he wishes for fellowship with them.

He then gives several reasons why he wants to visit them:

Source: <https://biblehub.com/greek/1971.htm>

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

REASONS FOR VISITING ROMAN CHURCH:

- **TO PASS ON SOME SPIRITUAL GIFT TO ESTABLISH CHURCH (V. 11)**

v. 11 –

Paul wishes to enable the church in Rome to be spiritually stable/established/supported (more mature) by passing on to them something that will contribute to that. The word “gift” is Greek *charisma* meaning a “free gift, gift of grace, undeserved gift.” Paul hopes to pass on to the believers a Spirit-inspired gift that will strengthen them and result in their growth toward maturity.

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

REASONS FOR VISITING ROMAN CHURCH:

- **MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT (V. 12)**

v. 12 – the giving of this spiritual gift that leads to growth would be an encouragement to him as well as to the Roman believers. Together they would enjoy the sharing of their “mutual faith” (such as testimonies, experiences, journeys, questions and discoveries of God’s truth) with one another and find support and inspiration through this.

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

REASONS FOR VISITING ROMAN CHURCH:

- **FRUIT AMONG ROMAN BELIEVERS (V. 13)**

v. 13 – Paul lets us know here that he has been trying to visit Rome for some time but something has always hindered his efforts up to the time of writing this letter. But he hopes to also have fruit in Rome among the Gentiles as he has elsewhere. “Fruit” would refer to conversions to faith in the true God and His Messiah as well as growth in Christian walk as we have seen characterizes Paul’s work throughout Asia Minor.

ROMANS 1:8-15 LONGS TO VISIT ROME

REASONS FOR VISITING ROMAN CHURCH:

- **PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THOSE IN ROME (V. 15)**

v. 15 – Paul hopes to preach the gospel in Rome, just as he has to the Gentiles in many other cities of the Roman Empire.

In v. 14 he describes himself as a debtor to both Greeks and barbarians. He feels great responsibility to preach the gospel not only in Greece, where he is while writing this letter, but also to barbarians. In ancient times, the word “barbarian” referred anyone who did not speak the Greek language. Paul indicates he feels an obligation to all mankind to bring to them the message of the kingdom and God’s Messiah. Paul goes on to include his obligation to the wise and the foolish. The wise are *sophos*, the learned, skilled, and clever. The foolish is Greek *anoétos* meaning those without understanding or heedless/oblivious. All of mankind falls into one of these categories. Paul wants to convey the sense of his all-encompassing responsibility. He wants to share the gospel message with any or all of mankind.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 – Paul describes how he is compelled to share the gospel and why.

Why particularly Rome? Rome is the headquarters of the government. It is the hub of what is political and religious and social in the Empire. Rome was where government

policy was determined, and the city indulged in great immorality and idolatry. To have a chance to be an influence in this significant and active place, possibly even with government officials, must have been very compelling and inviting to Paul.

This is the basis for Paul's letter to Roman church. He says he wants to visit them. But this is not the end of the letter. Although this salutatory beginning introduces himself and his interest in the Romans, Paul is far from finished with his message to the church there. He is now going to go into the specifics of the gospel message. He is imparting to them a spiritual gift through the method of a letter.

Source: <https://biblehub.com/greek/4680.htm>
<https://biblehub.com/greek/453.htm>

APPLICATION TO LIFE

- **BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CHURCH**
- **IMPART A SPIRITUAL GIFT**

Follow the model of Paul:

- Pray for the church
- Give to the believers the gifts of your testimony, what is happening in your spiritual life, what God is teaching you, insights in Scripture, etc.
- Share the message of the kingdom with believers and unbelievers alike

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMAN CHURCH

Paul has laid groundwork so far in this letter for what he is going to write about in the coming chapters. There we will read more about righteousness, justification, the salvation of the Gentiles, and how to demonstrate faith and righteousness by the way we live.