

Paul's Road Leads to Rome...Kind Of



I. The book of Romans is a letter.

A. Written by Paul.

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God [v. 1]

1. A pharisee who tried harder than anyone to earn his place in Heaven.

“If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” [Phil. 3:5b–6]

2. A citizen of Rome, who has never seen Rome.

“So the tribune came and said to [Paul], ‘Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?’ And he said, ‘Yes.’ The tribune answered, ‘I bought this citizenship for a large sum.’ Paul said, ‘But I am a citizen by birth.’” [Acts 22:27–28]

“For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that

somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.” [v. 9–10]

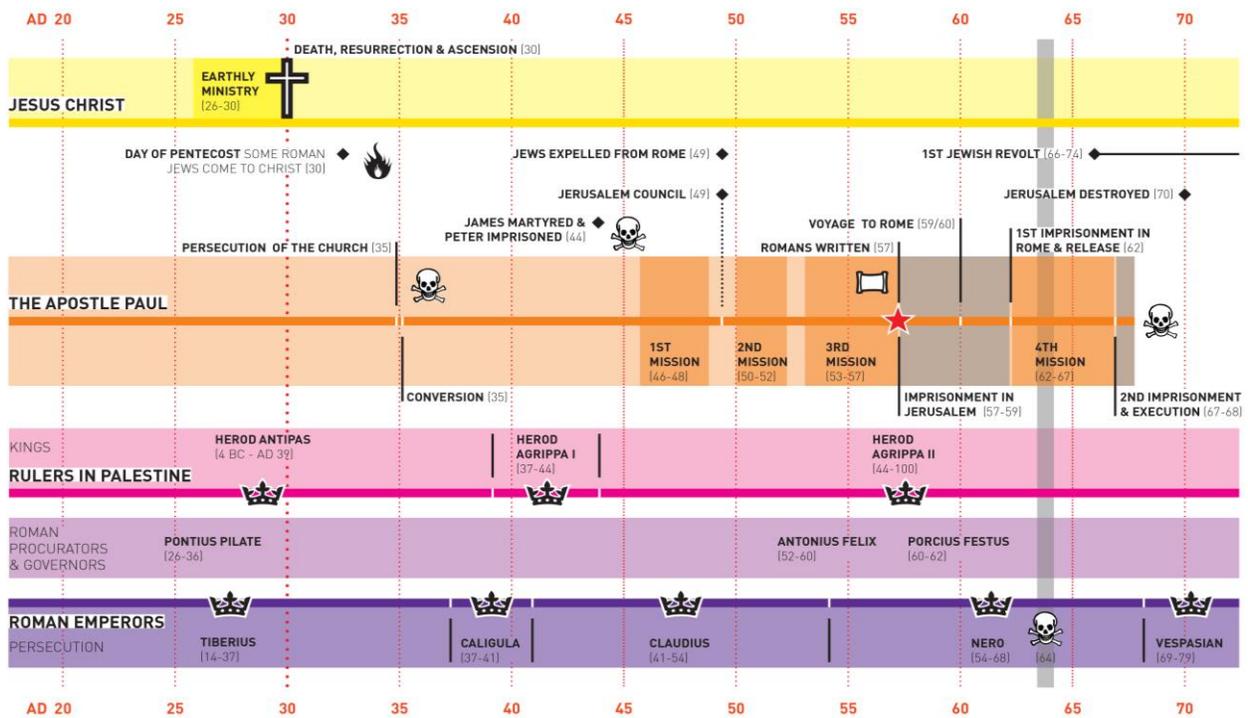
B. Written in Corinth, ~AD57.

Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.” [16:23]



ROMANS TIMELINE

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C. Written to the church in Rome.

“To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints...” [v. 7]

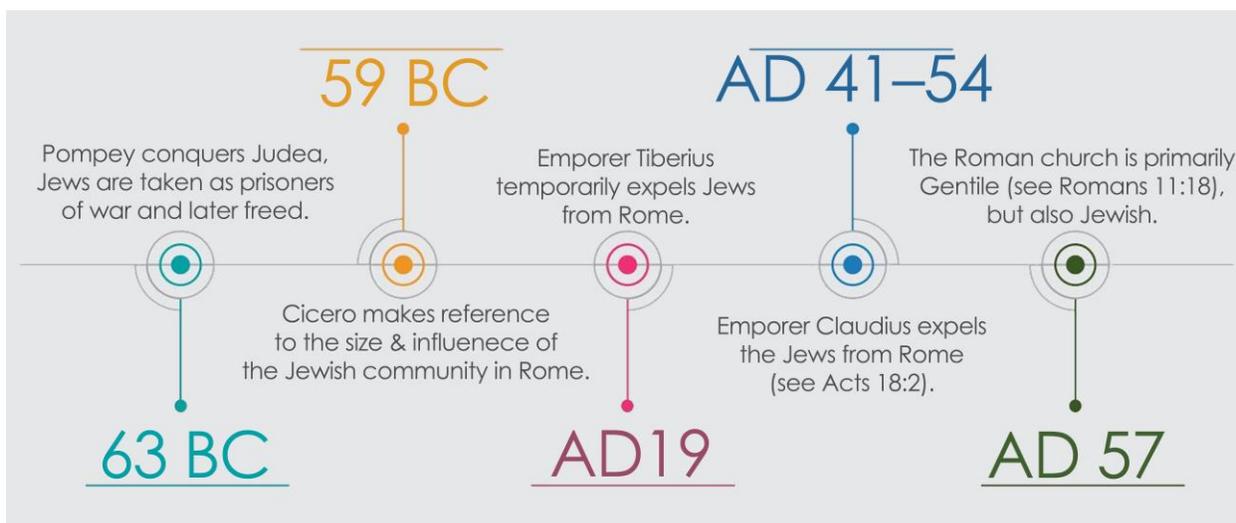
1. To Jewish and Gentile Christians.

“Gentiles were in the majority in the church, and had come to dominate both its leadership and theological tone.” (Moo, 1994)

2. To people who had never witnessed Apostolic authority (Bruce, 1977).
“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place...And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome...” [Acts 2: 1, 8–10]
3. To people who carried the gospel to Rome themselves (Bruce, 1985)
 - a) Some of whom Paul knew well (Whaley, 2009; Romans 16 greetings).

II. The book of Romans is a letter written to people living in the Roman Empire.

A. Persecutors of Jews (Bruce, 1985)



B. Haters of Christians

“To the majority of Romans who knew anything about it, Christianity was another disgusting oriental superstition...The Christians of Rome were unpopular — reputed to be ‘enemies of the human race’ and credited with such vices as incest and cannibalism.” (Bruce, 1985)

Expelled because they “were constantly rioting at the instigation of *Chrestus*.” (Moo, 1994 quoting Suetonius)

III. Written as a treatise on faith and a celebration of the good news of The Gospel.

YOU. ARE. JUSTIFIED. BY. FAITH. ALONE.

“There is more autobiography in this letter than meets the eye – the autobiography of a man who has been justified by faith...[which] if it humbles [the Romans] to the dust before God, it is that God may raise them up and set them on their feet.” (Bruce, 1985)



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IV. The book of Romans was written with great impact and influence.

A. Part of the *corpus Paulinum*

“The way in which [Clement, the secretary of the Roman Church in AD96] echoes its language suggests that he knew it by heart.” (Bruce, 1985)

B. Augustine

“I snatched [Romans] up, opened it, and read in silence the chapter on which my eyes first fell...‘not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.’ [13:13b–14]...No further wished I to read, nor was there need to do so. Instantly, in truth, at the end of this sentence, as if before a peaceful light streaming into my heart, all the dark shadows of doubt fled away.” (Ryan, 1960)

C. Martin Luther

“As he pondered [how God's righteousness could deliver him], his attention was more and more attracted to Paul's statement in Romans 1:17 that in the gospel ‘the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written “the righteous shall live by faith”’...The outcome of his study is best told in his own words...‘This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into [H]eaven.’” (Bruce, 1985)

D. John Wesley

“‘While [Luther] was describing the change in which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken my sins away, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.’ That critical moment in John Wesley's life provided the spark which kindled the ‘inextinguishable blaze; of the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival.’” (Bruce, quoting John Wesley, 1985)

E. Karl Barth

“[Barth's exposition on Romans] has been written with a joyful sense of discovery. ‘The mighty voice of Paul was new to me, and if to me, no doubt to many others also.’ He compared himself to a man who, clutching in the dark at a rope for guidance, finds that he has pulled on a bell-rope and made a sound fit to wake the dead.” (Bruce, 1985)

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