

### 13. The Letter to the Romans

**I. Introduction:** A different kind of letter: addressed to "all God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints," It is a letter of introduction. Paul had not yet visited Rome (1:10-15; 15:22-23). Paul introduces himself in 1:1-6, the longest self-identification of himself in any of his letters. Paul's chef d'oeuvre, his "masterpiece," but it is a real letter

A long letter: A "letter essay," not only because of its length but also because of its sustained argument. Because of its sustained argument, Paul remains focused on the principle point that he developed in Romans 1-8. It lacks the personal interaction seen in Paul's other letters. Even the familiar address, "brothers and sisters," appears only seven times (1:13; 7:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14,30; 16:17)

After the customary thanksgiving, expressed in rather general terms (1:8-9), to which Paul adds an expression of his wish to visit the saints in Rome, Paul announces the point that he is going to develop: 1:16-17. The rhetorical "thesis" of the letter. "The one who is righteous will live by faith," the citation of Hab 2:4 in 1:17 A note on language: "righteous" and "just" A note on theology, the Catholic-Lutheran controversy and dialogue

**II. The Universal Need for Salvation** (1:18-3:20): Gentiles need salvation because of their idolatry and its consequences (1:18-32). Their idolatry (vv. 19-25) Its consequences (vv. 26-32) Jews need salvation because of their self-righteousness (2:1-3:8). The Jews and the Law (vv. 17-24) Real circumcision is spiritual, a matter of the heart (vv. 25-29).

All people, Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin and are accountable to God (3:9-20). The scriptural chain (catena, vv. 10-18) includes a number of quotations from the Greek Bible, which has the Psalms numbered differently from the Hebrew Bible (generally one number more): Ps 5:10; 139:4; 10:7; Isa 59:7-8 Ps 35:2; Eccl 7:20, with an echo of Ps 14:1-3/53:2-4. Through the law comes the knowledge of sin (v.20).

**III. Righteousness is a gift of God, given to sinners who freely receive it by faith** (3:21-4:25). Sinners are justified by God's grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. This is a manifestation of God's righteousness (3:21-25). God justifies the one who has faith in Jesus, Jew and Gentile alike, and the law says so (3:26-31). A note on faith (pistis), pisteuo)

The Example of Abraham (4:1-25): A ring construction that cites Gen 17:10, „his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness" (vv. 3, 22) Abraham's story (vv. 3-22) The story was told for our sakes (vv. 23-25).

**IV. The results of justification** (5:1-8:39): Christ's death is an assurance of God's love (5:1-11). Salvation brought by Christ is greater than the sin and condemnation brought by Adam (5:12-21). The new life through baptism; dying and rising with Christ (6:1-14) Death to sin to which people were once enslaved (6:15-7:6) We still must deal with sin: the provocation of the law and inner conflict (7:7-25). Paul continues to write about the results of justification in chapter 8.

### **Review Questions**

1. Why does Paul raise the issue of homosexuality in Romans 1? What does he say about it?
2. How does Paul go about showing that everyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, are in need of salvation?
3. How are people justified? What does it mean to be justified?
4. What is meant by the new life in Christ?