

The risen Son

Once the roadblocks are over, We emerge into this glorious sunrise. **God's Son has risen from the dead. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** Jesus has died for our sins. Jesus has risen from the dead.

God's Holy Spirit lives in us and guarantees our future resurrection, just like Jesus', into a whole new creation without sin or death. God's Holy Spirit enables us even now to live for God, to do what is right. And God's Holy Spirit enables us even to endure suffering now, just like Jesus.

But what about Israel?

God is sovereign

God is sovereign over the world, including Israel. Actually, **God can do whatever he wants.** And if he wanted to choose Israel to fail, then so be it. But that's not the only part of the answer.

Israel, the problem is...

Paul has been sent as an apostle from Israel to the world. Israel had the law, but they didn't realise what the law was supposed to lead to. It wasn't a law that was supposed to teach how to do good works to achieve salvation. **No, the law was supposed to lead people to Christ. Christ is the end of the law for all who believe.** Salvation comes through hearing and confessing and believing a message about Jesus. "If you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."



Green with envy

Israel had rejected this message. But since it is from Israel to the world, there is hope. **Paul wants to keep preaching the gospel, and drive his fellow Israelites to jealousy.** He wants them to see that all the promises God made to them are being fulfilled through Jesus and to see the Gentiles streaming in to be saved. **Paul sees that through being jealous of the Gentiles, Israel will be saved too.**

A call to sacrifice

So Paul tells the Gentiles that they have a sacrifice to do. It's not a sacrifice that saves them; because God has already shown them mercy. **Therefore they should offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God.** To give our lives to God, and to do what he wants not what we want. This sacrifice especially involves love—love for one another, love for outsiders. When we love, we are fulfilling the law anyway.

A multicultural feast

A really important element in all this is learning to live together as God's people—whether our background is Jewish or non-Jewish. This involves welcoming one another in Christ. As we welcome one another in Christ, and put aside differences over food and laws and days, we are doing what Christ did for us.

As we do this, praising God together, **we are fulfilling all those visions of the OT, where Jews and Gentiles come together under God.**



Together to the ends of the earth

Paul talks about how he has a priesthood. But it's not a priesthood where he stays put and does stuff in a temple. **It's a priesthood where he goes out and proclaims the message of Jesus to the world.**

And Paul wants his readers in Rome to help him spread this message further. That's a key reason he's written this letter. He has spelled out his gospel in detail, and showed why it's so important. And he's done it so that the Christians in Rome can join him in this great vision, to see the gospel of Jesus Christ spread to far-flung regions.

Paul's not alone. He has a great cohort of helpers, some with him, some in Rome. So with the help of the Christians in Rome, the cycle of proclaiming the gospel can repeat...

Roadblock #3 - law

What about the law? Isn't our life all about loving God's law and keeping it and so receiving his commendation?

Well no. For two reasons:

- **We have died to the law through Jesus' death**, it no longer has mastery over us.
- As much as we might try to keep the law, it doesn't ultimately work. Because of sin **the law conspires with sin to bring death.** It's no good.

Roadblock #1 - death

But there are roadblocks on the journey. What about death? Surely it is an enemy of life and assurance. **We are all in Adam, who sinned & died.** And the law makes it worse.

But this has been dealt with, because all will be made alive in Christ. **Where sin increased, God's grace increased even more.**

Roadblock #2 - sin

What about sin? **Should we just keep sinning and God will be gracious to us even more—**

which is a little ridiculous and is no basis for any real life. How does the gospel deal with sin?

But sin has been dealt with through Jesus' death and resurrection. **If we are in Christ, we have died to sin and live for God.** So we can and should surrender our lives to him.

A new life to live

This justification leads us on a life journey. The first thing to remember on this journey is that **it is not about our works. It is about trusting God.** We receive that life by trusting in what Jesus has done for us, not by trying to achieve it ourselves.

Abraham, the great figure in the Old Testament, is the pioneer of this faith apart from works. Abraham was right with God just by trusting in God's promise. Sure, he did great things but before all that, he trusted, and was justified, right with God. Like Abraham, we can only be right with God by faith

The payment on the cross

At the darkest point in the valley are these amazing words, "But now, the righteousness of God has been revealed, apart from Law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it."

There is rescue from sin and judgment. There is justification: a way to be right before God our judge. And it comes through an atonement, the death of Jesus for us!

The cross satisfies God's justice, and all who trust in this cross are right with God.

The dark valley of sin

We enter a dark valley all about dark & distressing themes; human sin, God's judgment, Israel's failure.

The people of the world have rejected God, and gone on a downward spiral. God is rightly angry with sin; he judges it.

Even for the Jews **having God's law isn't enough**; because just knowing God's law doesn't make people good. Jews as well as Gentiles will be judged on a future day.

So God's law doesn't save people, it actually condemns people. God's law is good, but it makes everyone accountable to God, because it shows that **there is no one who does good, no one who seeks God, all have turned away.**

a journey through romans

What is Romans all about?

Is it a handbook of theology about salvation?
Or, is it a letter for particular circumstances?
Well actually, it is both.

A gospel to proclaim

Paul announces that he is a servant, an apostle, a preacher. And he is preaching **the gospel about Jesus Christ.**

The gospel isn't just some universal philosophical message about peace and love. It's a special message gospel that is grounded in one particular nation, the nation of Israel—Mount Zion. Jesus is descended from Israel's King David. And **Jesus is God's King, shown most of all by the fact that he is risen from the dead.**

Even though that message is grounded in Israel, it goes out to all the world, to the nations, to Gentiles, including those who are in Rome. So Paul wants to come to Rome, to encourage them with the gospel and to be encouraged by them.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

These are the theme verses which summarise all of Romans. Romans is about a message:

- Which is powerful and rescues us, ...comes through believing, through faith
- ...Jews and Gentiles are both saved, with some priority for Israel
- ...It is about God's righteousness
- ...It involves the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament
- ...and it brings life through righteousness and faith