

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ROMANS CLIFF SABROE

The Epistle itself claims to have been written by Paul. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1). Although many of the New Testament books receive challenges against their stated authorship, the book of Romans has never had any significant arguments against it. Although Paul is the undisputed author of the book, there is some confusion regarding his use of amanuenses. Most likely Tertius, identified in 16:22 was his amanuenses. A question arises on how much freedom of choice Tertius had in penning this epistle.

The date of this letter is most probably written during A.D 57 or A.D 58 from the city of Corinth. Paul had been intending to visit the church, but at this time had yet to make it (15:21, 1:13). His reason for wanting to visit Rome was to preach the gospel among them and to impart some spiritual gift (1:11,15). Most scholars collectively put the location of the writing in Corinth and date it around 58 A.D within the quinquennium period of Nero. There are variations on the date of a few years; this is determined on whether or not Paul was brought before the proconsul Gallio at the beginning or end of his term in office.

The epistle to the Romans identifies Rome as being its direct audience. “To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7).

Compared to other epistles, the integrity of this writing is not disputed as much as others, however, there is some debate over the last part of chapter 16. There are some who feel that because of the intimate relationship Paul shares with the people mentioned there, that this particular part of the epistle was directed toward Ephesus. This position is not adhered to by most.

The basic theme of this epistle is justification by faith. But yet at the same time Paul is trying to unite a divided church. The church in Rome is made up of Jews and Gentiles, referred to often as “you” and “them” . These two groups are not getting along. Paul writes them to show that “all” (Jew and Gentile) are sinners, “all” (Jew and Gentile ) need Jesus, and that justification is not on the basis of meritorious deeds, but faith. Therefore Jew or Gentile does not have anything to boast about, because righteousness is through faith and justification, reconciliation, judgment, and salvation are from God.