



Study Guide: Romans – Chapter 1

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Romans Chapter 1 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Romans Chapter 1 serves as the foundational introduction to Paul's epistle to the Romans, setting the theological tone and preparing the reader for the detailed exposition of the gospel that follows. It establishes Paul's authority and mission, introduces the universal need for salvation, and highlights humanity's rejection of God despite clear evidence of His existence. As the opening chapter, it frames the entire letter by emphasizing both the power of the gospel for salvation and the consequences of human sinfulness. Readers should watch for how Paul connects God's revelation to human accountability and sets up the argument for justification by faith.

Context

The immediate literary context of Romans 1 is Paul's greeting and introduction to the Roman believers, whom he had not yet visited. This letter is written in the early Christian era, around A.D. 57, during Paul's third missionary journey. Historically, the epistle addresses both Jewish and Gentile Christians, reflecting the tension and unity within the early church. Paul, as the key speaker, writes from Corinth, intending to present a comprehensive theological treatise on salvation. The chapter also fits within the covenant framework, emphasizing God's revelation to all humanity and the consequences of rejecting that revelation, which echoes Old Testament themes of covenant faithfulness and judgment.

Outline

Romans 1 begins with Paul's introduction and declaration of his apostolic calling, followed by a statement of the gospel's power for salvation to all who believe. The chapter then shifts to a description of God's revelation through creation, which leaves humanity without excuse. Finally, Paul outlines the downward spiral of human sinfulness and God's righteous judgment against those who suppress the truth. This progression moves from divine



revelation to human response, culminating in a vivid portrayal of moral and spiritual decline.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1–3: Paul introduces himself as a servant and apostle, set apart to preach the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the human lineage of Jesus, grounding the gospel in history and prophecy.

Verses 4–7: Paul affirms Jesus’ divine identity by resurrection and Lordship, and he extends grace and peace to the Roman believers, acknowledging them as called saints.

Verses 8–15: Paul expresses gratitude for the faith of the Roman Christians and his eagerness to visit them, highlighting his obligation to preach the gospel to both Greeks and non-Greeks.

Verses 16–17: Central to the chapter, Paul declares he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. He introduces the theme of righteousness revealed through faith.

Verses 18–20: Paul explains that God’s wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness because people suppress the truth about God, which is clearly evident through creation, leaving them without excuse.

Verses 21–23: Despite knowing God, people neither glorify Him nor give thanks, but instead become futile in their thinking and exchange the glory of God for idols, demonstrating idolatry and spiritual blindness.

Verses 24–27: As a consequence of their rejection, God gives them over to impurity and dishonorable passions, including unnatural relations, illustrating the moral decay resulting from turning away from God.

Verses 28–32: The chapter concludes with a list of sinful behaviors and attitudes that characterize those who reject God’s truth, including envy, murder, deceit, and disobedience, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of human rebellion and God’s just judgment.

Key Themes



One key theme is the universal revelation of God through creation, which makes humanity accountable for recognizing Him. Another theme is the power of the gospel as the means of salvation for all who believe, transcending ethnic and cultural boundaries. The chapter also highlights human sinfulness, particularly the suppression of truth and the resulting idolatry and moral degradation. Finally, God's righteous judgment is a central theme, demonstrating that rejection of divine truth leads to just consequences.

Cross-References

Psalms 19:1–4 parallels Romans 1:20 by affirming that the heavens declare the glory of God, supporting the idea that creation reveals God's invisible qualities. Acts 17:30–31 echoes the theme of God's patience and judgment on those who suppress the truth. Jeremiah 17:9 helps clarify the depth of human sinfulness described in Romans 1. Additionally, John 3:16–18 complements the gospel's power for salvation and the consequences of unbelief emphasized in this chapter.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Romans 1 the importance of recognizing God's self-revelation in creation and responding with faith rather than suppression. It challenges believers to examine areas where idolatry or misplaced priorities may have taken root. The chapter also calls for humility, acknowledging the universal need for salvation and the power of the gospel to transform lives. Furthermore, it encourages believers to share the gospel boldly, knowing it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes.

Summary

Romans Chapter 1 introduces Paul's gospel message by establishing the universal revelation of God and humanity's failure to honor Him, resulting in sin and divine judgment. It sets the stage for the epistle's exploration of justification by faith by highlighting both the power of the gospel and the depth of human rebellion. Through this chapter, Paul prepares the reader to understand the necessity of salvation through Christ and the righteousness that comes by faith, framing the entire letter's theological argument.