

*Abridged and adapted for the Pathfinder Bible Experience*



# Andrews Bible Commentary

## ROMANS

**Title and Authorship.** Romans claims to have been written by Paul, and no serious scholar doubts that he was in fact the author.

**Date.** The letter was written in Corinth, which helps with the date of writing (Acts 20:1–3).

**Backgrounds.** The Christian believers in Rome were a mixed lot of Jews and Gentiles. A close look at Paul's long list of people he greeted in chapter 16 reveals many names typically bestowed on slaves. This suggests that the message of the risen and soon-returning Christ resonated particularly with slaves and freed slaves. Paul's greeting by name twenty-six people in a city he had never visited demonstrates the mobility of early Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

**Theology and Purpose.** Romans is a letter of introduction to believers in Rome that displays Paul's understanding of the gospel as well as its implications for their communal life. Two fundamental realities frame Paul's argument in Romans

1 to 8. The first is the righteousness of God; the essential character of God is revealed in His response to the unrighteousness of humanity. The second is faith—a faith that acknowledges God's righteous condemnation and accepts the gracious gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Paul has an extended call for holy living intended to undercut every argument and temptation to fall into the old patterns of sin. For believers, there must be a complete change of loyalty from sin to righteousness. Paul moves from the tragedy of sin and rebellion, which undermined the ability of humans to live at peace with God, to the restoration of that relationship for all through Christ. In Romans 9–11 he also confronts the Jewish rejection of the Messiah. Finally, in Romans 12–15, while no sinner can rely on the righteousness of anyone other than Christ, no Christian is expected to advance spiritually apart from the nurture and encouragement of other believers. God has distributed gifts and abilities among the believers, who are to use them for one another's benefit.