

Contents

1	Paul and Rome — <i>June 26–July 2</i> —	5
2	Jew and Gentile — <i>July 3–9</i> —	17
3	All Have Sinned — <i>July 10–16</i> —	29
4	Justified by Faith — <i>July 17–23</i> —	41
5	Justification and the Law — <i>July 24–30</i> —	53
6	Expounding the Faith — <i>July 31–August 6</i> —	65
7	Victory Over Sin — <i>August 7–13</i> —	77
8	The Man of Romans 7 — <i>August 14–20</i> —	89
9	Freedom in Christ — <i>August 21–27</i> —	101
10	Redemption for Jew and Gentile — <i>August 28–September 3</i> —	113
11	The Election of Grace — <i>September 4–10</i> —	125
12	Love and Law — <i>September 11–17</i> —	137
13	All the Rest Is Commentary — <i>September 18–24</i> —	149

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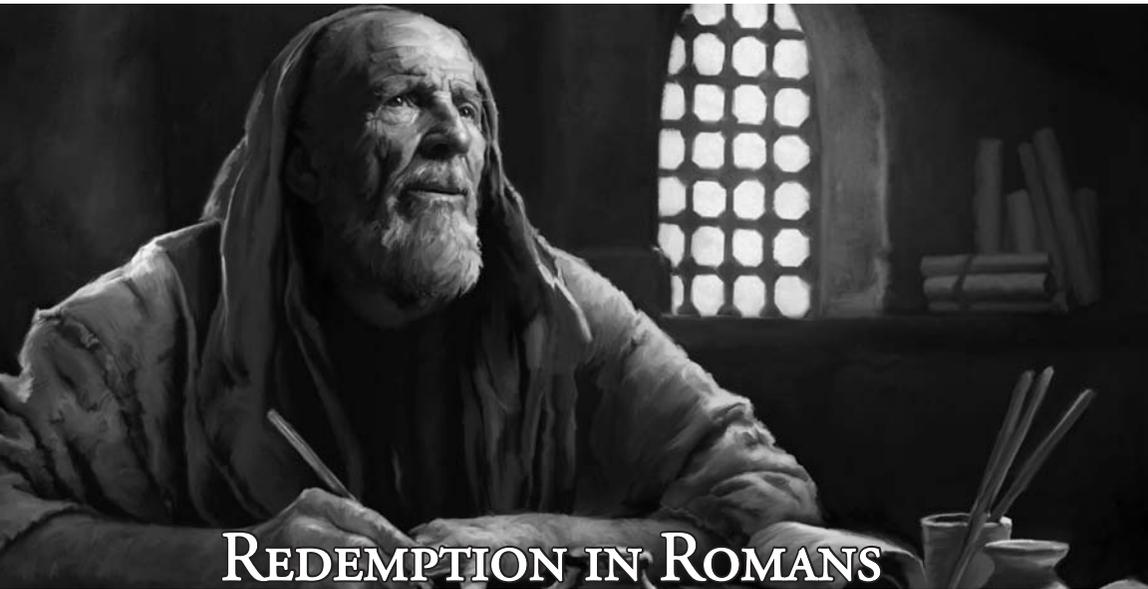
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REDEMPTION IN ROMANS

He had been a monk, a diligent one at that. “I was indeed a pious monk and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can express. If ever a monk could attain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it. If I had continued much longer, I should have carried my mortifications even to death.”

No matter his works and mortifications, however, the monk never sensed acceptance with God, never believed that he was good enough to be saved. His personal despair was so great that it was destroying him mentally and physically, because—believing in the reality of God’s wrath—he feared the prospect of ever having to face it.

After all, who wouldn’t?

Then one day, through his study of the Bible, a text jumped out at him that changed not only his life but the history of the world. “The just shall live by faith” (*Rom. 1:17*).

His eyes had been opened: his acceptance with God was based not on his works, not on his bodily mortifications, not on his deeds but on the merits of Christ. Never again would he be open to the delusions of a theology that placed the hope of salvation in anything other than the righteousness of Christ given to the believer through faith alone.

The monk was, of course, Martin Luther, who was used by God to start the great-

est religious revolt in Christian history: the Protestant Reformation.

For Luther, it all began in the book of Romans, the topic of this quarter's study. It's not surprising that the Protestant revolt against Rome began in Romans (ironically enough), because this book has played a key role in the history of Christian thought. All great movements in Christianity back to the pure gospel and to the theme of justification by faith have found their starting point in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The epistle contains a complete theological presentation of the gospel and of the hope that it presents to fallen humanity.

As we study Romans, we will follow a crucial rule, and that is: we will seek to discover what the words of Scripture were meant to say to those to whom they were first addressed. We will look at them in their immediate context; then, after that, we will seek their meaning for us today. This does not imply that the texts themselves change meanings; it implies, instead, that the truths taught by the Scriptures need to be applied to the present circumstances of those reading the texts.

We must, therefore, first discover what the words of Paul meant to the Roman Christians. What was he saying to them, and why? Paul had a particular reason for writing to that congregation. There were certain issues he wished to clarify, but the great truths that he taught as he clarified those issues were not restricted to only his first readers. On the contrary, these words have reverberated across the centuries, teaching millions the wonderful news of the gospel and its foundational doctrine—justification by faith. It was this light, light from the book of Romans, that scattered the darkness that had enveloped Luther and millions of others, light that revealed to them not only the great truth of Christ pardoning sinners but also the power of Christ to cleanse them from sin. And it is light from these pages that we, this quarter, will seek to uncover for ourselves as we study the great theme of salvation by faith alone as revealed in the book of Romans.

All great movements in Christianity back to the pure gospel and to the theme of justification by faith have found their starting point in Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

This quarter is based on work by Don Neufeld (1914–1980), who served as associate editor of the Review and Herald (now called the Adventist Review) for 13 years (1967–1980) and as one of the editors of The SDA Bible Commentary.

How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question: With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.