

AUTHOR & DATE: The apostle Paul wrote the letter toward the close of his third missionary journey (most likely in a.d. 56), as he prepared to leave for Palestine with an offering for the poor believers in the Jerusalem church (15:25). Phoebe was given the great responsibility of delivering this letter to the Roman believers (16:1, 2).

BACKGROUND: Rome was the capital and most important city of the Roman Empire. It was founded in 753 b.c., but is not mentioned in Scripture until NT times. In Paul’s day, the city had a population of over one million people, many of whom were slaves. Rome boasted magnificent buildings, such as the Emperor’s palace, the Circus Maximus, and the Forum, but its beauty was marred by the slums in which so many lived. Some of those converted on the Day of Pentecost probably founded the church at Rome (cf. Acts 2:10). Paul had long sought to visit the Roman church, but had been prevented from doing so (1:13). In God’s providence, Paul’s inability to visit Rome gave the world this inspired masterpiece of gospel doctrine. Paul’s primary purpose in writing Romans was to teach the great truths of the gospel of grace to believers who had never received apostolic instruction.

(MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). The MacArthur study Bible: New American Standard Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

► **“Faith” and “the faith” ...**

- “Faith” means to believe in, to have trust in, to rely on.
- “The faith” is what we believe. The body of doctrine and theology that we hold to as set forth through the Holy Scriptures.
- We need to understand and embrace both to come to “the obedience of faith.”

WHERE WERE YOU TWENTY YEARS AGO?

