

# ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CHURCH(ES)

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At least three household churches existed in Rome by the time Paul wrote to the imperial city: Romans **16:5**, 14, 15.

Early churches outside Palestine had varying proportions of the following groups: Jews, proselytes, God-fearers (σεβόμενοι, *sebomenoi*), Gentiles/Greeks.

I. Converts from Pentecost: Acts **2:10**

II. Jews returning after the relaxation of Claudius' edict of expulsion in A.D. 49 (Claudius died in A.D. 54): Romans **16:3-5a** and Acts **18:2**

III. Migration of converts from other Gentile areas: Epaphroditus (Romans **16:5a**); Urbanus (Romans **16:9a**); Rufus (Romans **16:13**). Especially would this be the case among Jewish converts; Hellenistic Jews were largely involved in commerce and located in inland cities along the trade routes as well as in coastal cities at the terminals of sea lanes. (This entry may overlap with II.)

IV. Interchurch activity: Phoebe (Romans **16:1-4**); Aquila and Prisca (Romans **16:3-5a**; Acts **18:2-4**, 24-28; 1 Corinthians **16:9**)

V. Apostolic input

A. Peter did not found the Roman church(es).

1. Peter was still in Jerusalem in A.D. 49 (Acts **15**), as far as New Testament records go.

2. Paul made a practice of not building on another's foundation (Romans **15:20**).

B. Paul did not found the church: **1:6-15**; **11:13**; **15:20**, 24, 28; cp. Acts **19:21**; **23:11**.