

Preface to Second Edition:

Paul's Gospel Among the Gentiles

Romans was written in the mid- to late fifties. Romans 1:8–15 and 15:14–33 are the key passages establishing the setting. Having completed his three year ministry in Ephesus, Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, “ministering unto the saints” (15:25). He was carrying relief “for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem” from various churches of the Gentiles which he had planted (15:22–29). (See Acts 24:17 for the only reference in Acts to the alms brought to Jerusalem on this trip.) After passing through Macedonia he “came into Greece” (or Achaia), where he “spent three months” (Acts 20: 1–3). This lengthy stopover provided Paul with time to write his masterpiece. Details of the argument for the date and setting will be found in the new book discussed below.

At one time Paul found it necessary to lay before the apostles at Jerusalem the gospel he preached among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2). He does the same thing in the epistle to the Romans. He lays before the saints at Rome the gospel he was preaching among the Gentiles. But this time the gospel Paul preached was preserved for all posterity in a marvelous letter which makes our hearts sing with joy and gives us courage to endure.

Romans 1:16f gives us the subject of the epistle in a nut-shell. The rest is elaboration. Paul's epistle to the Romans is the fullest exposition of the gospel plan of salvation with all its ramifications found anywhere in the word of God.

Romans, therefore, must be valued as a precious treasure by every disciple of Jesus Christ. Christians dare not try to live without it. The study of Romans provides a wonderful opportunity to get deeper into the mind of God, both for our own good and for the good we may be able to do for others as we speak this good news into the twentieth and (if the Lord wills) the twenty-first centuries.

Let us approach this study with the zeal and diligence of a treasure hunter; and may the God of heaven open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things from his word.

...

L. A. Mott, Jr.
P. O. Box 17334
Jacksonville, FL 32245
1998

(2)

Lesson One Romans 1—2

Introductory Portion Leading to Announcement of Subject Romans 1:1—15

The Apostolic Salutation Romans 1:1—7

Paul's Position Defined (1)

Paul begins by defining his own position, giving his credentials, describing the capacity in which he writes. What are the three things he says about himself?

The Gospel Described (2—3)

Paul's definition of his own position leads to a description of the gospel. Two things are said about it:

1. What is the relation of the gospel to the Old Testament?
2. What is its subject?

The Son Described (3—5)

1. Paul goes further, describing God's Son in verses 3—5. Explain the dual nature of the Son as brought out in these verses.
2. How does Paul define his own ministry in verse 5?

Position of the Romans (6)

After defining his own position Paul comes to the position of the Romans. How have he and they come into relation to each other?

Address and Greeting (7)

(3)

Paul's Desire for the Roman Christians Romans 1:8—15

1. This section was headed “Paul’s Eagerness to Preach in Rome” in the first edition. But Paul had a reason for wanting to preach the gospel in Rome. Gather up the various expressions of purpose in these verses [paying special attention to the end in view in v. 11], and explain as fully as possible what Paul wanted to do for the Roman Christians.

2. In *TR* I have argued that this section is also a clue to Paul’s purpose in Romans. For he was not sure he would ever reach Rome (see Acts 20:22f; 21:4, 10—14). He would therefore do as much as he could for the Roman Christians in this letter. Judging from the desire for the Roman Christians expressed in these verses, what did Paul hope to do for them through this letter? And at the same time: What do we stand to gain by reading Romans?

Explanation of Paul’s Readiness, Leading to Announcement of the Subject of the Epistle Romans 1:16f

1. Explain the reasons for Paul’s eagerness to preach in Rome positively (11, 13) and negatively (16a).

2. Why was Paul “not ashamed of the gospel”?

3. What reason is given that the gospel is God’s power to save the believer? (17).

Observe that the language of this verse will be further explained when Paul returns to the thought and gives an elaboration of it at 3:21ff. Work hard to understand this language, for it states the subject of the epistle in a nutshell. The rest of the epistle is a full exposition of this summary statement.

(4)

A World Under Sin and Condemnation Romans 1:18—3:20

Observe the connection (“For” in v. 18) with the preceding. Paul is giving the reason God has revealed in the gospel a righteousness which can be obtained through faith.

The Revelation of Divine Wrath Against All Humanity Romans 1:18—31

My older outlines head this section: “The Guilt of the Gentiles.” But in light of the apparently all inclusive language at the beginning (v. 18), I am reconsidering. Perhaps Paul begins with a general indictment and then focuses specifically on the Jews. See which analysis you think is correct.

1. Why is all humanity in need of the gospel? Note “For” in verse 18.
2. Distinguish three stages in the development of the human predicament—the first in vv. 19—20, the second in vv. 21—23 and the third in vv. 24—32.
With regard to the third point, observe the repetition of the thought.
3. Consider this passage as a basis for understanding the modern world.
 - 3a. When these conditions are seen today, is it a “new morality”?
 - 3b. How does God see our world today?

The Judgment of God: None Exempt by Respect of Persons Romans 2:1—16

“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (1:18). But some thought they were exceptions. The Jews, of course, considered themselves to be superior or special because of their privileged

(5)

position. But they were not the only ones. Greeks also considered themselves special and elite. For the Jews, everyone who was not a Jew was a Gentile. But the Greeks also had a term that reflected their own superior status. Anyone who was not a Greek was a Barbarian, which simply meant non-Greek as Gentile meant non-Jewish.

The main point of Romans 2:1–16 is that no favoritism or partiality would characterize the judgment of God. The principles of God's judgment would allow none to escape. Paul is closing every escape route, and finally even that of the Jew (2:17–29). Not even he would escape the divine judgment.

Conclusion with Regard to Judges (1)

My first edition took the view that the guilt of the Gentiles was discussed in 1:18–32 and the guilt of the Jews in chapter 2, the Jew being already in Paul's mind in the opening verses. But consider: Does the universal language of both 1:18 and 2:1 agree with that analysis?

Furthermore, 2:1 is a conclusion ("Wherefore") from what preceded. Does that not imply that the person addressed is already included in the indictment of 1:18–32?

See the new heading for 2:1–16 and the analysis that follows. Again: Weigh the arguments and see which analysis of these passages you think is correct.

Common Knowledge with Regard to the Nature of God's Judgment (2)

Miscalculations (3f)

What could this man that judges another, while guilty of the same things, be thinking? Discuss the miscalculations of such a man, the illusion that characterized his mind.

The Harsh Reality: A Treasure of Wrath in a Judgment According to Works and Without Favoritism (5–11)

1. Paul strips away the illusion. Escape the judgment (3)? Hardly. Show how this man had totally miscalculated (5).

2. What are the principles of God's judgment, which strip away the illusion of such a man? (6–11).

(6)

Judgment Without Respect of Persons Elucidated (12–16)

1. Summarize the way God's judgment takes into consideration special circumstances so that it may be without "respect of persons."
2. What points indicate that no one is totally without law?

Special Application of the Principles of Judgment to the Jews Romans 2:17–29

Paul is demonstrating that "all" (in 1:18) means all. Not even the Jews will escape the judgment of God.

The Proud Boast of the Jew (17–20)

Explain the basis of the Jew's confidence—his reason for thinking he would receive special (and favored) treatment in the judgment.

Indictment and Conviction of the Jew (21–24)

How had the Jew failed? Show how the principles of God's judgment (stated in 1–16) are brought to bear upon the Jew in this passage.

The Profit of Circumcision (25–27)

1. Background: What was the significance of circumcision, according to Genesis 17:10–14?
2. How had circumcision lost its meaning among many Jews?
3. On the other hand, how might the uncircumcised man be better off than the Jew?

The Real Jew (28f)

1. Who, according to Paul, was the real Jew?
2. Discuss the contrast between letter and spirit, and in particular: Does the possession of the letter (27, 29) indicate a person obedient and devoted to the law of God? Draw your answer from the whole context (25–29).

(7)

Lesson Two Romans 3

Question Anticipated and Answered: Vindication of the Faithfulness and Righteousness of God Romans 3:1–8

1. Explain how the question anticipated in verse 1 arises out of what Paul has just said (2:17–29, especially 25–29).

2. Then make an effort to think through the whole passage and to understand how one statement grows out of another, so that the whole passage becomes a vindication of God.

My outline (from *TR*) follows:

Conclusion from Preceding Passage Anticipated (1)

Answer: The Primary Advantage of the Jew (2)

Additional Objection: This Advantage Nullified by Unbelief (3)

Answer: God's Faithfulness Remains (4)

Further Inference from Paul's Answer: God Unrighteous to Punish Sin (5)

Answer: Consequences of this Reasoning (6–8)

(8)

**Summary Conclusion:
The Whole World Guilty of Sin
and Liable to Punishment
Romans 3:9—20**

Summary (9)

This verse summarizes what Paul has accomplished in the body of material since 1:18. What was Paul doing in that section?

Accordance with the Old Testament (10—18)

What is the purpose of the Old Testament references in verses 10—18?

Conclusion (19f)

1. For what twofold purpose does the Old Testament speak in such passages? (19).

Grk. *hupodikos* (under judgment) means “liable to judgment or punishment” (Arndt-Gingrich, 844) and refers to “one who has lost his suit” (Grimm-Thayer, 643).

2. Why is every mouth stopped and all the world brought under judgment by Old Testament scripture? (20a).

3. What reason is given that no flesh shall be justified (accounted righteous) by the works of the law? (20b).

It is extremely important to understand Paul’s conclusion in verses 19f. It will enable one to understand the principles of justification by works of law, and that is essential to understanding the contrasting system of righteousness revealed in the gospel. So note carefully the relation of one thing to another in these two verses.

(9)

The Way of Salvation

Romans 3:21—4:25

The bad news is followed by the good news. Paul has not painted the dark picture of man's desperate plight and stripped away all hope of being justified on the ground of our own deeds only to leave us in despair. A gracious God has provided a way out, a way to attain righteousness before God in spite of our sins. That is the marvelous news revealed in the gospel of Christ.

The Righteousness of God

Revealed in the Gospel

Romans 3:21—26

Having demonstrated that all humanity stands condemned on the basis of law and in desperate need of forgiveness, Paul is now ready to explain the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. It is a righteousness that has been manifested "apart from the law"; that rests on a different basis altogether; that has been made available and is possible for sinful men.

1. Study Paul's exposition of gospel righteousness in these verses and explain the principles of this righteousness as contrasted with the righteousness of the law. Your explanation should take into consideration all the descriptive clauses and phrases attached to "a righteousness of God" (21) and therefore helping to explain this righteousness; for example:

1a. It is a righteousness of God manifested "apart from the law":
Significance?

1b. It was "witnessed by the law and the prophets": Significance?

1c. It is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ."
Consider especially the interchangeable language of 4:6—8 in your explanation of righteousness through faith. But see also Philippians 3:9.

1d. "Unto all them that believe": What explanation is attached to explain why righteousness must rest on the same basis for all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles?

1e. The meaning of the word "justified" and the various terms associated with it in verse 24—"freely," "grace," "redemption."

(10)

2. How is “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (24) elaborated in verses 25 & 26? And in particular:

2a. Explain the necessity of the cross as brought out in this text.

2b. What is the significance of “propitiation,” “through faith,” and “in his blood”? See especially Leviticus 17:11 for the last.

2c. Paul takes us right inside the mind of God. What was the divine purpose of the cross?

2d. Observe: The righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is a righteousness for sinners—not sinless (innocent) persons. What was necessary in order that sinful man might be righteous before God?

Besides a careful study of this text, a consideration of parallel passages will enable you to understand and explain this righteousness. See Jeremiah 50:20, Philippians 3:9, and especially the parallel expressions in Romans 4:6—8.

Consequences of Righteousness Through Faith Romans 3:27—31

See if you can distinguish and summarize three results (or consequences) that follow from the way of righteousness revealed in the gospel—one in 27f, one in 29f, one in 31.