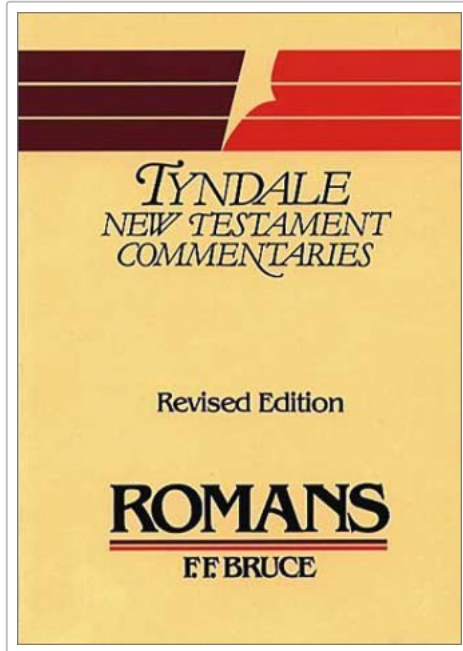


The letter of Paul to the Romans: an introduction and commentary

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(The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans)



Even in this hard times of heavy work load, I have spared some time to the pleasure and enrichment of reading this biblical commentary. It is going to be one of the most important resource to my final paper.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

No man can read it too oft or study it too well; for the more it is studied the easier it is, the more it is chewed the pleasanter it is, and the more groundly it is searched the preciouser things are found in it, so great treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein. [William Tyndale, 9]

INTRODUCTION

I. THE OCCASION OF THE LETTER

F. F. B. in this part briefly summarizes Pauls life situation and conditions of writing the letter. For deeper study of this theme i recommend Pauls biography written by John Pollock.

II. CHRISTIANITY AT ROME

All roads led to Rome. Christian community in Rome was established only two or three years after crucifiction, if not by the following autumn (15). The fourth-century Latin father Ambrosiaster notes, that Romans had embraced christian faith “according to Jewish rite, without seing any sign of mighty works or any of the apostles” [15–16].

Christian community went through dispersion after Claudiuse's expulsion of Jews. Historician Suetonius remarked “in his Life of Claudius, that Claudius ‘expelled the Jews from Rome because they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Chrestus (impulsore Chresto)’”. [16]

However, expulsion edict hasn't last for very long.

Less than three years after the death of Claudiium Paul can write to the Christians of Rome and speak of their faith as a matter of universal knowledge. [17]

Note: We can assume, that Paul's close friends Aquila and Priscilla were Christians before they met Paul and that they were original believers of Roman church.

Roman community had its regular Christian meetings in private house, as was usual in primitive Church times. Early christianity was publicly prejudiced as oriental superstition. When Nero looked for scapegoats against which he could divert the popular suspicion against him (may be unjust), he found them ready to hand. Christians were unpopular – reputed to be “enemies of the human race” [Tacitus, 19].

The blood of the martyrs, however, in Tertullian's words, proved to be seed. Persecution and martyrdom did not extinguish Christianity in Rome.

[20]

III. ROMANS AND THE PAULINE CORPUS

T. W. Manson believes, that Letter to the Romans was designed in order to circulate between churches, as was usual in antiquity. Manson holds an opinion, that first fifteen chapters were designed to Romans and the 16th chapter was added to a copy which was sent to ephesus. F. F. B. finds this improbable.

The copy of the letter was received by Romans, treasured and recopied. The echo of Pauline specific language in Clement's letter to the church of Corinth (AD 96) proves his well acquaintance of the letter.

It is clear from Clement's letter that by AD 96 some Paul's letters had begun to circulate in other quarters than those to which they were sent in the first instance.

...

From the beginning of the second century Paul's letters circulated as a collection – the corpus Paulinum – and not singly.

[21]

... there is an innate fitness in the accordance of this position of primacy to a letter which, above all others, deserves to be called ‘the gospel according to Paul’.

[23]

IV. THE TEXT OF ROMANS

a. English Version

The text on which commentary is based is that of RSV (1971 edition); but it can be used equally well with the NEB (1970) or the NIV (1978). [23]

b. The early Pauline text

As soon as “the corpus Paulinum was compiled at the beginning of the 2nd century, Romans, like each of the other Pauline letters, no longer circulated separately but as a component part of the corpus.” [23–24]

From the end of the second century can we distinguish between two main text versions – the eastern and the western.

This western text goes back to the popular and rather corrupt text of the second century; the relative purity of the eastern text is due, Zunz thinks, to the constant application to it of the editorial techniques of Alexandrian textual scholarship.

[25]

c. Early recension of Romans

Several evidences indicates two shorter editions of the letter.

1. The beginning of the letter.

Origen's and Ambrosiaster's commentary were both based on the text, which lacked concrete addressing “to Rome”, but was addressed “to all who are in love of God”.

It looks as if the ancestors of the codices D and FG lacked ‘in Rome’ in 1:7 and 1:15 alike. That the omission was not exclusively western is indicated by the fact that Origen's text also lacked ‘in Rome’ in 1:7. [26]

2. The end of the letter.

Several evidences points to the fact, that edition which circulated between ancient churches did not only lack addressing “to Rome”, but also ended in 14,23. For example Tertulian haven't quoted from 15th chapter nor single time in his five books *Against Marcion* even though they contain strong anti-marcionic ammunition. Therefore everything points to Marcion, who probably omitted 15th chapter. Omission of 16th chapter is logical, for it allows to use letter in Christendom outward of the gates of Rome.

... in the textual history of Romans witnesses to the omission of the Roman reference in 1:7, 15 belong to the tradition which attests the fourteen-chapter edition, not the fifteen chapter edition.

[29]

But was Marcion responsible for the lack of addressing? We could assume, that when his teaching was repudiated in Roman church, he might have judged it unworthy to mention them in his text of Apostolikon, but this speculation remains unproved.

V. ROMANS AND THE PAULINE GOSPEL

Comparision of Paul's letters indicates, that Romans are latest of them. This conclusion is not only based on external historical evidence, but also on comparison of the letters.

Galatians, according to J. B. Lightfoot, is related to Romans ‘as the rough model to the finished statue’.

...

Romans is not polemical: Paul writes to gain the good-will and co-operation of a flourishing church not personally known to him.

[31]

Paul treats the question of the law of Moses in both Romans and Galatians.

His teaching about the role of the law is essentially the same in both letters, but he treats it more dismissively in Galatians than in Romans.

Paul had to oppose to certain teachers in the letter to Galatians, “those teachers believed and taught that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, but Messiah was for Israel.” [31]

In Paul's eyes those other requirements were not so much an addition to the pure gospel as a perversion of it.

[32]

Paul believed, that emphasis of the law in the teaching of the gospel is nullifying “the principle that God's salvation is bestowed by his sheer grace and recieved by faith alone.” [32]

It implied, moreover, that the age of law was still running its course; if so, then the age of the Messiah had not yet arrived, and Jesus, accordingly, was not the Messiah.

[32]

But in this way the doctrine f a crucified Messiah, which had once been such a stone of stumbling to Paul, became the corner-stone of his faith and preaching.

...

But it cannot be too strongly emphasized that Paul's theology was not based primarily on study or speculation. It was based primarily on the Damascus-road revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12, 16) and the flooding of his inner being with divine love through the impartation of the Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

[36–37]

Reconciliation, union with Christ, the indwelling Spirit, instatement as sons and daughters of God, joint-membership of the one body, sanctification, the hope of glory – these are all interrelated in Paul's thought; none occupies a position of centrality in relation to the others.

...

The term 'salvation' includes, as Anderson Scott has pointed out, 'all the chief factors in Christianity, whether in theory or in practice'. Not only so, but in the term 'salvation' Paul's message 'found a point of attachment to the religious needs both of the Jewish and of the pagan world'.

[39]

VI. 'FLESH' AND 'SPIRIT' IN ROMANS

"Flesh" is a designation used not only in sense of "bodily flesh" or "mankind", but also in sense of "natural human descent" and "weak human nature" (41–43).

Flesh, which Paul speaks about, is an evil essence of our being. Jesus did for example come in body of real flesh, but not those 'sinful flesh', because "sin was unable to gain a foothold in his life." [42]

When Paul speaks of 'my flesh', he most often means his sinful propensity inherited from Adam.

...

... believers are enjoined time and again to be what they are – to be in actual practice what they are as members of Christ.

[42–43]

Therefore flesh is an unregenerate human nature.

Believers were formerly 'in the flesh' (7:5) but now they 'are not in the flesh' but 'in the Spirit', if indeed the Spirit of God dwells within them – and if he does not, they do not yet belong to Christ (8:9).

[43]

"Spirit" represents the opposite of "Flesh". Spirit (we speak about the biblical Spirit, who is Spirit of the Christ) incorporates Christian into the Christ, leads him and gives him freedom from the bondage of law, sin and death.

... enables the believer to treat 'the deeds of the body' – the practices of the old unregenerate existence – as dead things, with no further power in life. There can be no true life without him. To be 'in the Spirit' (en pneumati) is the opposite of being 'in the flesh' (en sarki); ...

[47]

... he enables them to live in the present enjoyment of the glory that is yet to be revealed.

[49]

The term "Spirit in believer" has eschatological perspective. "His presence guarantees entry into resurrection life on a day yet to dawn." [49]

VII. 'LAW' IN ROMANS

Law in general means the Mosaic law given to Israelites from God through Moses. Paul disregards Hammurabi's, he doesn't compare Mosaic law to Roman law.

Therefore law is sovereign divine revelation of God's will. It's coded in ten commandments, or more widely in Pentateuch, or even more widely in whole Old Testament. (We have to distinguish between the revealed law and civil legislation of ancient Israel.)

VIII. THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANS

F. F. B. brings forward life experiences of four well-known men. All of them were touched and influenced by the power of the Gospel while they were studying the letter to Romans. Those men were: Aurelius Augustinus, Martin Luther, John Wesley and Karl Barth.

IX. ARGUMENT

A

- I. The gospel “reveals God's way of putting men and women right with himself by the exercise of faith.” [59]
- II. Every human is “morally bankrupt before God; no-one can hope to be pronounced righteous by God on the basis of any work or merit of his own”. [59]
- III. Christ has made full atonement for our sin and “we may, by faith, appropriate the benefits of his atoning work.” [59]
- IV. Sin no longer has any authority over believer.
- V. Israel may have refused the gospel, but God has always had his faithful remnant between the people of Israel and their refusal is only temporary, because Gentiles' enjoyment of the gospel blessings will stimulate Israelites to jealousy.

B

Christian should keep his conviction, his faith and the line of proper christian life. He should act according to love.

Christian liberty is a fine thing, but it should not be asserted at the expense of Christian charity. [63]

COMMENTARY

PROLOGUE

A. SALUTATION

1. *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.*

Paul is servant (gr. *doulos* – slave) is completely under command of his Master. He considers himself pre ordained by God for the ministry of the gospel among Gentiles (cf. Gal 1:15).

The Old Testament background of the New Testament use of *euangelion* is found in the LXX of Isaiah 40–66 (especially Is. 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1), where this noun or its cognate verb *euangelizomai* is used of the proclamation of Zion's impending release from exile.

[68]

The Spirit of holiness is the regular Hebrew way of saying ‘the Holy Spirit’; Paul here reproduces the Hebrew idiom in Greek.

[69]

But Christ's resurrection is denoted by a phrase which hints at the future resurrection of his people; his resurrection is the first instalment of ‘the resurrection of the dead’, as is made clear in 8:11 ...

[69–70]

A. The Gospel according to Paul (1:16–11:36)

I. THE THEME OF THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED (1:16–17)

Righteousness is to the Hebrew not so much a moral quality as a legal status.

[73]

... it is revealed in a twofold manner. The Gospel tells us first how men and women, sinners as they are, can come to be ‘in right’ with God and second how God's personal righteousness is vindicated in the very act of declaring sinful men and women ‘righteous’.

For Paul, life in the sense of salvation begins with justification but goes beyond it (cf. 5:9–10); it includes sanctification (the subject of Rom. 6–8) and is consummated in final glory (5:2; 8:30).

[76–77]

II. SIN AND RETRIBUTION: THE UNIVERSAL NEED DIAGNOSED (1:18–3:20)

A. THE PAGAN WORLD (1:18–32)

And these wrong ideas about God did not arise innocently; the knowledge of the true God was accessible, but men and women closed their minds to it.

[77]

The wrath of God is revealed. Not in the gospel (in which the saving ‘righteousness of God’ is revealed) but in the facts of human experience ...

...

Who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

...

‘The truth’ is more precisely defined in verse 25 as ‘the truth about God’.

[79]

24, 26, 28. God gave them up. ... An impressive modern statement of this principle of divine retribution is provided by C. S. Lewis in *The problem of Pain* (1940), pp. 115 f.: the lost, he says, ‘enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved’.

[80]

30. Insolent. Greek *hybristés*, one who behaves with humiliating and unconscionable arrogance to those who are not powerful enough to retaliate.

[81]

B. THE MORALIST (2:1–16)

No wonder that, especially in impassioned moments, his Greek is full of breaks in construction and unfinished sentences.

[82]

Paul could have portrayed contemporary Seneca – the stoic moralist and tutor of Nero, while writing this passage. Seneca impersonates the other side of pagan world – the side of moralists.

But

Even in this section of chapter 2, however, as more explicitly from verse 17 onwards, Paul is thinking chiefly of a Jewish critic.

...

That Paul has a Jewish critic more particularly in mind is evident from his repetition of the words ‘the Jew first and also the Greek’ (see 2:9 and 10), in which he emphasizes that the Jews are first to experience the judgement of God as well as the first to receive the good news of his saving grace (1:16).

[83]

(Cf. Am 3:2)

7. To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Paul is not teaching salvation by works here, but emphasizing God's impartiality as between Jew and Gentile.

[85]

C. THE JEW (2:17–3:8)

25. *Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law. Cf. Galatians 5:3, 'every man who receives circumcision . . . is bound to keep the whole law.'*

...

This lesson has already been taught in part by Jeremiah: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised but yet uncircumcised – Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab . . . for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart' (Je. 9:25–26)

...

What God desired was a purified and obedient heart.

...

29. *His praise is not from men but from God.*

[89]

The gospel of justification by faith, apart from 'works of righteousness' has always called forth this criticism, but the criticism is amply refuted by the fact that the same gospel insists unequivocally on the 'fruits of righteousness' which must follow justification.

[91]

D. ALL MANKIND FOUND GUILTY (3:9–20)

III. THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: UNIVERSAL NEED MET (3:21–5:21)

A. GOD'S PROVISION (3:21–31)

The Roman poet Horace, laying down some guide-lines for writers of tragedies in his day, criticizes those who resort too readily to the device of *deus ex machina* to solve the knotty problems which have developed in the course of the plot. . . . *nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus / incidere*

...

Luther took up these words and applied them to the forgiveness of sins: here, he said, is a problem which needs God to solve it (*nodus Deo vindice dignus*).

[96]

24. *They are justified by his grace as a gift.* Paul's hope, before he became a Christian, was that, by dint of persistence in observing the law of God, he might at length be pronounced righteous by God when he stood before his judgement-seat. But in this way of righteousness apart from the law, the procedure is reversed: God pronounces believers righteous at the beginning of their course, not at the end of it. If he pronounces them righteous at the beginning of their course, it cannot be on the basis of works which they have not yet done. Such justification, on the contrary, 'an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight.'

[97]

... the sin has been removed not only from believer's conscience, on which it lay as an intolerable burden, but also from the presence of God.

[100]

Pardon, liberation, atonement – all are made available to men and women by his free initiative and may be appropriated by faith. And faith in this sense is not a kind of work that is specially meritorious in God's sight; it is that simple and open-hearted attitude to God which takes him at his word and gratefully accepts his grace.

...

The redemption accomplished by Christ has retrospective as well as prospective efficacy. His atonement avails whole human family; 'he is expiation for our sins'...

[101–102]

B. TWO OLD TESTAMENT PRECEDENTS (4:1–8)

Of all the righteous people in Old Testament record, none could surpass Abraham – 'Abraham, my friend', as God calls him in Isaiah 41:8.

C. THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM (4:9–25)

If circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's justification by God, with all the promised blessings that accompanied it, the law had even less to do with it.

[108]

The law does not fix rewards for those who keep it, but it does necessarily lay down penalties for those who break it. And the principle on which God thus dealt with Abraham extends to his descendants ... to his spiritual descendants, those who follow the precedent of Abraham's faith.

[109]

... (since Abraham and Sarah had now entered a childless old age) nothing seemed less likely than they should ever exist. Yet, having taken account of all these factors, he concluded that the certainty of the divine promise outweighed every natural improbability.

[112]

D. THE BLESSING WHICH ACCOMPANY JUSTIFICATION: PEACE, JOY, HOPE, LOVE (5:1–11)

The first of this is peace with God.

...

... but pre-eminently to reconcile those who once were 'enstraged and hostile' to him at heart (Col. 1:20–22).

[113]

... as an old preacher put it, 'peace is joy resting; joy is peace dancing.'

... in the New Testament suffering is viewed as the normal experience of a Christian. New converts were warned that the kingdom of God could be entered only 'through many tribulations' (Acts 14:22); ...

[114]

The death of Christ is indeed the supreme manifestation of God's love. What perversion of the divine character it is to imagine that Christ died for human beings in order to make God love them!

[115]

E. THE OLD AND THE NEW SOLIDARITY (5:12–21)

So, if the fall of Adam brought all his posterity under the dominion of death, the obedience of Christ has brought a new race triumphantly into the realm of resurrection life.

...

The law has no permanent significance in the history of redemption. It was introduced as a temporary measure for practical purpose. Sin was present in the world ever since Adam's fall, but the law served the purpose of bringing sin right out into the light of day, so that it might be more clearly recognized for what it really is.

[121]

12. As sin came into the world through one man and death through sin.

...

... mortality of the race is the result of the original racial sin. This seems to be implied by verse 14, where those who lived between Adam and Moses are said to have died even if they did not sin in the manner of 'the transgression of Adam'. The construction, with the underlying thought, is paralleled in 2 Corinthians 5:14: 'one has died for all; therefore all have died' – where, however, it is the racial implication of Christ's death, not of Adam's fall, that Paul has in view.

[122–123]

IV. THE WAY OF HOLINESS (6:1 – 8:39)

A. FREEDOM FROM SIN (6:1 – 23)

Rasputin taught and exemplified the doctrine of salvation through repeated experience of sin and repentance.
[127]

But Paul's own experience had taught him that all the law-keeping in the world could not bring the assurance of pardon and peace with God, whereas faith in Christ did so at once. He could never consider legalism as the power of his Spirit, their inward being was radically transformed: a new creation took place.
[128]

Formerly you were enslaved to sin, but your old relation to sin has been broken -broken irrevocably, by death. What death? The death that you have died with Christ.
[129]

Is this just an exertion of the will, or an effort of the imagination? No, it is not. It is something that has proved its reality in the lives of many, and such people have no difficulty in understanding what Paul means. For God of whom he speaks is living God, and when men and women present themselves to him, to be used in his service, he accepts them as his servants and gives them the power to do his will.
[133]

Those who have been justified are now being sanctified; those who have no experience of present sanctification have no reason to suppose they have been justified.
[135]

B. FREEDOM FROM LAW (7:1–25)

... we must bear in mind that there is no evidence that Paul, before his conversion, suffered from an uneasy conscience. In so far as the 'I' is autobiographical, 'here Paul's autobiography is the biography of Everyman.'
[139]

3. The conflict within (7:14–25)

...
He is like a person living simultaneously on two planes, eagerly longing to lead a life in keeping with the higher plane, but sadly aware of the strength of indwelling sin that keeps on pulling him down to the lower plane.
[143]

There is something in humanity, even in regenerate humanity, which objects to God and seeks to be independent of him. This 'something' is what Paul here calls his 'flesh' (*cf.* verse 18), which lays him wide open to the tyranny of indwelling sin. The phrase 'sold under sin' has a parallel in Wisdom 1:4, where wisdom refuses to 'make her home in a body that is mortgaged to sin' (NEB).
[145]

22. I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self.

...
In the light of 8:7–8 it is difficult to view the speaker here as other than a believer.
[146]

C. FREEDOM FROM DEATH (8:1–39)

Christ dwells in them by his Spirit, and his Spirit infuses into them a new principle – the law of life – which is stronger than indwelling sin and sets them free from its tyranny.

...
Indeed, the fact that they respond to leading of the Spirit of God is a clear proof that they are children of God.
[149–150]

There is no reason for those who are 'in Christ Jesus' to go on doing penal servitude as though they had never been pardoned, never been released from the prison-house of sin.

[151]

Here is the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant (quoted in part in 11:27), under which, said God, 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts' (Je. 31:33), and of the parallel promise of Ezekiel 11:19–20; 36:26–27, where God undertakes to give his people a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit' – in fact, his own Spirit, sent to dwell within them so that they will henceforth do his will spontaneously.

[153]

To run and work the law commands,
Yet gives me neither feet nor hands;
But better news the gospel brings:
It bids me fly, and gives me wings.

[154]

... 'Father' was 'Abba'. When this non-Greek word passed into the usage of Greek-speaking churches it was amplified by the addition of its Greek equivalent, *ho pater* (the two forms being rendered together 'Abba! Father!').

[157]

Provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. The suffering is the indispensable prelude to the glory.

[159]

But the transformation has already begun to work in the lives of the justified; its continued working is sufficiently attested by the indwelling of the Spirit, and it is that same grace which, on 'the day of Jesus Christ', will bring to completion the work so well begun.

'Grace all the work shall crown
To everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.'

[161]

Before the world's foundation God foreknew and foreordained them – foreordained them for the day of final redemption, when they would be fully conformed to the image of his Son.

...

By the will of him who subjected it. Not Adam, or the devil, but God; only he could be said to have subjected creation to futility *in hope*.

[163]

The new creation, the community of men and women conformed to the image of Christ, who is himself the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), is seen to have been from the beginning the object of God's foreknowledge and foreordaining mercy.

[167]

V. HUMAN UNBELIEF AND DIVINE GRACE (9:1 – 11:36)

A. THE PROBLEM OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF (9:1–5)

If 'I appeal to you therefore' (12:1) came in at this point, we should be quite ready for it. Not so Paul. The problem with which he proceeds to grapple was one of intense personal concern to him.

[172]

B. GOD'S SOVEREIGN CHOICE (9:6–29)

If God does not reveal the principles on which he makes his choice, that is no reason why his justice should be called in question.

[178]

'Though justice by thy plea, consider this,
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation.'
[180; (Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4, Scene 1.)]

12 *'The elder will serve to the younger.'*
... it relates to the long periods during which the Edomites were in servitude to Israel or Judah (cf. 2 Sa. 8:14; 1 Ki. 22:47; 2 Ki. 14:7; *etc.).
[182]

C. HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY (9:30–10:21)

... God has brought his salvation near to us, in Christ. We do not have to 'climb the heavenly steps' to procure it; we have no need to 'plumb the lowest deeps' for it, for Christ has risen from the dead to make it secure to us. It is here, present and available; what men and women are called to do is to accept it by inward faith and to confess Christ publicly as Lord. 'Jesus is Lord' is the earliest, as it remains the sufficient, Christian creed.
[189]

9. *If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord.*

...
Some commentators have thought particularly of the confession of his name before magistrates (cf. Lk. 21:12–15; 1 Pet. 3:13–16); but if we are to think of one outstanding occasion for such a confession to be made, we should probably think of the initial confession made in Christian baptism – 'the pledge of a good conscience made in Christian baptism – 'the pledge of a good conscience towards God' (1 Pet. 3:21, NIV).
[192]

D. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL (11:1–29)

... it was still customary in Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century 'to reinvigorate an olive-tree which is ceasing to bear fruit, by grafting it with a shoot of the Wild-Olive, so that the sap of the tree ennobles this wild shoot and the tree now again begins to bear fruit'.
[204]

He has been accused of trying to eat his cake and have it – of consoling himself with the thought of 'a remnant, chosen by grace', and at the same time insisting on a wholesale restoration of Israel – but if his claim to have received a new revelation be taken seriously, he cannot fairly be blamed. The 'mystery' may indeed have been implicit in the 'revelation of Jesus Christ' which he received in the Damascus road, even if it was in the course of his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles that its full significance came home to him. In Old Testament prophecy the remnant of Israel was at the same time the nucleus of the new Israel. So it is here: the existence of the believing remnant is the earnest of the final salvation of 'all Israel'.
[208]

E. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD (11:30–36)

B. The Christian way of life (12:1 – 15:13)

I. THE LIVING SACRIFICE (12:1–2)

In particular, an impressive list of parallels can be drawn up between Romans 12:3 – 13:14 and the Sermon on the Mount.
[213]

II. THE COMMON LIFE OF CHRISTIANS (12:3–8)

Diversity, not uniformity, is the mark of God's handiwork.
[214]

III. THE LAW OF CHRIST (12:9–21)

IV. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE (13:1–7)

It was all the more necessary, therefore, that Christians should be specially careful of their public behaviour and give their traducers no handle against them, but rather pay all due honour and obedience to the authorities.
[220]

But what if authorities themselves are unrighteous? What if Caesar, not content with receiving what is rightfully his, lays claim to 'the things that are God's'?

...

When the decrees of civil magistrate conflict with the commandments of God, then, say Christians, 'we must obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29); when Caesar claims divine honours, Christians must answer 'No'. For then Caesar (whether he takes the form of dictator or democracy) is going beyond the authority delegated to him by God, and trespassing on territory which is not his.
[221]

V. LOVE AND DUTY (13:8–10)

These commandments forbid the harming of a neighbour in any way; since love never harms another, love fulfils the law.
[226]

VI. CHRISTIAN LIFE IN DAYS OF CRISIS (13:11–14)

VII. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY (14:1–15:6)

A. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (14:1–12)

So completely was he emancipated from spiritual bondage that he was not even in bondage to his emancipation. He conformed to the Jewish way of life when he was in Jewish society as cheerfully as he went along with Gentile ways when he was living with Gentiles.
[230]

B. CHRISTIAN CHARITY (14:13–23)

When, shortly afterwards, the Council of Jerusalem agreed that Gentiles should be admitted to church fellowship, like Jews, on the sole ground of faith in Christ, a proviso was added to the effect that Gentile converts should abstain from food which was abhorrent to their brethren of Jewish stock and should conform to the Jewish marriage-laws (Acts 15:20,29). If Paul went along with this decision (as the narrative of Acts declares he did), he makes no appeal to it in his letters when dealing with the issues which it covered, but bases his argument (as here) on ethical principles.
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(side note: The same ethical principles stood as the shadow beyond Acts 15:20.)

C. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (15:1–6)

1. *We who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak. Cf. Galatians 6:1–2, 'if man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. ... Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'*
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VIII. CHRIST AND THE GENTILES (15:7–13)

(side note: even the outreach of the Gospel to Gentiles is fulfilment of the God's promise made to Abraham)

EPILOGUE (15:14–16:27)

A. PERSONAL NARRATIVE (15:14–33)

B. COMMENDATION OF PHOEBE (16:1–2)

C. GREETINGS TO VARIOUS FRIENDS (16:3–16)

D. FINAL EXHORTATION (16:17–20)

E. GREETINGS FROM PAUL'S COMPANIONS (16:21–23(24))

F. DOXOLOGY (16:25–27)

25. *According to my gospel.* Cf. 2:16 (and 2 Tim. 2:8).

And the preaching of Jesus Christ. This phrase is essentially synonymous with 'my gospel': 'preaching' represents *kérigma*, the message proclaimed (as in 1 Cor. 1:21), and Jesus Christ is its subject-matter and substance.

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... if the mystery was 'kept secret for long ages' and manifestes only now, how could it be known through the prophetic writings?

...

Paul and his fellow-apostles used the 'prophetic writings' copiously in their gospel preaching; but it was only in the light of the new revelation in Christ that they were able to understand and expound those writings (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10–12)

William Tyndale's prologue to Romans ends with this admonition:

'Now go to, reader, and according to the order of Paul's writing, even so do thou. First behold thyself diligently in the law of God, and see there thy just damnation. Secondly turn thine eyes to Christ, and see there the exceeding mercy of thy most kind and loving Father. Thirdly remember that Christ made not this atonement that thou shouldest anger God again: neither cleansed he thee, that thou shouldest return (as a swine) unto thine old puddle again: but that thou shouldest be a new creature and live a new life after the will of God and not of the flesh. And be deligent lest through thine own negligence and unthankfulness thou lose this favour and mercy again.'

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