

Romans 7
and
The Law

Fall Seminar at McQuoid's 2008

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Intro

It is as if, with respect to one's spiritual status, a new entity has come into being. It is as if Christ and I have been married, or have merged to form a new corporation. Thus, the imputation of his righteousness is not so much a matter of transferring something from one person to another, as it is a matter of bringing the two together, so that they hold all things in common. In Christ I died on the cross, and in him I was resurrected. Thus, his death is not only in my place, but with me.

Christian Theology, Millard Erickson, 818-819. Baker Book House, 1985

Talking Points

1. Approach
2. Historical
3. Interpretive
4. Speaking by His Son
5. Obedience of Faith
6. The Law & its Purpose

Ro 2:16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God **judges** the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Ro 1:15 so I am eager to **preach** the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Ro 1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,

Ro 10:17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.

Historical

Various Interpretations of Romans 7

There have been many interpretations of Ro.7 but the main ones have been titled acceptably by MacGorman. His categories will be used in the chart and some of the more important theologians holding to a given position will be noted.

Articles covering this material for the chart.

Dockery, David S. "Romans 7: 14-25: Pauline Tension In The Christian Life." *Grace Theological Journal*. Vol. 2. No. 2. Fall 1981. 239-257.

MacGorman, J.W. "Romans 7 Once More." *Southwestern Journal of Theology*. Vol. 19. No. 1. Fall 1976. 31-41.

Autobiographical Pre-Christian	Autobiographical Christian	Autobiographical Non- Christian/Christian	Not Autobiographical Man under Law
Greek Fathers	Augustine	C. Leslie Mitton	R. Bultmann
John Wesley	Thomas Aquinas		G. Bornkamm
J. Weiss	Luther		
A. E. Garvie	Calvin		
Sanday-Headlam	C. K. Barrett		
James Moffatt	F.F. Bruce		
James Stewart Althaus	John Murray		
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C. H. Dodd Kurzinger	J. I. Packer		

Supplemental Materials:

Five Views on Sanctification - Hoekema

Ancient Christian Commentary

The Epistle To The Romans by J. Murray

Commentary on Romans by F. Godet

The "I" of Romans 7

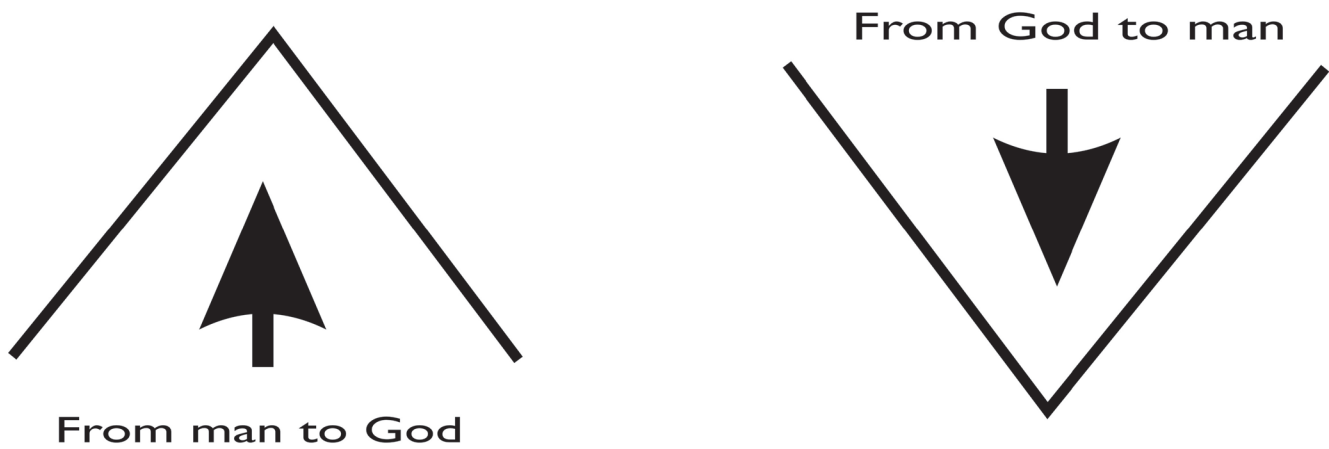
The "I" of Romans 7

The "I" of Romans 7

The "I" of Romans 7

Where do we start?

Revelation Understanding, etc



God's Eternal Purpose

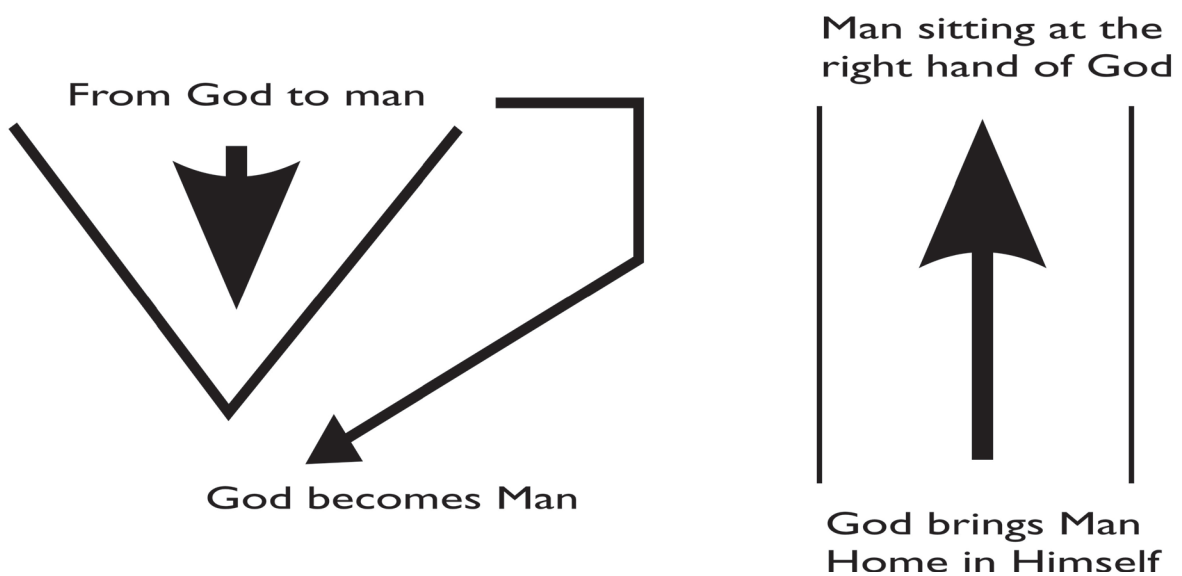


Salvation

Rom 7 "I"

Me/My experience & self knowledge

Framework of Reason-Fallen Man



Inductive Study

Where Do We Start?

God

God in creation

God's Eternal Purpose	Eph 1	Eph 3	Ez 36-37
Speaks by His Son	Heb 1		
Paul & God's purpose	Gal 1		

Paul in Romans	Rom 1	Rom 16
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Rom 1-6

Self aware of = testimony with-in Rom 1:19

Self aware evil conscious Gen 3 Rom 7: 7-25

Self aware righteousness Heb 10:22 1 Jn 5:10

God's House	Chart	Heb 3
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Put off Put on	Col 3
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God's Eternal Purpose

Eph 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Eze 36:21 “But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

22 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

23 “I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

24 “For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 ¶ “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Eze 37:24 “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.

25 “They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever.

26 “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever.

27 “My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

28 “And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.””

Eph 1:3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Hebrews Speaks by His Son

Heb 1:1 ¶ In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets;
2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
3 He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
4 ¶ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs.

Heb 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)
12 he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Put to death

Col 3:1 ¶ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
3 For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
5 ¶ **Put to death** therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.
7 In these you once walked, when you lived in them.
8 ¶ But now **put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth.
9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have **put off** the old nature with its practices
10 and have **put on** the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
11 Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.
12 ¶ **Put on** then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience,
13 forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
14 And above all these **put on** love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Romans 1 & 16 Bookends

Obedience of Faith

Ro 1:1 ¶ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God
2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,
3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh
4 and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord,
5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of
his name among all the nations,
6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ;

Ro 16:25 ¶ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages
26 but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the com-
mand of the eternal God, to bring about the **obedience of faith**--
27 to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
(RSV)

Romans 1

(RSV)

Ro 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; 7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, 10 asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brethren, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: 15 so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live."

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; 21 for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. 29 They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 2

(RSV)

Ro 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. 2 We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who do such things. 3 Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will render to every man according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

12 All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the law and boast of your relation to God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed in the law, 19 and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth-- 21 you then who teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

25 Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. 26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God.

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Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 3

(RSV)

Ro 3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Let God be true though every man be false, as it is written, "That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and prevail when thou art judged." 5 But if our wickedness serves to show the justice of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come? --as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands, no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 ¶ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; 23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; 26 it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. 28 For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised through their faith. 31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

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in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 4

(RSV)

Ro 4:1 What then shall we say about Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due. 5 And to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. 6 So also David pronounces a blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin.”

9 Is this blessing pronounced only upon the circumcised, or also upon the uncircumcised? We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. 10 How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, 12 and likewise the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but also follow the example of the faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants--not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, for he is the father of us all, 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations” --in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, “So shall your descendants be.” 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was “reckoned to him as righteousness.” 23 ¶ But the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, 25 who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 5

(RSV)

Ro 5:1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

6 While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man--though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. 8 But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.

12 Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned-- 13 sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the effect of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. 20 Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 6

(RSV)

Ro 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For he who has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. 9 For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. 13 Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification.

20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 7

(RSV)

Ro 7:1 Do you not know, brethren--for I am speaking to those who know the law--that the law is binding on a person only during his life? 2 Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4 Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; 10 the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me.

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 8

(RSV)

Ro 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- 13 for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

*Partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel Eph 3.6*

Preach the Gospel?

Bring about the obedience of faith?

Romans 7 & the Law
Romans & the Law of God

1. If the Law (of Sin & Death) is Present

2. If the Law (of Sin & Death) is not present

3. What is the pre-Rest State?

Summary Analysis

Romans 1:5

The study of 1:11–15 and 15:15 demonstrated that Paul's apostolic authority stands behind and motivates what he writes. Furthermore, the activities he describes in those verses, strengthening and reminding, were ways in which Paul carried out his apostolic responsibilities. The clear implication is that Paul wants to exercise his apostolic calling by performing both activities through his letter to the Romans. Since Paul's apostolic call plays an important role in the writing of this letter, it is significant that in 1:5 he provides a description of the purpose of that call: "for the obedience of faith among all the nations to the honor of his name."

Two additional factors also indicate the importance of this "obedience of faith." First, initially stated in 1:5, the theme of "obedience of faith" is echoed in 15:18 and repeated verbatim in 16:26. As mentioned in chapter one, Paul typically signaled for his hearers important themes in his letters by highlighting them in the opening and closing sections. Second, both obedience and faith serve as important motifs in the letter-body. Clearly, Paul's summary of his apostolic responsibility in 1:5 serves as a key indicator of what Paul hoped to accomplish among the Roman Christians through this letter.⁵⁴

This portion of the chapter will first analyze 1:5 in the context of the opening section of Romans, giving special attention to the disputed genitive construction "obedience of faith"

⁵⁴This verse often gets overlooked in the Romans Debate. For example, though Jervis focuses exclusively on the letter-frame in determining the purpose of Romans, Paul's obvious highlighting of the "obedience of faith" plays no role in her conclusions. Perhaps, her neglect of the letter body in her study allowed her to overlook its significance. The index to *The Romans Debate*, lists six references to 1:5, none of which deals with the purpose of the letter. Don B. Garlington, however, correctly observes, "Rom 1:5 can be looked upon as a programmatic statement of the main purpose of Romans" (*Faith, Obedience and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, WUNT, vol. 79 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994], 10. Matthew Black offers the same opinion on the basis of 15:18 (*Romans*, 2d ed., NCB [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989], 203).

(ὀπακοῦν πείστεως). The theme of obedience will then be examined in the entire letter in order to demonstrate that obedience is one of Paul's key concerns.

Context. Paul opened his letter using the formal elements typical of a letter in his time, namely, an identification of the sender, an identification of the recipient(s), and a greeting. Romans 1:5 concludes the identification of sender unit, drawing this section to a close by returning to the issue with which he opened the letter, his apostolic call. Each element of the verse is examined separately below.

Call. Paul makes clear that he received this call through the agency of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁵ He describes what he received⁵⁶ as "grace and apostleship" (χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν). The two terms stand in hendiadys, where two words describing one idea are joined by a conjunction rather than by one word plus an adjectival genitive.⁵⁷ In this instance, the second term "apostleship" modifies the first. Paul received a divine grace⁵⁸ which consists of the call to serve as apostle. The phrase could therefore be translated "grace which is apostleship." Paul uses χάρις ("grace" or

⁵⁵James D. G. Dunn notes that this call from the resurrected Lord shows that Jesus Christ is still active in the ongoing work of redemption (*Romans 1–8*, 16).

⁵⁶Paul's use of the first person plural "we received" here is either an example of an epistolary plural (so Cranfield *Romans*, 1:65, M.-J. Lagrange, *St. Paul: Épitre aux Romains*, 6th ed., Etudes Bibliques [Paris: Gabalds, 1950], 10; Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Harold Knight [London: Lutterworth Press, 1961], 38, n. §; see also C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959], 118–119) or a reference to the fact that Paul does not consider himself as the only apostle (Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 16). The matter has no bearing on the argument here.

⁵⁷The co-ordination of two ideas, one of which is dependent on the other (hendiadys), serves in the NT to avoid a series of dependent genitives." *BDF*, §442 (16).

⁵⁸Aptly described by Dunn as an "effective divine power in the experience of men and women" (*Romans 1–8*, 17).

The Obedience Of Faith, The Eschatological People Of God, And The Purpose Of Romans

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“gift”) in relation to his apostolic call elsewhere in Romans (12:3; 15:15) as well.

Obedience of Faith. The purpose of this apostleship was to bring about the “obedience of faith” among all the nations. The sense of the genitive πίσσεως (“of faith”) and therefore of the phrase as a whole has generated no little discussion.⁵⁹ The list of proposed interpretations can be reduced to four viable options.

1. objective genitive: “obedience to the faith” or “obedience to God’s faithfulness”
2. subjective genitive: “obedience which faith works”
3. genitive of apposition/epexegetical genitive: “obedience which consists in faith”
4. adjectival genitive/genitive of quality: “obedience which is characterized by faith”⁶⁰

The objective genitive reading,⁶¹ while popular in the past, founders on the fact that the word for faith here is not used to refer to a body of teaching without the direct article present—the faith.⁶² In 1:5, πίσσεως lacks the article.

⁵⁹Cranfield lays out seven options with characteristic clarity. See *Romans*, 1:66. Don B. Garlington rightly cautions, “It should be clarified, however, that our interest lies not in grammatical labels for their own sake but principally in the complex of ideas suggested by these categories” (*Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 15). Likewise, A. B. du Toit warns, “We must remember that language is so subtle and dynamic that often it cannot be neatly squeezed into our reductionary schemes” (“Faith and Obedience in Paul,” *Neot* 25 [1991]: 66).

⁶⁰The translation of point 4 is adapted from du Toit, “Faith and Obedience,” 66. Du Toit acknowledges the difficulty in finding an English equivalent for this genitive.

⁶¹See, for example, the commentaries of Liddon, Luther, and Sanday and Headlam.

⁶²As in Acts 6:7, ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει (Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, “A Note on ‘εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίσσεως’ in Romans 1:5 and xvi.26,” *ExpTim* 55 [1943–44]: 305).

C. E. B. Cranfield cites several parallel expressions from Romans where faith in God and obedience to God appear to be synonymous concepts. As such they constitute a strong argument for reading πίσσεως in 1:5 as a genitive of apposition.⁶³ These parallels are worth listing.⁶⁴

1:8 ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ
16:19 ἡ γὰρ ὑμῶν ὑπακοὴ εἰς πάντας ἀφίκετο

10:16a Ἄλλ’ οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ

10:16b Ἡσαΐας γὰρ λέγει· κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν;

11:23 ἐὰν μὴ ἐπιμένωσιν τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ

11:30 τῇ τούτων ἀπειθείᾳ

11:31 οὕτως καὶ ὁδοὶ νῦν ἠπειθήσαν

1:5 δι’ οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίσσεως ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

15:18 οὐ κατειργάσατο Χριστὸς δι’ ἑμοῦ εἰς ὑπακοὴν ἔθνῶν

As persuasive as these parallels are, Mark Nanos argues that some distinction needs to be made between the terms. He asks, “Why bother with the phrase if Paul’s point is the faith of the faith?”⁶⁵ Likewise, Glenn N. Davies claims that the two concepts certainly overlap, but are not identical. He goes on to argue for a subjective genitive or a genitive of origin, “obedience that springs from faith.”⁶⁶

The list of parallels make it apparent that “obedience” and “faith” bear a high degree of overlapping meaning in

⁶³Among the commentators also opting for apposition (or epexegetical genitive) are Althaus, Calvin, Godet, Johnson, Käsemann, Kuss, Murray, Nygren, Schlier, and Wilckens.

⁶⁴Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:66, n. 3.

⁶⁵*Mystery of Romans*, 224, n. 164.

⁶⁶*Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1–4*, JSNTSup, vol. 39 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 30.

Romans. But all the matched references to these terms are not entirely parallel. For example, the similarities between 1:5 and 15:18 produce evidence for reading πίστεις in 1:5 as a subjective genitive. Both verses concern Paul's apostolic calling and express that calling in nearly identical terms, εἰς ὑπακοὴν (for obedience). In both cases the noun ὑπακοὴν is followed by a genitive. Although the sense of πίστεις is disputed in 1:5, the genitive ἐθνῶν in 15:18 is clearly a subjective genitive; it is an obedience which the nations carry out. If these verses are truly parallel, would not the genitive of 1:5 (disputed) carry a sense similar to that of 15:18 (undisputed)? If the parallels are true, in 1:5 Paul is saying "the obedience that faith works" (subjective genitive).⁶⁷ The failure of this one parallel to support reading πίστεις in 1:5 as a genitive of apposition does not, however, nullify the strong evidence in favor of apposition offered by the other examples.

A. B. du Toit highlights the overlapping nature of the genitive of apposition and the genitive of quality. He understands the genitive of quality to have a more "descriptive rather than an identifying function." He argues for a genitive of quality, paraphrasing the expression as "the obedience which belongs to, is characterized by and goes together with faith." He also recognizes that this interpretation comes close to a genitive of origin: "obedience which stems from faith."⁶⁸

How is all this evidence to be sorted out? Nigel Turner recognizes that context must provide the key for inter-

⁶⁷Other evidence reveals the lack of a true parallel here. In both 1:5 and 15:18 the gentiles "obey." In 15:18, Paul demonstrates who obeys through the use of the subjective genitive ἐθνῶν immediately following εἰς ὑπακοὴν. The genitive (πίστεις) in question in 1:5, however, also qualifies the obedience Paul is called to bring about, but does not do so by specifying who performs it. In 1:5 Paul indicates who performs it in the phrase which follows the genitive πίστεις — "among all the gentiles" (ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). In other words, the genitive πίστεις in 1:5 has a different function than ἐθνῶν in 15:18. Consequently, the use of 15:18 to support reading πίστεις in 1:5 as a subjective genitive fails.

⁶⁸Ibid., 67.

pretation.⁶⁹ On this basis, the genitive πίστεις in 1:5 is best described as standing in apposition to obedience.⁷⁰ In 1:5 (and 16:26), Paul emphasizes the inseparability of faith and obedience. Paul called men and women to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord (6:16; 10:9) and lordship necessarily entailed submission, in other words, obedience.⁷¹ The parallel uses of the concepts cited by Cranfield demonstrate how closely Paul understood them.

This does not mean that Paul cannot distinguish between the concepts in other contexts. If the sense of each term could be thought of as circles, the circles would be almost entirely overlapping and inseparable, but not entirely concentric. Yet, in this context Paul is emphasizing their inseparability.⁷² Faith in Christ and obedience to Christ are of one cloth. Douglas Moo aptly summarizes Paul's use of faith and obedience in this verse. They are

mutually interpreting: obedience always involves faith, and faith always involves obedience. They should not be equated, compartmentalized, or made into separate states of Christian experience. Paul called men and women to a faith that was

⁶⁹Indeed, so rich is Paul's compression of language with genitives that the attempt to define too narrowly the various types of genitive is vain; they all denote a relationship which is amplified by the context." A *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963), 212.

⁷⁰The objection from the supposed parallel in 15:18 does not hold. The genitives of 1:5 and 15:18 stand in different relationship to the nouns with which they are joined due to the context in which they are found and the significance of the different nouns in the genitive. In both the gentiles are to be obedient. But in 1:5 Paul expresses the gentiles' role differently in order to make a more emphatic statement about obedience.

⁷¹Ernst Käsemann comments, "When the revelation of Christ is accepted, the rebellious world submits again to its Lord" (*Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980], 15).

⁷²"When one trusts in God one obeys God; faith and works are inextricably woven together in the response of trusting faith" (Nanos, *Mystery of Romans*, 223).

always inseparable from obedience . . . and to an obedience that could never be divorced from faith.⁷³

The interpretive debate over this expression should not cause one to lose sight of the fact that Paul is emphasizing the first term in this phrase, “obedience.”⁷⁴ What all Paul understands obedience to entail must await further examination of obedience as a theme in Romans (see below).

Among All the Nations. This obedience is to take place “among all the nations” (ἐν πάσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). What is noteworthy here is that while the phrase “obedience of faith” (ὕπακοὴν πίστεως) is first attested in Paul, the concept has deep roots in the Jewish faith. Don B. Garlington summarizes his study of the concept in the Jewish writings from Paul’s time by saying

Although the actual phrase ὑπακοὴν πίστεως does not occur before Paul, the idea embodied in it is clearly present. The obedience of God’s people, consisting in their fidelity to his covenant with them, is the product of prior belief in his person and trust in his word. . . . faith’s obedience is the appropriate response of Israel, the covenant partner, to the election, grace and mercy of God.⁷⁵

In other words, Paul has been charged with bringing about a Jewish response to God among the non-Jewish peoples.

In the first seven verses of the letter-opening, Paul describes the gospel he preaches to gentiles in thoroughly Jewish terms. This gospel was “proclaimed beforehand through God’s prophets in the holy scriptures” (v. 2). This

⁷³Romans, 52–53.

⁷⁴Du Toit emphasizes this fact, citing the Protestant inheritance of many interpreters as the causal factor leading to the its being overlooked. In other words, Protestants have emphasized faith, but devalued obedience out of fear of ‘works righteousness’ (“Faith and Obedience,” 67).

⁷⁵*The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context*, WUNT 2:38 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991), 233.

gospel concerns God’s son, born “of the seed of David” (v. 3). When he turns to describe the Christians in Rome, among whom undoubtedly are a number of gentiles by birth (11:13), he employs concepts drawn from the Jewish scriptures (vv. 6–7) such as “called,” “beloved of God” and “called to be saints.”⁷⁶ The call to the gentiles, in other words, is the same as Israel’s call: to become, or (in the case of gentiles) to join (11:17) the obedient people of God (9:24–26).

This inclusion of the gentiles within the people of God carries distinct eschatological overtones.⁷⁷ Although the Hebrew Bible and the non-canonical Jewish literature from the Persian through the Roman period reflect a variety of perspectives regarding the non-Jewish peoples, early Christians seized upon strands of thinking that envisioned the nations making pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship YHWH as part of the coming age.⁷⁸ Scholars differ on the specifics of how this incoming of the gentiles influenced Paul’s thought, especially with regard to Paul’s understanding of the significance of the collection for the church in Jerusalem (15:30–32). Yet, the fact that this concept was linked to future saving acts of YHWH in the Jewish literature from which Paul draws his understanding of his call and mission is seldom questioned.⁷⁹

⁷⁶A fuller listing of references can be found in the critical commentaries and in Garlington, *ibid.*, 238–242. Only a brief sampling can be provided here. On “beloved of God” see, for example, Ps. 60:5 [LXX 59:7], 108:6; Rom. 9:25, 11:28. On “called” see, for example, Isa. 49:1, 50:2, 65:12, 66:4; Jer. 7:13. On “saints” (or “holy ones”) see, for example, Lev. 17–26; Pss. 16 [LXX 15]:3, 74 [LXX 73]:3; Isa. 4:3; Tob. 8:15.

⁷⁷Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 18; Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SacPag, vol. 6 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 40; Nanos, *Mystery*, 229.

⁷⁸Thus one of the relatively minor themes of the OT became a definitive element for the Christian church because of its conviction that the fulfillment of that hope for the conversion of the nations had begun.” Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 57.

⁷⁹Among the numerous accounts of this phenomenon see, for example, Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 303–305; Gowan, *Eschatology*, 42–57; Ferdinand

In addition to the inclusion of the gentiles, other eschatological concepts appear in 1:3–5 as well. First, in 1:4, Paul speaks of Jesus as the “son of God.” That title recalls passages from the Old Testament where the royal messiah is also called the “son of God” (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7) as well as those which speak of a future ruler who would take captive the nations (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17–19; Amos 9:12).⁸⁰ According to Paul, the son of God is now calling the nations into submission to his reign through Paul’s preaching. Paul’s call is not just to announce this significant moment, but to be instrumental in implementing it. Second, and most significantly, Paul speaks of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead in v. 3. Within early Christianity this resurrection was often understood to be the “first fruits” of the general resurrection anticipated in the age to come (1 Cor. 15:20, 23).⁸¹

Further elaboration of the significance of the connection between obedience, Paul’s calling, and eschatology follow below. For now, it is enough to note the connections between these issues as they emerge in 1:3–5.

Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, SBT, vol. 47 (London: SCM Press, 1965), 19; Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 36–39; Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus’ Promise to the Nations*, trans. by S. H. Hooke (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 56–71.

⁸⁰Garlington, *Obedience of Faith*, 236–237; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 18. The eschatological context of Paul’s call and gospel can also be seen in Paul’s description of Jesus having been “declared Son of God by the resurrection from the dead” (1:4). The resurrection of the dead was, of course, an event of the eschaton (1 Cor. 15:12, 20, 23; 1 Thess. 4:14–17; Acts 4:2. See also L. J. Kreitzer, “Eschatology,” in *DPL*, 257–59 and George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Resurrection [Early Judaism and Christianity],” in *ABD*, 5:684–691). Paul’s concern for the collection (15:25–31) also appears to be motivated by his view of it as symbolic of the eschatological coming of the nations to worship God.

⁸¹See, for example, John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 264.

“For His Name’s Sake.” Finally, the gentiles’ coming to the obedience of faith was to lead “to the honor of his [Jesus] name.”⁸² When Paul’s call, received through Jesus Christ the Lord, bears fruit in this way, this same Jesus⁸³ will receive glory and honor. Though Paul does not use the term “glory” (δόξα) here, the idea is clearly present.⁸⁴

The point of Paul’s preaching is not just the winning of gentiles to obedience to God. Above all, Paul’s preaching was to result in the glorification of Christ.⁸⁵ With this allusion to the topic of the glory of Christ or God, we find Paul once again mentioning in this verse a theme that will prove central in this letter to follow.

“Obedience” In Romans

Although it is widely recognized that “the obedience of faith” plays an important role in Paul’s argument and that Paul signals its significance by his repetition of that phrase in the letter-frame, the concept has received too little attention in reference to Paul’s purpose in writing.⁸⁶ In addition, much has been made of the importance of faith in Romans,⁸⁷ yet

⁸²“ὅτι τὸ δόξα αὐτοῦ.” The translation supplied here is from *BAG(D)*, 573, “ὄνομα” 4.q.

⁸³The antecedent of the pronoun in the phrase is certainly “Jesus Christ our Lord” at the end of verse four, who is also referred to by the relative pronoun in the opening clause of v. 5.

⁸⁴Gerhard Kittel defines δόξα in the NT using overlapping concepts of “divine honour,” ‘divine splendour,’ ‘divine power’ (“δόξα,” *TDNT*, 2:247). Divine honor readily catches the sense here.

⁸⁵Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:67. Similarly, Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 18; Moo, *Romans*, 53; Byrne, *Romans*, 40.

⁸⁶Paul Minear entitled his monograph on Paul’s purpose in Romans “The Obedience of Faith” (SBT, second series, vol. 19, London: SCM Press, 1971). Yet, he never engages the phrase in any depth, exerting almost all his effort to identify numerous parties among the Roman Christians.

⁸⁷For example, Dunn says, “To clarify what faith is and its importance to his gospel is one of Paul’s chief objectives in this letter.”

little has been said about the crucial role that the related idea of obedience serves in the letter.⁸⁸

Obedience plays a far more important role in what Paul hoped to effect through this letter than has been previously recognized.⁸⁹ In order to support this assertion and define precisely what that role is, this study makes several further probes of Romans based upon the conclusions reached above. (1) It will define “obedience”/“to obey” in general. (2) It will demonstrate the centrality of obedience in the argument of Romans. (3) It will place Paul’s understanding of obedience within in its eschatological context in the letter.

Definition

The noun “obedience” (ὕπακοή) was not a common term in the New Testament era, probably becoming established through Christian usage.⁹⁰ As the form of the word suggests, obedience indicates the proper response to hearing.

Romans 1-8, 17. Dunn, however, does recognize the centrality of the theme “obedience of faith” in the letter (*ibid.*, 17-18).

⁸⁸The noun “obedience” occurs four times outside of Romans in the undisputed letters of Paul (2 Cor. 7:15; 10:5, 6; Phlm. 21) while the verb “obey” appears once (Phil. 2:12). The noun can serve as a general characterization of the Christian lifestyle (2 Cor. 7:15) or of submission to the Lordship of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5-6), or even of a proper response to Paul’s appeal to an individual (Phlm. 21). This study is limited to Paul’s use of the terminology in Romans because (1) its significance thematically in Romans (a role it does not have in any other letter), and (2) its use elsewhere in Paul’s letters does not contribute to an understanding of how it functions in Paul’s argument in Romans.

⁸⁹Mark D. Nanos serves as an exception. See his comments regarding the phrase ‘obedience of faith’ in Romans in *Mystery of Romans*, 219-220 (quoted on p. 55 below). Although Nanos’s interpretation of the phrase and his understanding of Paul’s purpose in Romans differ from what is offered here, his observation about the importance of this phrase in Romans is right on target. See also Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 10, and Black, *Romans*, 203.

⁹⁰Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 17. See *LSJ*, 851 and *MM*, 650 for the limited evidence of its use.

The use of two terms together in Hebrews 2:2 (also in Romans 5:12-21) illustrates what obedience is not, and therefore what it is, as well. The writer states, “and every transgression (παράβασις) and disobedience (παράκοή) received its just reward.” B. F. Westcott summarizes the author’s use of these terms by saying, “παράβασις describes the actual transgression, a positive offence (the overt act); παράκοή describes properly the disobedience which fails to fulfill an injunction, and so includes negative offences.”⁹¹ The writer therefore encapsulates both the doing of the overt wrong act (transgression) and the failure to do the right (disobedience).⁹² The choice of παράκοή was obviously determined by the warning in Hebrews 2:1 to “pay closest attention to what we have heard” (ἀκουσθεῖσιν),⁹³ meaning to act upon what was heard. Failure to respond constitutes παράκοή.

Obedience, therefore, indicates the proper response to what is heard. In Paul’s case, the “obedience of faith” involves proper response to the hearing of his gospel. Paul says, “faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (10:17; NRSV). Taking the final phrase as a genitive of reference, “the word about Christ,” Paul is claiming faith comes through hearing the gospel he preaches.

“Obedience” in Romans

Paul employs the verb “to obey” (ὕπακούω) only four times in Romans and the noun “obedience” (ὕπακοή) in seven instances. Yet, obedience is closely intertwined with other key themes in the letter. These thematic connections reveal that

⁹¹*The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1984 [n. d. for original]), 38. See also Ceslas Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1952), 26.

⁹²Gerhard Kittel (“παράκοή,” *TDNT*, 1:223) observes that παράκοή “in the NT always means ‘bad hearing’ in consequence of unwillingness to hear, and therefore in the guilty sense of disobedience which does not and will not proceed to the action by which hearing becomes genuine hearing.”

⁹³William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47A (Dallas: Word, 1991), 38. The translation is Lane’s (emphasis added).

obedience plays a more significant role in Paul's argument than a mere word count suggests. This section therefore examines "obedience" in relation to issues that permeate Paul's argument.

Disobedience. Of course, obedience cannot be separated from its opposite, disobedience (παράκοή). Paul contrasts the two most clearly in his discussion of the one act of Adam and the one act of Christ in 5:12–21. In 5:19, Paul describes Adam's act as disobedience. Up to this point in the passage he has already described Adam's act as sin (ἀμαρτία, v. 12), transgression (παράβασις, v. 14),⁹⁴ and trespass (παράπτωμα, vv. 15, 17, 18). All of these terms serve as meaningful components of vital themes running through the letter. Although transgression and trespass are found less often,⁹⁵ Paul uses "sin" over forty times in chs. 3–14. The verb "to sin" (3:23) summarizes Paul's indictment of all humanity outside of Christ, both Jew and gentile, in 1:18–3:20. Furthermore, the categories Paul establishes in 5:12–21 of "under sin" (with its parallel "under law") and "under grace" and their corresponding "reigns" (βασιλεύω, 5:21; cf. 3:9, 6:14) establish the two groupings under which all humanity can be placed. These two categories form the basic salvation-historical paradigm within which all that Paul argues in the letter must be understood.

Paul also speaks of disobedience using the term ἀπειθεία. In 11:30–32, Paul summarizes his argument in chs. 9–11 in terms reminiscent of 1:18–3:20. All humanity has been bound together in disobedience (εἰς ἀπειθειαν, 11:32). Using Paul's terms from ch. 5, one could say, "bound under the reign of Adam." Once again, the relationship of obedience to a broad theme in Paul's argument becomes apparent.

⁹⁴In Hebrews 2:2, παράκοή and παράβασις are used in hendiadys.

⁹⁵Transgression, 2:23, 4:15, 5:14; trespassor, 2:25, 27; trespass, 4:25, 5:15–20 [5x], 11:1,2.

Righteousness. In contrast to Adam's act of disobedience (5:19), Paul describes Christ's act as one of obedience (διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς, 5:19). As with disobedience, Paul employs several terms synonymously to refer to the same phenomenon. In this case, he uses four interchangeable terms for "gift" to describe Christ's obedience.⁹⁶ For example, this gift exhibits God's righteousness, "the gift which is righteousness" (τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης, 5:17),⁹⁷ and can be described as a "righteous deed" (δικαιώματος, 5:18). James D. G. Dunn notes the parallels between "the gift of grace" of v. 15 and the "gift of righteousness" cited above in v. 17. He claims that through this repetition Paul can "recall the principal theme of 1:17–5:21."⁹⁸ 'Righteousness,' however, also serves as the 'principal theme' of chs. 9–11⁹⁹ and, in light of 1:17 and 15:8¹⁰⁰ should be recognized as a central theme of the letter as a whole.

Faith. In the discussion of the "obedience of faith" in 1:5, I argued that obedience and faith stand in apposition. With this link to faith, obedience once again becomes joined to a theme at the forefront of Paul's "reminder" to the Romans. Faith linked to God's act of righteousness in Christ constitutes the pivotal point of Paul's gospel (1:16–17; 3:22; 4:3, 16, 22–24; 9:30–32; 10:4). Of the numerous examples one could cite here, perhaps 9:30–10:4 makes this point most distinctly. Unbelieving Israel has not received God's eschatological offer of righteousness because they did not pursue it by faith.

⁹⁶Χάρισμα, vs. 15, 16; χάρις, vs. 15, 17; δωρεά, vs. 15, 17; δώρημα, v. 16.

⁹⁷The second genitive is exegetical (Moo, *Romans*, 339, n. 116).

⁹⁸*Romans* 1–8, 281.

⁹⁹This view understands these three chapters as Paul's defense against the charge that his gospel entails a failure of God's word (9:6a), meaning God's "covenant faithfulness" or "righteousness."

¹⁰⁰"Christ has become a servant on behalf of the truth of God [which is another way of referring to the righteousness of God; cf. 3:4] in order to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Χριστὸν δίκονον γεννηθῆσαι περιτομῆς ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ βεβαιῶσαι τὰς ἐπαγγελίας τῶν πατέρων).

Believing gentiles, on the other hand, have received this righteousness precisely because they did pursue it by faith.

Unbelief. As obedience can be linked to faith (10:16), so also disobedience can be linked to unbelief. In 10:16a Paul states that not all “obeyed” the gospel. He then quotes Isaiah in order to confirm the prophetic (1:2) proclamation of this fact by calling that disobedience failure to believe (10:16b; Isa. 53:1). Paul then quotes a litany of scriptural passages to confirm that judgment (10:17–20). He concludes with yet another word of judgment against Israel from Isaiah which characterizes them as “a disobedient (ἀπειθοῦντες) and obstinate people” (10:21; Isa. 65:2). Paul applies these arguments to the large portion of his fellow Jews of that day who do not believe what Paul claims God has done in Christ (an unbelief apparent from 9:30 onward through Paul’s own summary of his argument in 10:21). It is noteworthy that Paul characterizes some of these same Jews as disobedient (ἀπειθοῦντων) in 15:31.

Obedience in 12:1–15:13. Finally, although most of these themes punctuate the body of the letter through 11:36, few are mentioned in the paraenesis of 12:1–15:13. Yet, this fact does not negate the reality that Paul’s instructions in 12:1–15:13 characterize the obedience he wants the believers in Rome to undertake.

Two factors make this connection apparent: (1) In 12:1, Paul summons his auditors to “offer” (παραστήσαι) themselves to God, a clear echo of his call in 6:13, 16, 19 (παρίστανει and παρίστανω) to do the same. Paul is obviously returning to his earlier call to the Roman believers to live out their true identity in Christ.¹⁰¹ (2) Christ’s obedience not only makes Christian obedience possible (8:3–4), it also serves as the

¹⁰¹For more detailed lists of connections between the exhortations of ch. 6 and 12:1–2, see Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 103–04, and Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 708–09.

model for that obedience (6:4–5, 11–14; 15:7). The lifestyle Paul exhorts Roman believers to embrace in 12:1–15:13 is, therefore, one of obedience to the one to whom they have offered themselves.

In summary, obedience is inextricably linked to other key themes that permeate Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians. As a result, one can see that obedience constitutes a central concern of Paul’s throughout the letter. Mark D. Nanos summarizes the place of this theme in Romans as follows:

I suggest that Paul’s fascinating programmatic phrase ‘obedience of faith’ . . . which appears in the midst of these contexts throughout this letter . . . actually knits together and succinctly defines the various strands of this message to Rome.¹⁰²

Without doubt, faith and obedience entail a particular lifestyle emerging out of submission to the lordship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

“Eschatological Obedience” in Romans

In order to grasp what Paul thought of as “obedience” in Romans, one must also understand the eschatological context in which Paul understands and uses the idea in the letter.¹⁰³ The eschatological concepts that surround the appearance of the expression “obedience of faith” in 1:3–5 have already been noted above. But Paul speaks of obedience elsewhere in Romans in eschatological contexts as well. An analysis of its use in Romans will substantiate this claim.

¹⁰²*Mystery of Romans*, 219–20. This study would differ with Nanos’s interpretation of the meaning of the obedience of faith in the context of Romans. Nevertheless, Nanos correctly assesses the significance of this phrase for understanding Paul’s message in the letter.

¹⁰³This is not to deny that the concept of “obedience of faith” was present among Jewish people before Paul coined the phrase as it appears in Romans. It is merely a claim that *as Paul uses it in Romans*, the concept carries distinct eschatological overtones. See Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 13.

The “Two Ages” in 5:12–21. In 5:12–19, Paul develops both contrasts and comparisons between Adam and Christ. Adam’s disobedience introduced sin and death into human experience (5:12, 19). From that point on, sin and death “reigned” (5:14, 17, 21), even over those “under” the Mosaic law (5:20; 6:14). Christ’s act of obedience (5:19), however, made many righteous, enabling grace to reign just as sin had reigned under Adam (5:21).

Paul here employs the idea of “two ages” found in apocalyptic strands of Judaism.¹⁰⁴ “For apocalyptic Judaism, history is the basic category and everything else is understood in terms of God’s plan for his people, now being worked out in the history of the world.”¹⁰⁵ That history is divided into two stages: the present evil age and the future age when God will intervene in history and transform all of creation.

In Rom. 5:12–21, Paul describes the first age, initiated by Adam, as characterized by sin and death. The second, begun by Christ, Paul depicts as one of righteousness and life (5:17). Each age exerts power over those under its rule. In the first, sin and death reign. In the second, grace reigns leading to eternal life (5:21). For Paul, however, the age to come has now begun with Christ’s death and resurrection.¹⁰⁶

It is significant that beginning at 6:1 when Paul goes on to defend his gospel against the charge that it promotes sin (an objection first noted in 3:8), he describes the experience of the believer in precisely these same “two age” terms.¹⁰⁷ Paul explains that believers undergo a death to sin (the sinful “reign” of 5:21) like Christ’s through baptism (6:3–5). The purpose of that death was that the believer should, like

Christ, be raised to a new life lived to God (6:4b–5). Through that death, the believer’s existence under sin’s reign is destroyed (6:6),¹⁰⁸ freeing him or her from its control (6:7, 9). On this basis, Paul exhorts his hearers to act in accordance with their new life in Christ “under grace” (6:11–14).

At a fundamental level, then, Paul’s understanding of who believers are, is framed within this “two age” construct. Believers in Christ have passed from living under the reign of one to living under the reign of another. Life must be lived under one of these two dominions. Paul calls his hearers to “present yourselves to God” (παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ, 6:13) so that sin and disobedience will not rule over them (6:14). The implications of all this for the theme of obedience become clearer when we see how Paul relates the Spirit to the lifestyle of those under grace (6:14).

The Role of the Spirit. That the Spirit of God played an important role in the eschatological understanding of Second Temple Judaism and in that of the early Christians, is beyond question.¹⁰⁹ This phenomenon appears in Romans where Paul associates the activity of the Spirit with the new age inaugurated by Christ and with the future work of God in bringing that which has been inaugurated to completion.

Against those who would charge that the Mosaic Law was needed in order to effectively deal with sin, Paul answers that the Law proved unable¹¹⁰ to provide the answer for the Adamic sin problem due to the power of human sin itself (8:3a; 7:7–25). Yet, what the Law was unable to do, God made

¹⁰⁸να καταργηθῆ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἀμαρτίας

¹⁰⁹For the most recent extensive treatment with regard to eschatological expectations of Paul (pp. 803–26) and intertestamental Judaism (pp. 904–15), see Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). See also Terence Paige, “Holy Spirit,” *DPL*, 411; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 416–19; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 124.

¹¹⁰Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἠσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός (8:3a).

¹⁰⁴E.g. 4 Ezra 7:[50] “the Most High has made not one world but two” (*OTP*). See also 4 Ezra 7:[113], 8:1; 1 Enoch 71:15.

¹⁰⁵Paul J. Achtemeier, *Romans*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1985), 7.

¹⁰⁶For explicit statements elsewhere in Paul’s letters, see Gal. 1:4; 1 Cor. 11:10; and 2 Cor. 5:17.

¹⁰⁷In fact, Paul lays out the comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Christ in 5:12–21 in order to define the terms for his discussion of sin and Law in chs. 6–8.

possible through Jesus Christ (8:2, 3b–4). As a result, the righteous requirements of the Law can be fulfilled among believers who walk according to the Spirit (8:4–5).

The Spirit is clearly associated with the age introduced by Christ. In contrast to the life lived helplessly under the rule of sin described in 7:14–24, under the reign of grace the Spirit enables an obedience not possible under the Law. “By the Spirit” (8:13) the deeds of the body under sin can be put to death. In summary, the obedience to which Paul calls the Romans is one lived under grace, in the age introduced by Christ’s death and resurrection, and made possible by the work of the Spirit.

The Spirit is also linked with the completion of the redemption begun in Christ’s death and resurrection. Paul claims that those who are led by the Spirit are the true children of God (8:14–17),¹¹¹ and they await the future glory coming to God’s children (8:18). Until that time, the Spirit has been given as “the first fruit” (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος, 8:23). Reversing the traditional order whereby the first-fruits are given to God (Deut. 18:4), here the first-fruits are given by God to human beings, anticipating the completion of their “adoption” (ὁιοθεσίαν, 8:23).¹¹²

Paul’s Call to the Gentiles. Finally, Paul’s call is to bring about the “obedience of faith” among the gentiles (1:5; 16:26). The purpose of that call identifies it as one to be understood in eschatological terms. Johannes Munck, whose grasp of this particular point has proved influential, states

With Paul it is not a matter of a call to apostleship in general, but of a clearly defined apostleship in relation to the Gentiles. His personal call coincides with an objective eschatological

¹¹¹Paul anticipates this identification in 2:25–29.

¹¹²Gerhard Dellling, “ἀπαρχή,” *TDNT*, 1:486.

necessity, namely God’s plan that the Gospel is to be preached to the Gentiles before the end of the age.¹¹³

The obedience Paul was to foster was one belonging to the age to come as the gentiles were summoned to worship the one true God (15:9b–12) along with the Jews.

Summary. “Obedience” is thoroughly integrated with other key themes in Romans. Furthermore, it also forms a key part of the “two age” understanding of salvation-history that creates the backdrop to all of Paul’s theological argument. As such, the key role obedience plays in Paul’s thought in Romans must be recognized.

Conclusion

When Paul speaks of “fulfilling the righteous requirements of the Law” (8:4), he asserts that something is possible now that was not before. Paul had been commissioned to effect that reality among the gentiles as part of the eschatological activity of God. The claim made here is that this is precisely the “obedience of faith” that Paul speaks of in the letter-frame.¹¹⁴ Paul calls gentiles to become obedient by the power of the Spirit and thereby be able to fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law in a way that is not possible under reign of the old age. Hence, one may speak of “the new obedience.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³*Salvation of Mankind*, 41. See also the insightful summary of Munck’s understanding of Paul’s call and the subsequent influence of Munck on this issue in Paul W. Bowers, “Mission,” in *DPL*, 616–18.

¹¹⁴Richard B. Hays correctly observes that obedience of faith “evidently describes a particular response to the proclaimed gospel” (“ΠΙΣΤΙΣ and Pauline Christology: What Is at Stake?” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 4, *Looking Back, Pressing On*, eds. E. Elizabeth Johnson and David M. Hay [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], 40).

¹¹⁵The phrase comes from Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 253. Ridderbos, however, arrives at this title in a

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Eerdmans 1959 pgs 13-14

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The purpose for which he received grace and apostleship is stated to be “unto obedience of faith among all the nations”. “Obedience of faith” could mean “obedience to faith” (cf. Acts 6:7; II Cor. 10:5; I Pet. 1:22). If “faith” were understood in the objective sense of the object or content of faith, the truth believed, this would provide an admirably suitable interpretation and would be equivalent to saying “obedience to the gospel” (cf. 10:16; II Thess. 1:8; 3:14). But it is difficult to suppose that “faith” is used here in the sense of the truth of the gospel. It is rather the subjective act of faith in response to the gospel. And though it is not impossible to think of obedience to faith as the commitment of oneself to what is involved in the act of faith, yet it is much more intelligible and suitable to take “faith” as in apposition to “obedience” and understand it as the obedience which consists in faith. Faith is regarded as an act of obedience, of commitment to the gospel of Christ. Hence the implications of this expression “obedience of faith” are far-reaching. For the faith which the apostleship was intended to promote was not an evanescent act of emotion but the commitment of wholehearted devotion to Christ and to the truth of his gospel. It is to such faith that all nations are called.

Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1) appo-si-tion

Pronunciation[ap-uh-zish-uhn]

–noun 1. the act of placing together or bringing into proximity; juxtaposition.

2. the addition or application of one thing to another thing.

3. Grammar: a syntactic relation between expressions, usually consecutive, that have the same function and the same relation to other elements in the sentence, the second expression identifying or supplementing the first. In Washington, our first president, the phrase our first president is in apposition with Washington.

Yet, this obedience is not only for gentiles. Paul makes the case in 2:1–3:20 that apart from Christ, Jews just as much as gentiles live “under sin.” In fact, in 6:14 he equates life “under Law” with life “under sin.” Paul’s fellow Jews are therefore called to submit to the mastery of the Lord Jesus Christ (6:15–23) as well. Failure to do so is not only unbelief, but also disobedience (10:16). So Paul is called to bring the gentiles to the “obedience of faith,” but Jews are called to the same obedience.¹¹⁶

The “obedience of faith” therefore not only expresses “the design of Paul’s apostleship,” but also is a “delineation of the eschatological purposes of God.”¹¹⁷ Romans is Paul’s attempt to carry out his calling with regard to those in Rome so that those eschatological purposes, summarized by Paul as the “obedience of faith,” may become reality there.¹¹⁸ When that happens, Paul will have some “fruit” (1:13) among them since the Roman believers will be “strengthened” (1:11) in their faith.¹¹⁹ To that end he writes “as a way of reminding” (15:15; NRSV) them, so that by the Spirit the “obedience of faith” may become reality among them.

different manner and gives the concept a different sense than that outlined here.

¹¹⁶Against Nanos (*Mystery of Romans*, 224), who sees Paul’s call as limited to gentiles, and therefore the “obedience of faith” as limited to gentiles as well. That Paul’s call was directed toward the gentiles is obvious. Such a focus should not be used to restrict the scope of those who were to walk in such obedience. Paul makes it clear in Romans 1:18–3:20, 23: his fellow Jews were as steeped in sin as the gentiles.

¹¹⁷Don B. Garlington, *Faith, Obedience and Perseverance*, 12.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 10; Matthew Black states that “to win obedience from the Gentiles” (NRSV translation of 15:18) is “the main purpose of the Epistle to the Romans” (*Romans*, 203).

¹¹⁹Such obedience, emerging from a strengthened faith, was the goal not only of the letter to Rome but of his anticipated trip there (1.11) (Minear, *Obedience of Faith*, 1).

SOLD OUT AT ROMANS 7

Dr. Vic Reasoner

<http://www.fwponline.cc/v10n1reasoner.html>

The Church fathers, until Augustine in the fifth century, generally interpreted Romans 7 as pre-Christian experience. According to Augustine the conflict of Romans 7 remains the highest stage of Christian experience. To this day Calvinists usually follow Augustine, interpreting Romans 7 as Christian experience. “The Arminian controversy really began upon the exegesis of this passage,” according to M. B. Riddle in Lange’s Commentary.⁽¹⁾

Jacob Hermansz was a Dutch theologian of the late sixteenth century. We know him by his Latin name, Jacobus Arminius. He went to Geneva to study under John Calvin’s son-in-law and successor, Theodore Beza. He returned to Amsterdam to pastor. He had the reputation of being a brilliant preacher, a gifted Bible exegete, and a humble and dedicated Christian. His expositional preaching drew large crowds.

He was considered the greatest scholar of his day. He was the first ever to receive the Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Leiden. He was later professor of theology at the university, until his death in 1609.

In 1589 Dirck Coornhert declared that the supralapsarian theory of Beza actually made God the author of sin. Arminius was commissioned to answer this charge. He finally concluded that Coornhert was right. No one could refute his scholarship, but preachers began to openly attack him from the pulpit. His words were twisted out of context and his enemies tried to destroy his influence. Finally, he asked for a public hearing, but he died before the synod convened. He was about 49 when he died, and his death was probably hastened by the stress he was under.

Although it was Arminius who had called for an open forum, the Synod of Dort (1618-9) only solidified the Calvinistic position. His followers, the Remonstrants, were not allowed to enter into the debate. They were either put to death, banished, or imprisoned. They were unable to hold any office in the church or state until 1625, when they were granted limited tolerance.

The writings of Arminius have been compiled in three volumes. The second longest treatise we have is his “Dissertation on the True and Genuine Sense of the Seventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.” It runs 258 pages.

Within one hundred years after his death, the Remonstrants had drifted toward Pelagianism. It was John Wesley who led a move back to evangelical Arminianism, even naming his magazine *The Arminian*.

The early Methodists held that Romans 7 was not a description of Christian experience. Wesley said, “To have spoken this of himself, or any true believer, would have been foreign to the whole scope of his discourse.”⁽²⁾ Wesley saw verses 7-25 as a digression by Paul. Adam Clarke stated, “The very genius of Christianity demonstrates that nothing like this can, with any propriety, be spoken of a genuine Christian.”⁽³⁾ John Fletcher devoted an entire section to Romans 7 in his “Last Check to Antinomianism.”⁽⁴⁾ He challenged the Calvinists to drop “the yoke of carnality which they try to fix upon St. Paul’s neck.”⁽⁵⁾ Richard Watson summarized the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans, saying:

The moral state of man is traced in the experience of St. Paul as an example, from his conviction for sin by the law of God revealed to him in its spirituality, to his entrance into the condition and privilege of a justified state.⁽⁶⁾

The Holy Spirit is only mentioned once in the entire chapter (verse 6). He is referred to some twenty times in the following chapter. Romans 7 makes no mention of the grace of God. It is a classic psychological analysis of

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the struggle between the conscience and the will. Every sinner knows the conflict between what he ought to do and what he wants to do. Desire usually wins out over duty.

The Greek personal pronoun ego is used eight times in this description. In Greek, as with many other languages, the subject is understood in the verb. Paul supplied an additional word (ego) for emphasis. He does not use it once in chapter 8. Chapter 7 closes with a double pronoun in verse 25, "I myself." Paul describes a man trying to be a Christian by himself.

But many people are bothered by a change in the verb tense. Through verse 13, the aorist tense was used. Then Paul switched to the present tense and used it through the end of the chapter. J. I. Packer declared, "Grammatically, therefore, the natural way to read it would be as a transcript of Paul's self-knowledge at the time of writing...." He argued the present tense must have a present reference and describe something distinct from the past experience of the previous verses.⁽⁷⁾

Calvinists are correct in observing the fact of the tense change. They are incorrect in their interpretation of what that fact signifies. In this case, a careful reading of the context will shed a great deal of light on the commentaries! This digression is introduced by the clear statement found in 6:14 and concluded by an equally clear summary in 8:2. Salvation delivers from sin.

How can the context be harmonized with the switch in verb tenses? In *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, we are told one of the special uses of the present tense is the "historical present." "The present tense is thus employed when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence."⁽⁸⁾ Today this literary technique is called a "flashback." Whether or not this is accepted as the proper interpretation for Romans 7:14-25 probably depends upon your own theological presuppositions. The explanation that Paul is remembering his pre-Christian experience is allowed by Greek grammar, however.

Recently a leading Calvinistic exponent, Anthony Hoekema, Calvin Seminary professor emeritus, reversed himself and declared that he no longer believes Romans 7 describes a regenerate person. He stated:

The mood of frustration and defeat that permeates this section does not comport with the mood of victory in terms of which Paul usually describes the Christian life. The person pictured is still a captive of the law of sin (7:23), whereas the believer described in 6:17-18 is no longer a slave to sin.⁽⁹⁾

That kind of intellectual honesty is rare. How would he have fared at the Synod of Dort?

While Hoekema's comments are refreshing, it is very disheartening to read comments and hear sermons coming from the holiness movement on Romans 7. Keep in mind that these men consider themselves defenders of Wesleyan-Arminian orthodoxy. W. B. Godbey said:

Every Christian, when converted, sets out to obey the Lord on earth like the angels in heaven, thus keeping the law in the beauty of holiness; but destined to defeat, failure, mortification despondency, culminating in desperation, like Paul in the verse when he cried out, "O wretched man that I am!"⁽¹⁰⁾

H. C. Morrison wrote:

The Christian reader will at once recognize the undoubted truthfulness of these Scriptures for they are corroborated by the every-day experience of believing souls, who, struggling against the "old man," have often been made to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

For Morrison, the solution to this problem is to receive the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which he equates with entire sanctification.⁽¹¹⁾ Early Methodism taught that occurred along with justification.⁽¹²⁾

Charles Ewing Brown explained what he thought Romans 7:7-25 meant:

Assuming, then, that we have in this chapter an account of the experience of a true and even of an advanced Christian, we learn that in every Christian there is a mixture of good and evil....⁽¹³⁾

In Great Holiness Classics: Holiness Teaching Today, not only are the statements by Morrison and Brown reprinted, but Milton Agnew describes Christian experience:

After conversion he discovers in himself a new nature that does “joyfully concur with the law of God” (Romans 7:22). But he learns to his distress that he also has an old nature, an “old self,” aroused and battling for supremacy. There occurs a profoundly disturbing struggle between the two natures, the two “I’s” of 7:14-25....”⁽¹⁴⁾

William Greathouse, writing in *Beacon Bible Commentary*, admits the primary meaning of Romans 7 is the unrenewed man. Yet he claims that the passage has a secondary meaning in which it describes a carnal babe in Christ.⁽¹⁵⁾ We are warned in *Biblical Hermeneutics* that “if the Scripture has more than one meaning, it has no meaning at all.”⁽¹⁶⁾

Nazarene scholar Ralph Earle encouraged preachers to apply romans 7 both before and after conversion in *Word Meanings in the New Testament*.⁽¹⁷⁾ Therefore, fellow Nazarene, Kenneth Grider seems to be overly optimistic when he asserts that “anyone in the Holiness movement knows that a regenerate person does not sin willfully, and yet this person depicted in Romans 7 seems to do that.” He blames the “folk theology” of ministers and teachers for spreading the idea that Romans 7 depicts a saved man.⁽¹⁸⁾ But as long as his denomination is reprinting *Great Holiness Classics*, which are not necessarily great classics nor Wesleyan, it is hard to pin all the blame on the uneducated.

Is it any wonder the pew is confused when the pulpit sounds an uncertain note? Is it any wonder the student is unclear when the teacher tries to ride the fence?

It does matter what we believe about Romans 7. Our interpretation of the passage is like a watershed. Whichever way we go will lead us to drastically different theological conclusions. The man described in Romans 7 was a slave to sin. It is true that he is unsanctified; he is also unsaved. We need not discount regeneration in order to make room for sanctification. For too long the holiness movement has tried to establish the need for a second work by demonstrating the failure of the first work.

Let us declare a moratorium on such illustrations as supposed Christians losing their temper and kicking the cow, biting the cow, or beating the cow. According to Galatians 5:20, outbursts of anger are a work of the flesh. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh. Those who walk after the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. True Christians are enabled by the Spirit to control sinful desires. Entire sanctification is a completion or perfection of what God began in regeneration. If nothing changed when we got saved, then we are simply making two trips to the altar to get saved, and claiming we have the second blessing. If we accept the second blessing on the basis of logical deduction, it is possible to have made two or more trips forward and still be a slave to sin.

The holiness movement has adopted the theology of John Calvin, while claiming to be the defender of John Wesley. No wonder we profess so much and live so far short of our profession.

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Five Views on Sanctification 1987

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(the literal translation of the Greek word *sarx*) and that the word *flesh* as used in this text (and in many other New Testament passages) means the tendency within human beings to disobey God in every area of life. I also agree that Christians have a new nature, as defined above.

My basic problem with Walvoord's presentation is that, in my judgment, he fails to do full justice to the fact that a decisive break with sin was brought about by Christ for believers (Rom. 6:6)—so that sin, though still present in the believer, no longer has dominion (v. 14)—and to the amazing truth that the believer is now indeed a new creature, old things having passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). When the author says (p. 209) that "the basic problem of sanctification from the Augustinian-dispensational perspective is how individuals with these two diverse aspects in their total character [the old nature and the new] can achieve at least a relative measure of sanctification and righteousness in their life," he gives the impression that the Christian is something like a spiritual seesaw with two contradictory types of inner tendencies. With both tugging at one's heart, a believer can go either way.

This picture of inner conflict may be true as far it goes, but where does the newness of the Christian enter in? Does not the believer now live a life of victory in the Spirit's strength (Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 5:16–24; 1 John 5:4)? Granted, this victory is not sinless perfection, but is it not nevertheless a real victory? Are we not indeed new persons in Christ? Do we not now "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4 RSV)? When Christians look at themselves, should not the emphasis fall on the new rather than on the old? (See my book *The Christian Looks at Himself*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977].)

Walvoord interprets the "old man," or "old self," as meaning "the former life" of the believer, and the "new self" as meaning "the new manner of life stemming from the new nature" (p. 208). I do not believe that this view does justice to Paul's teaching. "Old self" I understand to mean the total person enslaved by sin—this total person we Christians no longer are (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:9). "New self" means the total person ruled by the Holy Spirit. This new self the believer has put on, but it is being continually renewed (Col. 3:10). Believers, therefore, should see themselves as new persons who are being progressively renewed—*genuinely* new but not yet *totally* new. (The biblical basis for this view of the old and the new self can be found in my chapter, pp. 78–82.)

Another basic point of difference I have is the interpreta-

Response to Walvoord

Anthony A. Hoekema

The points made in John Walvoord's chapter with which I agree include the following: that the Holy Spirit plays an indispensable role in sanctification, that sanctification involves both sovereign grace and human responsibility, that sanctification must be progressive, and that the baptism of the Holy Spirit means the placing of people into the body of Christ—a divine blessing that is to be distinguished from the filling of the Holy Spirit (see my *Holy Spirit Baptism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972]). I also agree with Walvoord that the regenerated person has eternal security, that the believer cannot attain sinless perfection in this present life, and that such perfection will be reached only in the life to come.

Walvoord's main point, as I see it, is that Christians have two distinct natures: a "sin nature" and a "new nature." The sin nature is described as "a complex of human attributes that demonstrate a desire and predisposition to sin," and the new nature as "a complex of attributes having a predisposition and inclination to righteousness" (p. 206).

I have some difficulty with the expression "sin nature." I prefer the term "sinful nature," which is used in the best-known Reformed creed, the Heidelberg Catechism, and in the NIV. Questions of terminology aside, however, I agree that Christians do have a sinful nature, as defined here, which struggles against the new nature that is received in regeneration. I agree that, according to Galatians 5:16–17, believers must still fight against sinful impulses coming from "the flesh"

tion of Romans 7:14–25. Walvoord thinks this passage describes the regenerate person's struggle with sin. He quotes from a 1962 article of mine, in which I supported this view. But I have since changed my mind. I now see this passage as a description, seen through the eyes of a regenerate person, of an unregenerate person (e.g., an unconverted Pharisaic Jew) struggling to fight sin through the law alone, apart from the strength of the Spirit. I admit that this position is not the usual Reformed interpretation. I should add that the view of the Christian as a new person does not stand or fall with the exegesis of Romans 7:14–25 here defended.

What is the Scriptural basis for this interpretation? First, Romans 7:14–25 reflects and elaborates on the condition pictured in verse 5: "When we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death." This verse obviously describes unregenerate persons, in contrast to the regenerate persons described in verses 4 and 6. Verse 13 reads, "In order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good." This passage describes the same type of person pictured in verse 5 (namely, an unregenerate person); note the parallels: sinful passions aroused by the law produced fruit for death (v. 5), and sin, through what was good (i.e., the law), produced death (v. 13). Verses 14 and 15, which begin the controversial passage, have three *fors* in them (see the Greek text, *ASV, NASB*). By means of these *fors* Paul ties in what follows with what he has just finished saying. The rest of chapter 7, therefore, elaborates on the condition of the unregenerate person described in verses 5 and 13.

Second, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit or of his strength for overcoming sin in Romans 7:14–25, but chapter 8 has at least sixteen references to the Spirit.

Third, the mood of frustration and defeat that permeates this section does not comport with the mood of victory in terms of which Paul usually describes the Christian life. The person pictured is still a captive of the law of sin (7:23), whereas the believer described in 6:17–18 is no longer a slave to sin.

Finally, Romans 7:25 reads: "I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (*RSV*). The words "I of myself" are emphatic in the Greek. Paul is here describing a person who tries to "go it alone," to keep God's law in his or her own strength, rather than in the strength of the Spirit. I believe, therefore, that the biblical description of the normal Christian life is found, not in Romans 7:14–25, but in Romans 6 and 8.

Ancient Christian Commentary On Scripture
New Testament VI Romans General Editor THOMAS ODEN
1998 pg 183

OVERVIEW: In Romans 7:15 and the following verses Paul describes the plight of persons who know that they are sinners but who cannot escape from the sins they commit. Most of the Fathers believed that here Paul was adopting the persona of an unregenerate man, not describing his own struggles as a Christian. As far as they were concerned, becoming a Christian would deliver a person from the kind of dilemma the apostle is outlining here. Romans 7:22 would appear to create a difficulty for those who believe that Paul was describing the unregenerate person, but some of the Fathers resolved it by saying that the inmost self was the rational intellect. As far as they were concerned, any rational person would automatically take delight in the law of God because it is supremely rational. The difficulty comes in trying to move from theory to practice. The dilemma of unregenerate persons is insoluble apart from the grace of God given to us in Christ. This sets us free from the law of sin and death and allows us to serve the law of God as right reason dictates.

Unregenerate

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE ENGLISH TEXT WITH INTRODUCTION,
EXPOSITION AND NOTES

by

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7:7-13 TRANSITIONAL EXPERIENCE

In verses 7-13 the apostle has delineated for us some phase of his experience. Since his experience as thus portrayed arose from his own sinfulness and from the operations and effects of the law of God as it was registered in his consciousness, he is aware that his experience cannot be unique. Other men are likewise sinful and the law of God must evoke and occasion similar experiences in the hearts of others. He is writing thus as representative of what must occur in the experience of others. And his main interest is, without doubt, not to put on record a chapter in human biography but to set forth the relations of the law of God to our sin and, particularly, while, on the one hand, demonstrating the impotency of the law to deliver from sin, yet, on the other, vindicating the law from any aspersion as the author of sin. But the question is: what phase of his experience is here portrayed? Is it his experience as a regenerate or as an unregenerate man? It is quite clear that it is not his experience as an unregenerate man in a state of self-complacency and spiritual torpor. He is convicted of sin (vs. 7). He is no longer alive in the sense of verse 9. The commandment had come home and had aroused the covetous lust of his heart. But is he regenerate? There is no indication in this passage that the experience is that of one who had become dead to sin by the body of Christ. Perhaps most conclusive of all to this effect is the fact that the passions of sins which were through the law, referred to in verse 5, are precisely the passions described in this passage—"sin taking occasion wrought in me through the commandment all manner of lust" (vs. 8). But in verse 5 this state is located as the time "when we were in the flesh" and this is none other than the pre-regenerate state. We must conclude, therefore, that this passage is an account of pre-regenerate experience. It is not, however, the period of pre-regenerate self-complacency but his experience after he had been aroused from his spiritual torpor and awakened to a sense of his sin. It is the preparatory and transitional phase of his spiritual pilgrimage when, shaken by the conviction which the law of God ministers, his state of mind was no longer one of unperturbed calm and self-esteem.

Commentary on Romans Kregel Classic Reprint
F. Godet Orig 1883 pgs 292-294

Conclusion regarding the passage vv. 14-25.—Before entering on the study of this passage, we had concluded from the context, and from the section taken as a whole, that this part could only refer to Paul's state as a *Pharisee*. It was the natural consequence of the identity of the subject of the passage vv. 7-13 (on which all, or nearly all, are agreed) with that of the section vv. 14-25. This view seems to us to have been confirmed by the detailed study of the whole passage. Paul has avoided, with evident design, every expression specially belonging to the Christian sphere, and the term *πνεῦμα*, the *Spirit*, in particular, to make use only of terms denoting the natural faculties of the

human soul, like that of *νοῦς*, the mind. The contrast in this respect with viii. 1-11 is striking. We can thus understand why this is the passage in all Paul's Epistles which presents the most points of contact with profane literature. The state of the pious Jew under the law does not differ essentially from that of the sincere heathen seeking to practice goodness as it is revealed to him by conscience (ii. 14, 15).—Neither has it seemed to us that the verbs in the present offer an insurmountable obstacle to this explanation. Not only did ver. 24 prove with what liveliness Paul in writing this passage recalled his impressions of former days. But it must also be remembered, and Paul cannot forget it, that what for him is a past, is a present for all his sincere fellow-countrymen of whom he is himself the normal representative. Finally, does he not feel profoundly, that as soon as he abstracts from Christ and his union with Him, he himself becomes the natural man, and consequently also the legal Jew, struggling with sin in his own strength, without other aid than the law, and consequently overcome by the evil instinct, the flesh? What he describes then is the law grappling with the evil nature, where these two adversaries encounter one another without the grace of the gospel interposing between them. No doubt this is what explains the analogy between this picture and so many Christian experiences, and which has misled so many excellent commentators. How often does it happen that the believer finds nothing more in the gospel than a law, and a law more burdensome still than that of Sinai! For the demands of the cross go infinitely deeper than those of the Israelitish law. They penetrate, as a sacred writer says, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). Now as soon as the Christian has allowed the bond between Christ and his heart to be relaxed, however little, he finds himself face to face with the gospel, exactly like the Jew face to face with the law. Obligated to carry into effect the injunctions of Jesus and the apostles in his own strength, since Christ no longer lives in him, is it surprising that he should make the same, and even more bitter experiences, than the Jew under the yoke of the Decalogue? Faith in Christ is usually supposed to be a fact accomplished once for all, and which should necessarily and naturally display its consequences, as a tree produces its fruits. It is forgotten that in the spiritual domain nothing is done which does not require to be continually done again, and that what is not done again to-day, will to-morrow begin to be undone. Thus it is that the bond of the soul to Christ, whereby we have become His branches, relaxes the instant we do not re-form it with new active force and begins to break with every unpardonable act of infidelity. The branch becomes barren, and yet Christ's law demanding its fruitfulness remains (John xv.). Thus, then, he recommences the experience of the Jew. And this state is the more frequent and natural because we Christians of the present day have not passed, like Paul, from the law to faith through that profound and radical crisis which had made the one dispensation in him succeed to the other. From the fact of our Christian education, it happens rather that we learn to know the gospel at once as law and grace, and that we make, so to speak, the experiences of Jew and Christian simultaneously, and that very often (when there has been no marked conversion) to the end of our life. But we must beware

1 Mens aliud suadet. . . . Alindque cupido
(Desire counsels me in one direction, reason in another.)—OVID.
Deteriora sequor. . . . Video meliora proboque
(I see the better part, and approve it; but I follow the worse.)—OVID.
Scilicet ut esse me decrevit, facere non quibam miser
(I knew what I ought to be, but, unhappy that I am, I could not do it.)—PLAUTUS.
Quid est quod nos aliud tendentes aliud trahit.
(What then is it that, when we would go in one direction, drags us in the other?)
Ο ἀναγράφων ὁ ἑαυτὸν εἶλε, οὐ τρεσὶ, καὶ ὁ μὴ θέσας, τρεσὶ.
(He who sins does not what he would. And does what he would not.)—EPICURUS.
We need scarcely add the well-known comparison of Plato, which represents the human soul as like a chariot drawn by two horses, the one of which draws it upward, the other downward, of concluding therefrom that this state of half Jew half Christian is normal, and may be justified by the passage, Rom. vii. It is against this enervating view, resting on a false interpretation of our chapter, that the most recent religious movement has just sought to protest. It has brought out forcibly the difference between the spiritual state described in chap. vii. and that which chap. viii. describes, and claimed for the latter only the name of Christian. Is not the one in fact what Paul calls *oldness of the letter*, the other, *newness of Spirit* (vii. 6)? These cannot be, as Philippi would have it, the two aspects of one and the same state; they are two opposite states. We ought to humble ourselves because of the last traces of the former, when we find them in ourselves, as for something abnormal, and aspire after the complete possession of the glorious privileges which constitute the second.

Of the various explanations mentioned above (pp. 15, 16), we therefore set aside the application of this passage: 1. To mankind in general; 2. To the Jewish people, considered in their external and national history; 3. To Paul, as the representative of regenerate Christians; 4. Neither can we share Hofmann's opinion, who finds here only the entirely personal experiences of Paul. How would those experiences interest the Church, and deserve a place in the description of the *method of salvation*, given in the Epistle to the Romans, if they had not something of a prototypical character? Paul himself ascribes to them this character, Eph. iii. 8-10, and 1 Tim. i. 12-16. He regards himself as the normal example of what must happen to every man who, in ignorance of Christ, or thinking to dispense with Him, will yet take the law in earnest. It is only as such that he can think of presenting himself prominently in the pronoun I, in a work of supreme importance like our Epistle.—As little can we accept the explanation proposed in the treatise of Pearsall Smith: *Bondage and Liberty*. According to this writer, as we have said, the apostle is here giving the account of a sad experience through which he passed, some time after his conversion, by yielding to the attempt to "render himself perfect by his own efforts," so that in consequence of this aberration sin recovered life in him; he saw himself deprived of his intimate communion with Christ, and consequently also of victory over sin (see p. 14). This idea assuredly does not merit refutation, especially when this example of the apostle's alleged aberration is contrasted with that of an American preacher, who for forty years had known only the experience of chaps. vi. and viii. of the Romans, those of triumph, and never the experience of chap. vii. that of defeat (p. 28)! We cannot express our conclusion better than in these words of M. Bonnet (*Comment.* p. 85): "The apostle is speaking here neither of the natural man in his state of voluntary ignorance and sin, nor of the child of God, born anew, set free by grace, and animated by the Spirit of Christ; but of the man whose conscience, awakened by the law, has entered sincerely, with fear and trembling, but still in his own strength, into the desperate struggle against evil;"—merely adding that in our actual circumstances the law which thus awakens the conscience and summons it to the struggle against sin, is the law in the form of the Gospel, and of the example of Jesus Christ, taken apart from justification in Him and sanctification by Him.¹

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THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL: PAUL AND THE LAW

J. D. G. Dunn

A fresh assessment of Paul and of Romans in particular has been made possible and necessary by the new perspective on Paul provided by E. P. Sanders, *Paul*, 1-12, and pt. 1 (though Limbeck's [*Ordnung*] earlier critique of the negative depiction of the law in *OR* and "intertestamental" scholarship should also be mentioned; see also particularly Gaston, "Torah," 48-54, and Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, 2-18; for examples of discussion in terms of older categories see Kuss, "Nomos," with review of earlier literature; Lang, "Gesetz"; and Hübner, *Paul and the Law*). Sanders has been successful in getting across a point which others had made before him (e.g., Stendahl, "Conscience," and Dahl, on justification, *Studies*, particularly 110-11, 117-18), but which had been too little "heard" within the community of NT scholarship. The point is that Protestant exegesis has for too long allowed a typically Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith to impose a hermeneutical grid on the text of Romans (see, e.g., the way in which Bornkamm, *Paul*, 137, sets up his discussion of the subject). The emphasis is important, that God is the one who justifies the ungodly (4:5), and understandably this insight has become an integrating focus in Lutheran theology with tremendous power. The problem, however, lay in what that emphasis was set in opposition to. The antithesis to "justification by faith"—what Paul speaks of as "justification by works"—was understood in terms of a system whereby salvation is earned through the *merit of good works*. This was based partly on the comparison suggested in the same passage (4:4-5), and partly on the Reformation rejection of a system where indulgences could be bought and merits accumulated. The latter protest was certainly necessary and justified, and of lasting importance, but the hermeneutical mistake was made of reading this antithesis back into the NT period, of assuming that Paul was protesting against in Pharisaic Judaism precisely what Luther protested against in the pre-Reformation church—the mistake, in other words, of assuming that the Judaism of Paul's

day was coldly legalistic, teaching a system of earning salvation by the merit of good works, with little or no room for the free forgiveness and grace of God ("the imaginary Rabbinic Judaism, created by Christian scholars, in order to form a suitably lurid background for the Epistles of St. Paul"—Montefiore, *Judaism and Paul*, 65; in addition to the examples cited by Sanders, *Paul*, and Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles*, see, e.g., Leenhardt, *Romans*, passim, and Ridderbos, *Paul*, 130–35).

It was this depiction of first-century Judaism which Sanders showed up for what it was—a gross caricature, which, regrettably, has played its part in feeding an evil strain of Christian antisemitism. On the contrary, however, as Sanders demonstrated clearly enough, Judaism's whole religious self-understanding was based on the premise of grace—that God had freely chosen Israel and made his covenant with Israel to be their God and they his people. This covenant relationship was regulated by the law, not as a way of entering the covenant, or of gaining merit, but as the way of living *within* the covenant; and that included the provision of sacrifice and atonement for those who confessed their sins and thus repented. Paul himself indicates the attitude clearly by his citation of Lev. 18:5 in Rom. 10:5—"the person who does these things [what the law requires] shall live by them." This attitude Sanders characterized by the now well-known phrase "covenantal nomism"—that is, "the maintenance of status" among the chosen people of God by observing the law given by God as part of that covenant relationship (e.g., *Paul*, 544; see further Dunn, "New Perspective"; similarly Limbeck, *Ordnung*, 29–35; cf. Ziesler's earlier phrase "covenant-keeping righteousness"—*Righteousness*, 95). Sanders' review had not encompassed all the available Jewish literature of the period, but it has been confirmed by the work of one of my own postgraduates, D. Garlington ("Obedience"), who has demonstrated the consistency of the "covenantal nomism" pattern throughout the Jewish writings contained in "the Apocrypha." See also Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, who notes, however, that the pattern is not so consistent through all diaspora literature (pp. 14–15, 29, 48, 77, 141, 167, 178–81, 236–37). For the importance of the covenant in Judaism leading up to and at the time of Paul, see also particularly Jaubert (*Alliance*).

Unfortunately Sanders did not follow through this insight far enough or with sufficient consistency. Instead of setting Paul more fully against and within this context of Judaism so understood, he advanced the thesis that Paul had jumped in arbitrary fashion (as a result of his Damascus road encounter) from one system (covenantal nomism) into another (Christianity; *Paul*, 550–52), leaving his theology, particularly in reference to the law, incoherent and contradictory (*Law*). On this last point he has been given strong support by Räisänen (*Law*), who also argues that Paul "intended to portray Judaism as a religion of merit and achievement" ("Conversion," 411) and that he thus "gives a totally distorted picture of the Jewish re-

ligion" ("Legalism," 72 [in agreement with Schoeps, *Paul*, 200]; though with an important concession in Räisänen, *Tórah*, 183). Just as puzzling from a different angle is the fact that the "covenantal nomism" of Palestinian Judaism as described by Sanders bears a striking similarity to what has been commonly understood as the religion of Paul himself (good works as the fruit of God's prior acceptance by grace; Hooker, "Covenantal Nomism")! What, then, can it be to which Paul is objecting?

I. Exegetical Questions

The exegetical questions exposed here focus very largely on the issue of Paul and the law (hence, not surprisingly, the titles of the books by Sanders and Räisänen, as also by Hübner). This is important since the law actually forms a major secondary theme of the letter, to an extent not usually appreciated ("an indispensable accompanying motif"—Hahn, "Gesetzeverständnis," 30). Rather striking is the way in which Paul regularly in Romans develops part of his discussion before bringing in the law (2:12ff.; 3:27ff.; 4:13ff.; 5:20; ch. 7), while in other key sections it is the role of the law which provides a crucial hinge in the argument (3:19–21; 8:2–4; 9:3–10:5). Since these references taken together span the complete argument of chs. 1–11 in all its stages, there can be little doubt that the tension between his gospel and the law and his concern to resolve that tension provide one of Paul's chief motivations in penning the letter.

Moreover, it is hardly a coincidence that several of the most recalcitrant exegetical problems in Romans are bound up with this central secondary theme of the letter. Thus it is significant once again that Sanders and Räisänen are unable to integrate Paul's treatment of the law in ch. 2 into the rest of his theology (Sanders, *Law*, 147—"true self-contradiction"; Räisänen, "Difficulties," 307—"contradictory lines of thought"; also *Law*). The use of *nomos* in 3:27–31 has caused unending puzzlement: should we take *nomos* in v. 27 as a reference to the law or translate "principle"? And how can Paul claim in v. 31 to be "establishing the law"? The centrality of the law in ch. 7 has been recognized, but how and whether that insight facilitates the exegesis of 7:14–25 in particular is a matter of unresolved controversy, with the meaning of *nomos* in 7:23 and 8:2 disputed in the same way as in 3:27. In the obviously crucial resumptive section, 9:30–10:4, there is equal controversy over the meaning of *nomos dikaiosynēs*, "law of righteousness" (9:31), and *telos nomou*, "end of the law" (10:4). And in the parenetic section the claim that love of neighbor is a fulfillment of the law (13:8–10) causes further puzzlement to those who think that Paul has turned his back on Judaism and its law. As Räisänen's withering critique has underlined (*Law*, 23–28, 42–83), the problem of holding together in an integrated whole both the positive and the negative

statements regarding the law in Romans has not reached a satisfactory solution; though Räisänen's own atomistic treatment of the texts is itself a critical hindrance to an integrated and coherent overview of the theme.

Clearly, then, this major secondary motif in the letter presents problems of central importance for our understanding of the letter. It may be, indeed, that they all hang together, and a correct resolution of one may carry with it resolution of the others. At all events it will be necessary to gain a clearer view of the role of the law in first-century Judaism before we venture into the letter itself. Only when we can take for granted what Paul and his readers took for granted with regard to the law and its function will we be able to hear the allusions he was making and understand the argument he was offering. The confusion and disagreement still remaining with regard to the passages listed above strongly suggest that the role of the law, both within the Judaism against which Paul was reacting and within the new perspective on Paul, has not as yet been properly perceived. In what follows I will therefore attempt briefly to "set the scene" for an understanding of this important integrating strand of the letter.

II. *Nomos* as Equivalent of Torah

First of all, we should clarify a point that has occasioned some misunderstanding and confusion, namely, the appropriateness of *nomos*/law as the translation equivalent or "meaning" of *torah*/Torah. Since Schechter (*Rabbinic Theology*) and Dodd ("Law") it has frequently been claimed that *torah* does not mean *nomos* or "law"; rather, *torah* means simply "instruction" or "teaching," and the Torah (the Pentateuch, or indeed the whole of the scriptures) includes more than law. According to an influential body of opinion, this equation of *torah*/Torah with (the) law as given by the LXX translation of *torah* using the narrower word *nomos*, subsequently contributed to Paul's "distorted" understanding of his ancestral faith, and lies at the root of the modern characterization of Judaism as "legalistic" (e.g., Dodd, "Law," 34; Schoeps, *Paul*, 29; Sandmel, *Paul*, 47–48; cited by Westerholm, "Torah," 330–31; also Lapidé-Stuhlman, *Rabbi*, 39). However, Westerholm has now shown clearly (1) that *nomos* can be an appropriate rendering of *torah* (e.g., Gen. 26:5; Exod. 12:49; Lev. 26:46); (2) that the technical use of *torah* to refer to a collection which spells out Israel's covenantal obligations" goes back to Deuteronomy, which provides the basis for Torah = *nomos* = law as an appropriate title for the Pentateuch (e.g., Deut. 4:8; 30:10; 32:46); and (3) that Paul's use of *nomos* to sum up Israel's obligations as set out by Moses is "fully in line with Hebrew usage of *torah*" (cf. e.g., Rom. 2:12, 17–18; 7:12; and 10:5 with 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 7:6, 10, 12, 14, 26; Neh. 8:14; 9:14, 34; and Jer. 32:23).

In particular, the basic understanding of "covenantal nomism" is more or less self-evident in the central foundation act of Israel as a nation—the

exodus from Egypt and the giving of the law at Sinai. As quintessentially expressed in Exod. 20 and Deut. 5, the law (here the ten commandments—cf. Deut. 4:8 with 5:1) follows upon the prior act of divine initiative ("I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt . . ."); obedience to this law is Israel's response to divine grace, not an attempt to gain God's favor conceived as grudgingly given and calculatingly dispensed. As already implied, the fullest and most sustained expression of this basic Jewish theologoumenon is Deuteronomy, the classic statement of Israel's covenant theology: the statutes and ordinances of the law (chs. 5–28) set out explicitly as God's covenant made with Israel (5:2–3; 29:1); the promise (and warning) repeatedly reaffirmed in numerous variations, "This do and live" (e.g., 4:1, 10, 40; 5:29–33; 6:1–2, 18, 24; 7:12–13; etc.; see also Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, 9–16, on 2:13 and 10:5). Not surprisingly, in Romans Paul interacts more frequently with Deuteronomy than with any other section of the Pentateuch; and his exposition of Deut. 30:12–14 is at the center of his attempt to expound the continuing and wider significance of the law in a way which retrieves the law from a too narrowly defined understanding of "This do and live" (10:5–13).

It is unnecessary to enter the debate about how deeply rooted this understanding of covenant and law was in pre-Exilic Israelite religion (see, e.g., Nicholson). Whatever the actual facts in that case, the attitude of covenantal nomism was certainly given determinative shape by Ezra's reforms in the post-Exilic period, with their deliberate policy of national and cultic segregation as dictated by the law (Ezra 9–10). This trend was massively reinforced by the Maccabean crisis, where it was precisely Israel's identity as the covenant people, the people of the law, which was at stake (1 Macc. 1:57; 2:27, 50; 2 Macc. 1:2–4; 2:21–22; 5:15; 13:14), and where "zeal for the law" became the watchword of national resistance (1 Macc. 2:26–27, 50, 58; 2 Macc. 4:2; 7:2, 9, 11, 37; 8:21; 13:14; see further Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, on 10:2). So, too, in the period following the Maccabean crisis the tie-in between election, covenant, and law remains a fundamental and persistent theme of Jewish self-understanding, as illustrated by ben Sira (Sir. 17:11–17; 24:23; 28:7; 39:8; 42:2; 44:19–20; 45:5, 7, 15, 17, 24–25), *Jubilees* (1:4–5, 9–10, 12, 14, 29; 2:21; 6:4–16; 14:17–20; 15:4–16, 19–21, 25–29, 34; 16:14; 19:29; 20:3; etc.), the Damascus document (CD 1.4–5, 15–18, 20; 3.2–4, 10–16; 4.7–10; 6.2–5; etc.) and Pseudo-Philo (*LAB* 4.5, 11; 7.4; 8.3; 9.3–4, 7–8, 13, 15; 10.2; 11.1–5; etc.). In particular we may note the outworking of all this in two of the main groups in Palestinian Judaism at the time of Jesus and Paul. The Qumran community defined membership of the covenant of grace in terms of observing God's precepts and clinging to God's commandments (1QS 1.7–8; 5.1–3), and commitment to the law had to be total and to be examined every year, with any breach severely punished (1QS 5.24; 8.16–9.2). And the Pharisees were known for their *akribēa*, "strictness," in observing the law (see Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, §1.1), and

evidently also for their concern to maintain a level of purity in their daily lives which the law required only for the temple cult itself (see also idem, *Romans 9-16*, on 14:14). For rabbinic traditions on Israel's special relationship with the law see Str-B, 3:126-33. We may confine ourselves to two quotations provided by Schoeps, *Paul*, 195 and 216: *Sifre Deut.* 53b-75b—God addresses Israel in the words "Let it be clear from the keeping of the commandments that you are a people holy to me"; and *Mek. Exod.* 20:6—"By covenant is meant nothing other than the Torah."

3.1 The law thus became a basic expression of Israel's *distinctiveness* as the people specially chosen by (the one) God to be his people. In sociological terms the law functioned as an "identity marker" and "boundary," reinforcing Israel's sense of distinctiveness and distinguishing Israel from the surrounding nations (Neusner, *Judaism*, 72-75; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 97; Dunn, "Works of Law," 524-27). This sense of separateness was deeply rooted in Israel's national consciousness (e.g., Lev. 20:24-26; Ezra 10:11; Neh 13:3; *Pss. Sol.* 17:28; 3 *Macc.* 3.4) and comes to powerful expression in *Jub.* 22:16:

Separate yourself from the Gentiles,
and do not eat with them,
and do not perform deeds like theirs.
And do not become associates of theirs.
Because their deeds are defiled,
and all of their ways are contaminated,
and despicable, and abominable.

The letter of Aristeeas expresses the same conviction in terms which reinforce the sociological insight.

In his wisdom the legislator . . . surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter. . . . So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law (*Ep. Arist.* 139, 142).

Similarly Philo, *Mos.* 1.278—a people "which shall dwell alone, not reckoned among other nations . . . because in virtue of the distinction of their peculiar customs they do not mix with others to depart from the ways of their fathers." And a funerary inscription from Italy praises a woman "who lived a gracious life inside Judaism [*καλὸς βίωσασα ἐν τῷ Ιουδαϊσμῷ*]"—Judaism understood as "a sort of fenced off area in which Jewish lives are led" (Amir, *Ioudaismos*, 35-36, 39-40).

Consistent with this is the characterization of Gentiles as *anomos* and their works as *anomia*: by definition they were "without the law, outside the law," that is, outside the area (Israel) coterminous with the law, marked out by the law; so already in the Psalms (28:3; 37:28; 55:3; 73:3; 92:7; 104:35; 125:3), in 1 Maccabees (Gentiles and apostates—3:5-6; 7:5; 9:23,

58, 69; 11:25; 14:14), and in the self-evident equation, Gentile = "sinner" (as in Tob. 13:6 [LXX 8]; *Jub.* 23:23-24; *Pss. Sol.* 1:1; 2:1-2; 17:22-25; Matt. 5:47 with Luke 6:33; Gal 2:15). Not surprisingly this desire to live within the law and be marked off from the lawless and sinner became a dominant concern in the factionalism which was a feature of Judaism in the period from the Maccabees to the emergence of rabbinic Judaism as the most powerful faction within post-C.E. 70 Judaism. It was expressed in the frequent complaints of "the righteous" and "devout" over against those (within Israel) whom they characterized as "sinners" (as in *Wisd. Sol.* 2-5; *Jub.* 6:32-35; 23:16, 26; 1 *Enoch* 1.1, 7-9; 5.6-7; 82.4-7; 1QS 2.4-5; 1QH 2.8-19; CD 1.13-21; *Pss. Sol.* 3.3-12; 4.8; 13.5-12; 15.1-13; Pharisees probably = "separated ones"); see also on 3:7; 4:5, 7-8; and 9:6.

3.2 A natural and more or less inevitable converse of this sense of distinctiveness was the sense of *privilege*, precisely in being the nation specially chosen by the one God and favored by gift of covenant and law. This comes out particularly clearly in writings which could not simply ignore and dismiss Gentiles as sinners, but which had to attempt some sort of apologetic for the claims of Israel in the face of a much more powerful Gentile world. Thus both Philo and Josephus speak with understandable if exaggerated pride of the widespread desire among Greek and barbarian to adopt Jewish customs and laws (Philo, *Mos.* 2.17-25—"they attract and win the attention of all . . . the sanctity of our legislation has been a source of wonder not only to Jews and to all others also;" Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.277-286—"The masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances. . . . Were we not ourselves aware of the excellence of our laws, assuredly we should have been impelled to pride [*mega phronein*] ourselves upon them by the multitude of their admirers"). Expressive of the same pride in the law of Moses is what seems to have been a fairly sustained attempt in Jewish apologetic to present Moses as "the first wise man," who was teacher of Orpheus and from whose writings Plato and Pythagoras learned much of their wisdom (Eupolemus, *frag.* 1; Artapanus, *frag.* 3; Aristobulus, *frag.* 3-4; from Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.26.1; 9.27.3-6; and 13.12.1-4; texts in Charlesworth).

Pride in the law as the mark of God's special favor to Israel is also well illustrated in the identification of divine Wisdom with the law, the assertion that the universally desirable Wisdom, immanent within creation but hidden from human eyes, was embodied within "the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob" (*Sir.* 24:23). The same claim is expressed more forcefully in Bar. 3:36-4:4:

36 . . . (He) gave her to Jacob his servant and to Israel whom he loved
.....
1She is the book of the commandments of God,
and the law which endures for ever.

All who hold her fast will live,
 but those who forsake her will die.
 2-Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
 walk towards the shining of her light.
 3-Do not give your glory [*lên doxan sou*] to another;
 or your advantages [*ta sympheronta*] to an alien people.
 4-Blessed are we, O Israel,
 for what is pleasing to God is known [*gnōsta*] to us.

For those confronted by the crushing power of Rome within Palestine this sense of privilege was difficult to maintain. *Psalms of Solomon* found a solution in pressing the older distinction between discipline and punishment (particularly *Pss. Sol.* 3, 10, and 13)—thus 13:6–11.

The destruction of the sinner is terrible
 but nothing shall harm the righteous, of all these things,
 For the discipline of the righteous (for things done) in ignorance
 is not the same as the destruction of the sinners

 For the Lord will spare his devout,
 and he will wipe away their mistakes with discipline.
 For the life of the righteous (goes on) for ever,
 but sinners shall be taken away to destruction. . . .

Less easy to satisfy was the writer of 4 *Ezra*, who in common with his fellow Jews saw the law given to Israel as a mark of divine favor (3:19; 9:31), but who could not understand how God could spare the sinful nations and yet allow his law-keeping people to be so harshly treated (3:28–36; 4:23–24; 5:23–30; 6:55–59).

3.3 A sociological perspective also helps us to see how the conviction of privileged election and the practice of covenantal nomism almost inevitably come to expression in focal points of distinctiveness, particular laws and especially ritual practices which reinforced the sense of distinctive identity and marked Israel off most clearly from the other nations. In this case three of Israel's laws gained particular prominence as being especially distinctive—circumcision, food laws, and sabbath (cf. Limbeck, *Ordnung*, 34; Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 36–37, 97; Sanders, *Law*, 102). These were not the only beliefs and practices which marked out Jews, but from the Maccabean period onward they gained increasing significance for their boundary-defining character and were widely recognized both within and without Judaism as particularly and distinctively characteristic of Jews. Not that they were intrinsically more important than other laws; they simply had become points of particular sensitivity in Jewish national understanding and were test cases of covenant loyalty. Since I will provide sufficiently full documentation later, I need say no more here (see Dunn, *Romans 1–8, 9–16*, on 2:25 and 14:2, 5).

III. Paul and the Law in Romans

This, then, is the context within which and against which we must set Paul's treatment of the law in Romans. The Jews, proselytes, and God-worshipping Gentiles among his readership would read what Paul says about the law in the light of this close interconnection in Jewish theology of Israel's election, covenant, and law. They would, I believe, recognize that what Paul was concerned about was the fact that covenant promise and law had become too inextricably identified with ethnic Israel as such, with the Jewish people marked out in their national distinctiveness by the practices of circumcision, food laws, and sabbath in particular (Wright, *Messiah*, ch. 2, appropriately coins the phrase "national righteousness"). They would recognize that what Paul was endeavoring to do was to free both promise and law for a wider range of recipients, freed from the ethnic constraints which he saw to be narrowing the grace of God and diverting the saving purpose of God out of its main channel—Christ.

Not least in importance, by setting Paul's treatment of the law into this matrix we are enabled to offer a solution to the sequence of exegetical problems and disputes outlined earlier (I. above = Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, §5.2). Thus it should occasion no surprise that ch. 2 turns out to be a developing critique of precisely these features of Jewish covenant theology which were sketched out above (II. above = Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, §5.3)—the law as dividing Jew from non-Jew, the law as a source of ethnic pride within from those without (2:12–14); the law as a source of ethnic pride for the typical devout Jew (2:17–23); and circumcision as the focal point for this sense of privileged distinctiveness (2:25–29) [Hartman draws attention to the consistent strand of "covenant ideology" in and behind these chapters]. Paul regularly warns against "the works of the law," not as "good works" in general or as any attempt by the individual to amass merit for himself, but rather as that pattern of obedience by which "the righteous" maintain their status within the people of the covenant, as evidenced not least by their dedication on such sensitive "test" issues as sabbath and food laws (see Dunn, *Romans 1–8, 9–16*, on 3:20 and 14:2, 5).

Likewise I will be arguing that an important hermeneutical key to such crucial passages as 3:27–31, 7:14–25, and 9:30–10:4 is precisely the recognition that Paul's negative thrust against the law is against the law taken over too completely by Israel, the law misunderstood by a misplaced emphasis on boundary-marking ritual, the law become a tool of sin in its too close identification with matters of the flesh, the law sidetracked into a focus for nationalistic zeal. Freed from that too narrowly Jewish perspective, the law still has an important part to play in "the obedience of faith." And the parennetic section (12:1–15:6) can then be seen as Paul's attempt to provide a basic guideline for social living, the law redefined for the es-

chatological people of God in place of the law misunderstood in too distinctively Jewish terms, with the climax understandably focused on a treatment of the two older test-cases, food laws and sabbath. It is my contention that only with such an understanding can we do adequate justice to both the positive and the negative thrusts of Paul's treatment of the law in Romans, and that failure to appreciate "the social function" of the law (as outlined above) is a fatal weakness both of alternative attempts (e.g., Cranfield, Hahn, and Hübner) and of Räisänen's critique.

In short, properly understood, Paul's treatment of the law, which has seemed so confused and incoherent to many commentators, actually becomes one of the chief integrating strands which binds the whole letter into a cohesive and powerful restatement of Jewish covenant theology in the light of Christ.

With the letter thus situated within the contexts of its author, of those for whom he wrote, and of the issues with which he engaged, we can now turn to the task of exegesis.

A Theology of the New Testament
 George E. Ladd
 Eerdmans 1974
 pgs 495-510

THE LAW*

Literature:

W. G. Kümmel, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus* (1929); C. H. Dodd, "The Law," *The Bible and the Greeks* (1935), pp. 25-41; C. L. Mitton, "Romans VII Reconsidered," *ET* 65 (1953/54), 78-81; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1958), pp. 147-76; H. J. Schoeps, *Paul* (1961), pp. 168-218; G. A. F. Knight, *Law and Gospel* (1962); W. Kleinknecht and W. Gutbrod, "Nomos," *TDNT* IV, 1022-91; see also *Bible Key Words: Law* (1962); W. G. Kümmel, *Man in the NT* (1963); R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (1964); D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (1964), pp. 76-85; G. von Rad, "The Law," *OT Theology* (1965), II, 388-409; H. L. Ellison, "Paul and the Law" in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. by W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (1970), pp. 195-202.

Paul's thought about the Law is difficult to understand because he seems to make numerous contradictory statements. He asserts that those who do the Law shall be justified (Rom. 2:13) and shall find life by the Law (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12); but at the same time he affirms that no man shall be justified by the Law (Rom. 3:20) but is only brought to death by the written code of the Law (II Cor. 3:6), for the Law cannot give life (Gal. 3:21). He claims that he was blameless in his obedience to the Law (Phil. 3:6) and yet asserts that no man can perfectly submit to the Law (Rom. 8:7).

Paul's teaching about the Law is often approached from the perspective of the historical experience either of Paul himself as a Jewish rabbi, or of a typical first-century Jew under the Law. However, Paul's thought must be seen neither as a confession of his spiritual autobiography, nor as a description of the legalistic character of first-century Pharisaism, but as a theological interpretation by a Christian thinker of two ways of righteousness: legalism and faith. This is made clear in Romans 10, where Paul bemoans the fate of Israel in having failed to recognize Jesus as her Messiah and

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embrace the divine gift of a free salvation. Why was Israel blind to the claims of Christ? Paul's answer is that there are two ways of righteousness, and because Israel pursued one way, they missed the other. Israel followed the "law of righteousness" (Rom. 9:31), i.e., the Law that revealed the will of God and showed what a right relationship with God was; but Israel failed to attain to that goal because they misused the Law by making it a means of attaining righteousness by their own works instead of through faith (Rom. 9:32). Thus they showed themselves to be ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God and is received by faith; instead, they tried to establish their own righteousness of works and did not submit to the righteousness of God through faith (Rom. 10:1-3). In these words, Paul makes the fundamental issue clear: the establishing of one's own righteousness (by works), or submission to the righteousness of God (by faith).

In writing as he does about the Law, Paul is writing from a distinctly Christian viewpoint. His experience of justification through faith in Christ and the subsequent conflict with the Judaizers led him to insights he could not have held as a Jew, and to a fundamental reinterpretation of the role of the Law in redemptive history.

THE BACKGROUND OF PAUL'S THOUGHT ABOUT THE LAW. To understand Paul's thought on the role of the Law, we must interpret it against the threefold background of Old Testament religion, Judaism, and his own experiences. The heart of Old Testament religion cannot be characterized as legalism, nor was the Law given as the means of achieving a right relationship with God by obedience. On the contrary, the context of the Law was the covenant that preceded and underlay the Law; and the covenant was initiated by the gracious act of God. Israel was constituted God's people not because of merit gained by obedience to the Law, but because of God's free election.¹ Israel belongs to God because he has revealed himself by delivering his people out of Egypt. The Law was given as the means of binding Israel to her God. Obedience to the Law did not constitute Israel God's people; rather, it provided Israel with a standard for obedience by which the covenant relationship must be preserved. "Thus the object of the law is to settle the relationship of the covenant-nation and of the individual to the God of the covenant and to the members of the nation who belong to the same covenant."² The reward for obedience to the Law was preservation of the positive relationship to Yahweh. This is the meaning of Leviticus 18:5: "The man who obeys the law shall live," i.e., enjoy the blessings of God.³ However, life was not a reward earned by

¹ See W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT* (1961), I, ch. 2; G. A. F. Knight, *Law and Gospel* (1962), pp. 25f.

² H. Kleinknecht, *Bible Key Words: Law* (1962), p. 27. "The Law of Moses in itself was originally given not as a code, the observance of which was necessary to salvation, but as a set of principles for the guidance of the people of God." R. McL. Wilson, "Nomos," *STh* 5 (1952), 39.

³ The primary concept of "life" in the Old Testament is not the life of the Age to

good works; it was itself God's gift. This is illustrated by Deuteronomy 30:15-20 where Moses lays before the people the choice of life or death, which is determined by whether or not Israel chooses the Word of God. "Only by faith, i.e., by cleaving to the God of salvation, will the righteous have life (cf. Hab. 2:4; Am. 5:4, 14; Jer. 38:20). It is obvious that life is here understood as a gift."⁴ Furthermore, the obedience demanded by the Law could not be satisfied by a mere legalism, for the Law itself demanded love for God (Deut. 6:5; 10:12) and for neighbor (Lev. 19:18). Obedience to the Law of God was an expression of trust in God; and only those who offered God such trust were really his people.

One of the most important factors in the old covenant was the twofold character of the people of God. On the one hand, they constituted a theocracy—a nation; but they were also a spiritual people. Membership in the nation required obedience to external commands, for example, circumcision; but circumcision of the flesh did not make a man right with God; there must also be a circumcision of the heart (Jer. 4:4; Deut. 10:16). When the nation proved disobedient to the demands of the covenant, the prophets announced that God had rejected the nation as a whole and would raise up in her place a faithful remnant that was righteous in heart as well as in deed. Thus there is found even in the Old Testament the distinction between the nation and the "church," between physical Israel and the true, spiritual Israel,⁵ who have the Law written on their hearts (Jer. 31:33).

In the intertestamental period a fundamental change occurred in the role of the Law in the life of the people. The importance of the Law overshadows the concept of the covenant and becomes the condition of membership in God's people. Even more importantly, observance of the Law becomes the basis of God's verdict upon the individual. Resurrection will be the reward of those who have been devoted to the Law (II Macc. 7:9). The Law is the basis of the hope of the faithful (Test. Jud. 26:1), of justification (Apoc. Bar. 51:3), of salvation (Apoc. Bar. 51:7), of righteousness (Apoc. Bar. 57:6), of life (IV Ez. 7:21; 9:31). Obedience to the Law will even bring God's Kingdom and transform the entire sin-cursed world (Jub. 23). Thus the Law attains the position of an intermediary between God and man.

This new role of the Law characterizes rabbinic Judaism; and for this reason, "the basic starting point of the Old Testament is characteristically and decisively altered and invalidated."⁶ The Torah becomes the one and

Come, as in Dan. 12:2, but the enjoyment of the good gifts of God in fellowship with God in this life.

⁴ G. von Rad, *TDNT* II, 845. See also his essay on "Law" in *OT Theology* (1965), II, 388ff., where he shows that the apostasy of Israel consisted not in breaking individual commandments, but in failing to respond to God's saving acts for his people.

⁵ See J. Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (1953), p. 94.

⁶ H. Kleinknecht, *Bible Key Words: Law*, p. 69.

only mediator between God and man; all other relationships between God and man, Israel, or the world are subordinated to the Torah. Both righteousness and life in the world to come are secured by obeying the Law. "The more study of the law, the more life. . . ." "If (a man) has gained for himself words of the law, he has gained for himself life in the world to come" (Pirke Aboth 2:7).⁷

This does not mean that the Judaism out of which Paul came was utterly destitute of any spiritual values. There were circles in Judaism where the higher elements of inner devotion and piety were coupled with strict obedience to the Law.⁸ Nor are we to forget that at the heart of first-century Jewish personal devotion as well as the synagogue worship was the recital of the *Shema* with its call to love God with the whole heart.⁹ However, the tendency to externalism is evident even at this point, for the very repetition of the *Shema* was seen as a submitting to the reign of God.¹⁰

It is true that repentance played a large role in Jewish piety. While the Jews never despaired about the "fulness of the law," it was nevertheless a real problem.¹¹ All of the commandments, both written and oral, must be kept. "To violate one of them was equivalent to rejecting the whole law and refusing God's yoke (*Sifre on Num.* 15:22)."¹² However, salvation did not depend upon faultless conformity to the Law. Man is indwelt by an evil impulse as well as a good impulse, and therefore no man can attain to sinless perfection.¹³

Therefore the "righteous" man is not he who obeys the Law flawlessly, but he alone who *strives* to regulate his life by the Law. The sincerity and supremacy of this purpose and the strenuous endeavor to accomplish it are the marks of a righteous man.¹⁴ Because God knew that man could not perfectly keep the Law because of the evil impulse God himself had implanted in his creature, God provided repentance as the way by which his sins could be forgiven. Repentance therefore must be coeval with the

⁷ For other references see H. Kleinknecht, *Bible Key Words: Law*, p. 76; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, III, 129ff., 237. Schoeps recognizes the change in the concept of the Law in apocryphal writings and the LXX, but not in classical Judaism. He maintains that Paul's opposition to the Law was based in part upon this distortion and misrepresentation of the Law in Hellenistic Judaism. *Paul* (1961), pp. 215ff.

⁸ See such writings as *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Hymns of the Qumran Community*. See also R. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (1964), ch. III, who differentiates between "legalism" with its emphasis on law-keeping as a human action, and "nomism," which offers obedience to the Law as the reaction to the goodness and saving acts of God—an expression of trust in God.

⁹ E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (1890), II, ii, pp. 77-115; G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (1927), I, 291.

¹⁰ G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, II, 465.

¹¹ See H. J. Schoeps, *Paul*, pp. 177, 193.

¹² J. Bonsirven, *Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Jesus Christ* (1964), p. 95.

¹³ See G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 467f. We are dependent on Moore for the following summary.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 494.

Law, and is one of the seven things pre-existent before creation.¹⁵ Repentance plays such a large role in Judaism that Moore calls it "the Jewish doctrine of salvation."¹⁶ The righteous man, therefore, is not the man who actually succeeds in keeping the Law, but the man who intends to, strives to do so, and is repentant when he fails. This repentance is the sole but inexorable condition of God's forgiveness, and is efficacious however great the sin may have been, or however late a man comes to repentance.¹⁷ Repentance is purification of the inner man, and so annuls the sinner's past that he is in effect a new creation.¹⁸ Sacrifices were carried out because the Law commanded them; but Judaism had no theory of atonement. It was repentance that secured the efficacy of the sacrifices.¹⁹

It is this background in Jewish thought that leads Schoeps to say that whether a man actually fulfills the Law or not, the mere intention to fulfill it brings a man close to God. This good intention is "an affirmation of the covenant which precedes the law."²⁰ Paul, however, was fatally ignorant of the Jewish doctrine of repentance. He failed to understand the relationship between the covenant and the Law, and isolated the Law from the controlling context of God's covenant with Israel.²¹

Schoeps bases his argument on the Old Testament view of the relationship between covenant and Law, attributing this understanding to Judaism. However, the reverse appears to be the historical fact: namely, that Judaism had in reality substituted the Law for the covenant, or identified the covenant with the Law. Schoeps in effect admits this when he says, "By covenant is meant nothing other than the Torah."²² It is significant that the concept of the covenant plays a very small role in rabbinic writings,²³ and tends to be identified with circumcision and the sabbath.²⁴ Moore on the basis of Mishnah Sanhedrin 10.1 argues that eternal life is ultimately assured to every Israelite²⁵ "on the ground of the original election of the people by the free grace of God, prompted not by its merits, collective or individual, but solely by God's love."²⁶ This conclusion is difficult to sustain, if for no other reason than that of the exclusion of certain classes of Israelites from eternal life in the paragraphs that follow. It is refuted by the discussion of the fate of the righteous, the wicked, and the middle class whose

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 266, 526.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 114, 117, 500.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 520-21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 532f.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 500-4, 508.

²⁰ *Paul*, p. 196.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²³ See J. Behm in *TDNT* II, 128-29.

²⁴ See G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, II, 16-21.

²⁵ "All Israelites have a share in the world to come." See H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (1933), p. 397.

²⁶ *Judaism*, II, 95. Krauss interprets this saying in light of San. 6:2, which assures extreme sinners of a share in the world to come, providing they make confession of their sin. S. Krauss, *Die Mischna* (1933), IV, iv and v, p. 264.

righteousness and sins balanced each other. The righteous enter at once into eternal life. Certain extremely wicked classes of people will be locked up to punishment in hell forever. Others less wicked, together with the wicked of the nations, are thrown into hell to be punished for twelve months and then destroyed.²⁷ As to the great majority of Israelites who were "half righteous and half sinful," the Schools of Hillel and Shammai differed. The School of Hillel maintained that God in mercy would incline the balance to the side of mercy and not send them into hell at all, while the School of Shammai held that they would be plunged into hell but would come up healed.²⁸ While it is true that it was God's kindness that gave the Law to Israel, thus providing a basis for salvation, salvation itself is dependent on good works, including the good work of repentance. This conclusion is strongly supported by the numerous references in Jewish literature to the books in which the good works of the righteous are recorded,²⁹ treasures in which good works are stored up,³⁰ scales on which the merits and demerits are weighed.³¹ God's grace grants forgiveness to the repentant man who has transgressed the Law, but the devout man who fulfills the Law, insofar as he fulfills it, does not need grace.

In any case, it is clear that Paul's life as a Jew was one of legalistic obedience to the Law. He himself tells us that he was a committed Jew, a Pharisee who was blameless in his obedience to the letter of the Law (Phil. 3:5-6). He was outstanding in his zeal not only for the written Law but also for the oral scribal traditions (Gal. 1:14).

In view of these clear statements, it is impossible to accept the autobiographical interpretation of Romans 7³² that pictures Paul torn by an inward struggle that plunged his soul in darkness and confusion, making him feel that the Law had broken him and hope was almost gone.³³ In fact, the key to Paul's understanding of the Law lies in the fact that his very devotion to the Law had led to pride (Phil. 3:4, 7) and boasting (Rom. 2:13, 23). Boasting is the very antithesis of faith (Rom. 4:2), for it means the effort to establish a human righteousness of works (Rom. 3:27) that seeks glory before God and which relies on itself rather than on God. This human

²⁷ *Judaism*, II, 387.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 318. The text from Tosefta Sanhedrin 13.3ff. is quoted by J. Bonsirven, *Palestinian Judaism*, p. 250.

²⁹ En. 47:3; 81:4; 89:61-70; 90:20; 98:7-8; 104:7; Apoc. Bar. 24:1; IV Ez. 6:20; Asc. Isa. 9:22; Jub. 30:22; Aboth 3:17.

³⁰ IV Ez. 7:77; 8:33; Apoc. Bar. 14:12; Ps. Sol. 9:9.

³¹ Test. Abr. 13; En. 41:1; 61:8; Ps. Sol. 5:6; Pesikta 26. See J. Bonsirven, *Palestinian Judaism*, p. 239; F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie* (1897), pp. 279ff.

³² W. Gutbrod, *Bible Key Words: Law*, p. 119.

³³ See C. H. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for Today* (1920), pp. 71, 73. Others who follow this autobiographical interpretation of Rom. 7 are A. Deissmann, *Paul* (1926), pp. 92ff.; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1955), pp. 24ff.; J. Klausner, *Paul* (1944), pp. 498f.; A. C. Purdy, *IDB III*, 685, 692. J. Murray, *Romans* (1959), I, 255 sees an unregenerate man under conviction of sin. J. Knox, "Romans," *IB IX*, 499 thinks Paul describes both past and present experience.

pride and boasting is an affront to the very character of God, who alone must receive glory and before whom no human being may boast (I Cor. 1:29). The only object for man's boasting is God himself (I Cor. 1:31); II Cor. 10:17).³⁴

Here is the shocking fact that compelled Paul to a complete re-evaluation of the Law. It was his very zeal for the Law that had blinded him to the revelation of God's righteousness in Christ. What he as a Jew had thought was righteousness, he now realizes to be the very essence of sin, for his pride in his own righteousness (Phil. 3:9) had blinded him to the revelation of the divine righteousness in Christ. Only the divine intervention on the Damascus Road shattered his pride and self-righteousness and brought him to a humble acceptance of the righteousness of God.

THE LAW IN THE MESSIANIC AGE. Many features of Paul's interpretation of the Law not only find no parallel in Judaism, but in fact so differ from Jewish thought that modern Jewish scholars refuse to accept his claim to have been a Palestinian rabbi but insist that he represents a distorted Judaism of the Diaspora.³⁵ On the contrary, Paul represents a fresh Christian interpretation that can be understood only from Paul's eschatological perspective. With Christ the messianic age has been inaugurated. In Christ, "the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (II Cor. 5:17). Before he was in Christ, Paul understood the Law *kata sarka*, from a human point of view, in terms of the standards of the old aeon, even as he interpreted all his experience (II Cor. 5:16). Viewed *kata sarka*, the Law was the basis of good works, which led to pride and boasting. Viewed *kata pneuma*, from the perspective of the new age in Christ, the Law assumes an entirely different role in God's redemptive purpose. The prophets had foretold a day when God would make a new covenant with his people, when the Law would be no longer primarily an outward written code, but a Law implanted within men, written on their hearts (Jer. 31:33). This promise of a new dimension of inwardness does not carry with it the complete abolition of the Mosaic Law. On the basis of such Old Testament promises, the Jews debated the role the Law would play in the messianic age and in the world to come. Moore concludes that in the messianic age the Law would be more faithfully studied and better applied than in this world; and in the Age to Come, although much of the Law will be no longer applicable because of the changed conditions on the new earth, the Law will continue to express the will of God, but God himself will be the teacher.³⁶

³⁴ On the theological significance of boasting, see R. Bultmann, *TDNT III*, 649; *Theology*, I, 242.

³⁵ See C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul* (1914), p. 93; S. Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the NT* (1956), pp. 37-51; H. J. Schoeps, *Paul*, pp. 198, 206, 218.

³⁶ G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 271f. See also W. D. Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come* (1952), who cites some evidence for the expectation of a modified Torah in the messianic age. Schoeps cites rabbinic sayings that anticipated the cessation of the Law in the messianic Kingdom as a basis

With Christ a new era has come in which the Law plays a new and different role. Paul designates these two eras of the Law and the gospel as two covenants. The old covenant is one of the "letter" (*gramma*), and is a dispensation (*diakonia*) of condemnation and death, while the new covenant is one of the Spirit, a dispensation of life and righteousness (II Cor. 3:6ff.). These words do not refer to two ways of interpreting Scripture: a literal and a spiritual or allegorical approach. They contrast the ages of the Law and of Christ as two different forms of the Law. Under the old covenant, the Law was an external written code that set before men the will of God. When they failed, it condemned them to death. The new covenant in this passage says nothing explicitly about the permanence of the Law. The difference in the new age is that the Holy Spirit has been given to men to write the Law upon their hearts, as Jeremiah foretold, and thus the Law is no longer merely an external written code but an inward, life-giving power that produces righteousness.³⁷

Most interpreters of this passage have overlooked the fact that since the Holy Spirit is an eschatological gift, the entire passage has an eschatological orientation. The new age, which is the age of Christ and the Spirit, has come in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31,³⁸ even while the old age goes on.

While this passage in II Corinthians says nothing about the permanence of the Law, Paul tells the Romans, "*telos gar nomou Christos eis dikaiosunen panti to pisteuonti*" (For Christ is [the] end of [the] Law unto righteousness to everyone who believes, Rom. 10:4). This verse can be rendered in two different ways. "Christ is the end of the Law with the objective of righteousness for everyone who believes." That is, Christ has brought the Law to its end in order that a righteousness based on faith alone may be available to all men. Another rendering is, "Christ is the end of the Law so far as righteousness is concerned for everyone who believes." That is, the Law is not itself abolished, but it has come to its end as a way of righteousness, for in Christ righteousness is by faith, not by works.

In view of the fact that Paul has just contrasted the righteousness of God with that of the Law, and continues immediately with the righteousness of the Law (v. 5), the latter rendering is preferable.³⁹ Paul does not affirm the total abrogation of the Law, that by its abrogation righteousness might come to believers.⁴⁰ He affirms the end of the Law in its connection with righteousness in Christ apart from the Law, with the result that the Law has

for Paul's view of the abolition of the Law (Paul, pp. 171-72). However, this is not the prevailing Jewish view, and Paul does not teach the complete *abolition* of the Law. See also R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 128-32.

³⁷ See G. Schrenk in *TDNT* I, 765ff.

³⁸ R. A. Harrisville, *The Concept of Newness in the NT* (1960), p. 60. It is recognized largely missing in rabbinic Judaism.

³⁹ See R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 144ff.

⁴⁰ See below, p. 509, for the permanence of the Law.

come to an end for the believer as a way of righteousness. This is not true historically; the Jews continue to practice the Law. It is true *heilsgeschichtlich*—for men of faith.

This is true because Christ is the end of the Law. *Telos* can mean both end and goal, and both meanings are to be seen here. Christ has brought the era of the Law to its end because he has fulfilled all that the Law demands.

Paul expounds the life of the believer in the new age in several different ways. The new age is the age of life; and since the believer has been identified with Christ in his death and resurrection, he is dead to the old life, including the rule of the Law. Paul uses the metaphor of a woman being freed from her husband when he dies, and applies it by saying that it is the believer who has died with Christ who is therefore free from the Law (Rom. 7:4). Therefore we no longer serve God under bondage to a written external code but with the new life of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6). It was the Law itself, which had become a basis of boasting, and therefore of sin, that convinced Paul that he must die to the reign of Law (Gal. 2:19).

An apparent contradiction appears in Paul's thought when he insists, on the one hand, that the believer is no longer under Law, but at the same time, according to the Acts, approves of the Law for Jewish Christians (Acts 21:20ff.), and even circumcised Timothy when he joined Paul in missionary work because he was half Jewish (Acts 16:3). However, this contradiction corresponds with Paul's eschatological perspective. While believers have experienced the freedom of the new age in Christ, they still live in the present evil age. The Law with its ceremonial demands belongs to this world—the old order. The proper attitude for men of the new age toward the old age is not a negative one but neutral: "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation," because circumcision belongs to the world, and the man in Christ has been crucified to the world (Gal. 6:15).

An application of this principle is that Paul himself as a Jew observed the Law when he was in a Jewish environment (I Cor. 9:20). As a man in Christ, he was no longer under Law, and therefore, where the human situation required it for his ministry to the Gentiles, he "became as one outside the law" (I Cor. 9:21). This involves, admittedly, an inconsistency in conduct; but the very inconsistency rests upon the consistent application of a profound theological truth: that Christians belong to two worlds at once and have obligations to both orders.⁴¹

THE LAW AS THE WILL OF GOD. Paul never conceived of the claims of the Law coming to their end because of any imperfection in the Law itself. The Law is and remains the Law of God (Rom. 7:22, 25). The Law is not sinful (Rom. 7:7) but is holy and just and good (Rom. 7:12) because it comes from God ("spiritual," Rom. 7:14).

⁴¹ See R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 245ff., who comes to similar conclusions from the perspective of Paul's doctrine of liberty.

At this point it is important to note that Paul can speak of the Law from several different points of view. The Greek word *nomos* is not equivalent to the Hebrew *torah*. *Nomos* is fundamentally "custom," hardening into what we call "law," and is human in its perspective. *Torah* means "instruction" and is used not only of the legislation God gave to be obeyed but also divine instructions and teachings. In its broadest sense it designates the divine revelation as a whole.⁴² Under the influence of the Old Testament, Paul uses *nomos* not only to designate legislation—"the law of commandments and ordinances" (Eph. 2:15), but, like *torah*, also to refer to the Old Testament where no legislation is involved.⁴³ In still other places Paul uses *nomos* in a Greek way to designate a principle (Rom. 3:27; 7:23, 25; 8:2).⁴⁴

Thus we can understand how Paul can reflect the Jewish point of view that the Law is a standard for life by which he as a Pharisee lived blamelessly (Phil. 3:6). This level of interpretation had led him to pride and boasting in his own righteous achievements. At the same time, there is a deeper demand of the Law, for the Law expresses the total will of God. The Law itself witnesses to the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21). The Law's demand is such that only love can satisfy it (Rom. 13:8).

When Paul says that the mind set on the flesh "is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot" (Rom. 8:7), he is referring to more than legal statutes. Hostility to God is in reality rejection of the Law of God; what God's Law requires is not merely outward obedience but an obedient and submissive heart. Israel's problem lay at precisely this point. Pursuing a "law of righteousness," i.e., a Law that would make men right with God, they failed to attain this very righteousness because they refused to submit to God's righteousness by faith but instead sought a righteousness by works, which is no true righteousness at all (Rom. 9:31-32; 10:1-2). The human righteousness that is achieved by works (Phil. 3:6) is itself a denial of true righteousness; it is "a righteousness of my own" (Phil. 3:9), and is therefore a ground of boasting (Rom. 2:23; Eph. 2:9); and this very boasting is the essence of sin, for it is the exaltation of self against God. Boasting in one's own righteousness is equivalent to having confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). Legal righteousness leads to this selfish, sinful pride and frustrates the true righteousness demanded by God. When the Jews boast in the Law and sit in prideful judgment on those who do not have the Law, they show by this very fact that they do not know true righteousness (Rom. 2:17-21). The very act of judging convicts them of being sinners (Rom. 2:1). Sin is man's ambition to put himself in the place of God and so be his own lord. This is precisely what the judge does when he assumes the right to sit in judgment on his fellow creatures.⁴⁵

⁴² H. Kleinknecht, *Bible Key Words: Law*, p. 46.

⁴³ Rom. 3:10-18 cites passages from Isaiah and Psalms as utterances of the *nomos* (3:19). I Cor. 14:21 quotes Isa. 28:11 as *nomos*.

⁴⁴ See C. H. Dodd, "The Law" in *The Bible and the Greeks* (1935), pp. 25-41.

⁴⁵ C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle of the Romans* (1957), p. 44.

When Paul accuses the Jews of inconsistency for breaking the Law at the very points where they condemn others—stealing, adultery, temple robbing—he must have the higher demand of the Law for an inner righteousness in mind, for instances of such flagrant conduct did not characterize first-century Jews, who were in fact recognized by the Gentiles for their high moral standards. Paul must be referring to robbing God of the honor due him, spiritual adultery, and profaning the devotion due God alone by exalting themselves as judge and lord over their fellow creatures (Rom. 2:17ff.).⁴⁶ Paul immediately goes on to say that circumcision—the symbol of all law-keeping—is really of the heart and not of the flesh, and to be a true Jew is to have a right heart toward God (Rom. 2:25-29).

If, then, the Law in fact embodies the full will of God, it follows ideally that full conformity to the Law would lead to life (Rom. 7:10). Those who do the Law will be justified (Rom. 2:13). But at this point Paul goes beyond Judaism. Judaism based salvation on conformity to the Law, but recognized that most men really did not keep the Law. Therefore it had to mix its doctrine of salvation by obedience to the Law with a doctrine of forgiveness and repentance, by which God in his mercy grants salvation to men who are partly righteous and partly sinners.⁴⁷

Paul sees that this involved the confession of two contradictory principles: works and grace. He therefore insists upon something that no Jewish rabbi would accept,⁴⁸ namely, that if righteousness is obedience to Law, then obedience must be perfect—without a single flaw. One who submits to the Law must keep the *whole* Law (Gal. 5:3). Any man who does not do *all things* written in the Law is cursed (Gal. 3:10). Paul would assent to the words of James that whoever obeys the entire Law but fails in a single point is guilty of being a lawbreaker and stands under condemnation (Jas. 2:11).

The problem of perfect fulfillment of the Law is most acute at the point where the Law demands more than conformity to outward regulations. This is revealed when Paul says that a man may accept circumcision and yet not keep the Law (Rom. 2:25). On the surface this is a nonsensical statement, for the very act of circumcision is obedience to the Law. When Paul goes on to say that true circumcision is a matter of the heart and not something external and physical (Rom. 2:28-29), it is clear that "obedience to the law does not mean carrying out the detailed precepts written in the Pentateuch, but fulfilling that relation to God to which the law points; and this proves in the last resort to be a relation not of legal obedience but of faith."⁴⁹

THE FAILURE OF THE LAW. Although the Law remains for Paul the righteous and holy expression of the will of God, the Law has failed to

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 56ff. See for a similar interpretation L. Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism* (1964), p. 137.

⁴⁷ See above, p. 498.

⁴⁸ See G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, III, 150-51.

⁴⁹ C. K. Barrett, *Romans*, p. 58.

make men righteous before God. It is impossible for a man to be justified by the works of the Law (Gal. 2:16). In fact, there is no possible law that can make a man right with God (Gal. 3:21). The reason for this failure is twofold.

The most fundamental reason is that the weakness and the sinfulness of man render him incapable of giving the obedience the Law demands. The condition of the human heart is such that no law could help it. The weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3) and the sinfulness of human nature (Rom. 7:23) could not be changed by the Law. The idea of some rabbis that man's evil impulses could be overcome by study of the Law,⁵⁰ Paul would firmly reject.

The reason why the Law cannot make sinful men righteous is that it is an external code, whereas the sinful hearts of men need a transforming inward power. The Law is a written code, not a life imparted by God's Spirit (Rom. 7:6). This idea is extended in the contrast between the new and the old covenant. The old covenant of Law consisted of commands written on tables of stone, which could only declare the will of God but not provide the power to sinful men to obey God's will. Therefore, even though it was glorious, the written code condemns men as sinners and places them under the judgment of death. "The written code kills," whereas what men need is life (II Cor. 3:6).

THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE LAW. In reflecting on the failure of the Law in contrast with the work of Christ to bring him to a knowledge of the righteousness of God, Paul achieves a new interpretation of the role of the Law in God's overall redemptive purposes. First, he explains the inability of the Law to procure salvation by showing that this was not the divine intention. The Law is secondary to the promise, and God's way of salvation by faith is found in the promise.

To the Galatians, Paul argues that God made a covenant of promise with Abraham long before he gave the Law to Moses (Gal. 3:15-18). Making a play on the word *diathēkē*, which can mean both will-testament and covenant, Paul points out that as a valid human testament cannot be contested or altered by additions, so the promise of God given to Abraham cannot be invalidated by the Law, which came later.⁵¹ And since this covenant with Abraham was one of promise, the possibility of righteousness by works is excluded, for promise and Law are mutually exclusive. The promise is no longer promise if it has anything to do with the Law.⁵²

This idea is further supported in Romans by the argument that Abraham did not have the Law but was accounted righteous by faith (Rom. 4:1-5). Paul points out that this righteousness was attained by faith even before the sign of circumcision had been given. Circumcision, then, in its true sig-

⁵⁰ G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, I, 491.

⁵¹ See J. Behm, *TDNT* II, 129.

⁵² J. Schniewind, *TDNT* II, 582.

nificance does not belong to the Law but is a sign and seal of justifying faith (Rom. 4:9-12).

It is disappointing to the modern student of Paul and Judaism that Paul does not work out a consistent pattern of the relationship between covenant and Law. Thus he uses *diathēkē* for the covenant of promise made with Abraham (Gal. 3), but he also uses it for the covenant of the Law (II Cor. 3:14), as well as for the covenant in Christ. Quite certainly, while Paul says that the Law was a dispensation of death, he would not maintain that the old covenant of the Law meant death to all who were under that covenant. On the contrary, the implication of the line of thought in Galatians 3 and Romans 4 is that all Israelites who trusted God's covenant of promise to Abraham and did not use the Law as a way of salvation by works were assured of salvation. This becomes explicit in the case of David, who, though under the Law, pronounced a blessing on the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works (Rom. 4:6-7). When Paul speaks of the *coming* of faith (Gal. 3:25), he does not mean that no one had previously ever exercised saving faith. On the contrary, for Paul faith appeared with Abraham; but faith could be frustrated when the Law was made a basis of human righteousness and boasting.

If salvation is by way of promise and not Law, what was the role of the Law in God's redemptive purpose? In answering this question, Paul comes to conclusions that were both novel and quite unacceptable to Judaism.⁵³ The Law was added (*pareisēlthen*) not to save men from their sins but to show them what sin was (Rom. 3:20; 5:13, 20; Gal. 3:19). By declaring the will of God, by showing what God forbids, the Law shows what sin is. By forbidding coveting, it shows that coveting is sin (Rom. 7:7). Thus the power of sin is the Law (I Cor. 15:56), for only by the Law is sin clearly defined. Sayings about the Law making sin to increase (Rom. 5:20) do not mean that it was the Law that actually brought sin into being and made man more sinful than he was without the Law. The Law is not itself sinful nor sin-producing (Rom. 7:7). Rather, the Law discloses man's true situation, that his accountability to God as a sinner may be revealed (Rom. 3:19).

Thus the Law is an instrument of condemnation (Rom. 5:13), wrath (Rom. 4:15), and death (Rom. 7:19; II Cor. 3:6). It is not the Law itself that produces this tragic situation; it is sin in man that makes the Law an instrument of death (Rom. 7:13). The dispensation of the Law can be called a dispensation of death (II Cor. 3:7), of slavery to the world (Gal. 4:1-10), a covenant of slavery (Gal. 4:21-31), a period of childhood when one is under the control of guardians (Gal. 3:23-26).⁵⁴

⁵³ H. J. Schoeps, *Paul*, pp. 174, 183. However, this reinterpretation is due to his Christian perspective and not to the Hellenistic background that Schoeps assumes.

⁵⁴ These verses describe a time of immaturity and subjection in contrast to maturity and freedom. *Eis Christon* (v. 24) should therefore be rendered "until Christ" (RSV), not "to bring us to Christ" (KJV).

Certainly Paul does not mean to suggest that all men who lived between Moses and Christ were in such bondage to sin and death that there was no salvation until Christ came. His reference to David (Rom. 4:6-8) disproves that. The promise antedates the Law and was valid both before and after its fulfillment in Christ. Nor does Paul mean that this was his experience as a Jew under the Law. This is his understanding of what the Law, apart from the promise, really accomplishes. Paul's argument in both Romans and Galatians is not designed to instruct Jews how they should understand the Law, but to keep Gentile Christians, who had no racial tie to the Law as Jewish Christians did, from exchanging salvation by grace for salvation by the works of the Law.⁵⁵

It is from this same Christian perspective that the much contested passage in Romans 7:13-25 is to be interpreted. The older autobiographical interpretation is very difficult in the light of Paul's own descriptions of his Jewish life in Galatians 1:14 and Philippians 3:5-7.⁵⁶ It is equally difficult to understand the passage to describe the experience of the defeated Christian who still relies on the flesh in contrast to the victorious Christian who has learned to rely on the Spirit (Rom. 8).⁵⁷ Paul's concern in this passage is not life in the flesh but the nature of the Law. "Is the law sin?" (Rom. 7:7). No; but because sin dwells in man, the holy Law shows sin to be sin and thus becomes an instrument of death. But it is sin, not the Law, that brings death (Rom. 7:10-11).

This theme is further expanded in verses 13-24. The entire chapter embodies a Christian understanding of the actual plight of man under the Law, whether this corresponds to his conscious experience or not. As a Pharisee, Saul was quite satisfied with his obedience to the Law and found therein a cause for pride and boasting. But as a Christian, Paul understands that he was deceived because he had misused the Law. Only in the light of his life in Christ can he understand what his situation under the Law really was; and only as a Christian can he understand why the Law can in fact only condemn a man to death when it is itself holy and just and good. The reason is not the sinful nature of the Law but the sinful nature of man. Thus Romans 7 is a picture of existence under the Law understood from a Christian perspective.⁵⁸ The will of God therefore is a

delight to man, and he desires to fulfill the highest demand of the Law to love both God and neighbor. As Paul looks back on his life as a Jew under the Law, he realizes, contrary to his previous conviction, that he had not fulfilled the Law. Because of sin residing in his flesh, he was incapable of providing the righteousness God requires, for the good demanded by the Law is not mere outward, formal obedience, but the demand of God for true righteousness.⁵⁹ Of this man is incapable—so incapable, in fact, that it is as though his own will was overcome completely by sin, which rules his life (vv. 17, 20). Freedom from this bondage to sin and death is found only in Jesus Christ.

THE PERMANENCE OF THE LAW. By fulfilling the promise given to Abraham, Christ has ended the age of the Law and inaugurated the age of Christ, which means freedom from bondage and the end of the Law for the believer. However, it is clear that inasmuch as Paul always regards the Law as holy and just and good, he never thinks of the Law as being abolished. It remains the expression of the will of God.

This is evident from his frequent assertion that redemption in Christ enables believers in some real sense to fulfill the Law. In Christ, God has done what the Law could not do, namely, condemned sin in the flesh, that the just requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in those who walk by the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4). Here is paradox: by being freed from the Law, we uphold the Law (Rom. 3:31). It is obvious that the new life in Christ enables the Christian to keep the Law not as an external code but in terms of its higher demand, i.e., at the very point where the Law was powerless because it was an external written code. Thus Paul repeats that the essential Christian ethic of love, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22), is the fulfilling of the Law. The whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal. 5:14). In place of the Law as a written code is now the law of Christ. This "new law" cannot be reduced to specific rules but goes far beyond legislation. No set of rules can tell one how to bear the burdens of another (Gal. 6:2); only love can dictate such conduct. However, the law of Christ, which is the law of love, does fulfill the Law. Love will not commit adultery, or lie or steal or covet, or do any wrong to one's neighbor (Rom. 12:8-10).

Probably Paul refers to this same law of Christ when he expounds his own personal relationship to Law. As a man in Christ, he is no longer under the Law, and therefore he can minister to Gentiles as though he were a Gentile who had no Law (*anomos*). Yet he is not therefore an antinomian (*anomos theou*) but *ennomos Christou*—"subject to the law of Christ."⁶⁰

p. 146. R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 114ff. includes with this interpretation "the human cry . . . of the spiritually sensitive."

⁵⁹ R. Bultmann, "Romans 7 and the Anthropology of Paul" in *Existence and Faith*, ed. by S. Ogden (1960), pp. 145ff.

⁶⁰ Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 266.

⁵⁵ See L. Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism*, p. 147. Also G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, III, 151.

⁵⁶ See above, p. 366, for this interpretation.

⁵⁷ See W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Romans* (1896), pp. 184ff.; W. D. Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man* (1956), p. 212. C. L. Mitton, "Romans VII Reconsidered," *ET* 65 (1953/54), pp. 78ff., 99ff., 132ff. considers it to be the Christian who falls back into reliance on the Law. F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (1963), p. 150, the Christian who lives in two ages at once.

⁵⁸ This viewpoint was supported by J. Denney, *Romans: Expositor's Greek Testament*, III, 639. The basic work today is W. G. Kümmel, *Römer 7 und die Bekehrung des Paulus* (1929), who has been followed by the majority of German scholars. See references cited in Kümmel's *Man in the NT* (1963), pp. 51f. See also C. K. Barrett, *Romans*, pp. 140, 152; L. Goppelt, *Jesus, Paul and Judaism*,

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Because he is motivated by love, he adapts himself to men of all kinds of conditions to bring them the gospel.⁶¹

The permanence of the Law is reflected further in the fact that Paul appeals to specific commands in the Law as the norm for Christian conduct. He appeals to several specific commandments (*entolai*) of the Decalogue that are fulfilled by love (Rom. 13:8-10). His reference to "any other commandment" designates everything in the Law that relates to one's neighbor. Yet it was the character of the Law as *entolai* that marked its externality. Again, Paul quotes the command to love father and mother as the first commandment with a promise (Eph. 6:2). It is clear that the Law continues to be the expression of the will of God for conduct, even for those who are no longer under the Law.

It is quite clear, however, that the permanent aspect of the Law is the ethical and not the ceremonial. "For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God" (I Cor. 7:19). Most of the studies on Paul emphasize the fact that Paul does not explicitly distinguish between the ethical and ceremonial aspects of the Law. This is of course true; but the implicit distinction is unavoidable and should be stressed. Although circumcision is a command of God and a part of the Law, Paul sets circumcision in contrast to the commandments, and in doing so separates the ethical from the ceremonial—the permanent from the temporal. Thus he can commend the *entolai theou* to Gentiles, and yet adamantly reject the ceremonial *entolai*, such as circumcision, foods, feasts, and even sabbath keeping (Col. 2:16), for these are but a shadow of the reality that has come in Christ.

Thus Christ has brought the Law as a way of righteousness and as a ceremonial code to its end; but the Law as the expression of the will of God is permanent; and the man indwelt by the Holy Spirit and thus energized by love is enabled to fulfill the Law as men under the Law never could.

⁶¹ C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou" in *Studia Paulina* (de Zwaan Festschrift, 1953), pp. 96-110, followed by R. N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, pp. 183-90, feels that the law of Christ is not the law of love but a body of traditional sayings of Jesus that provided an objective basis for Christian conduct. While the existence of such a tradition is established, we do not feel that the "law of Christ" is this tradition conceived as a new law for the Christian community.

to the believer's whole Christian life. Fruit-bearing (v. 5), prayer (v. 7), and ultimately joy (v. 11) depend upon it.

Paul expressed a similar idea in his wish to "gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:8b-11). Here, becoming like Christ is closely connected with a willingness to share in his sufferings. A similar expression is found in Romans 8:17: "and if [we are] children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." Apparently Paul regarded union with Christ as a two-way commitment.¹²

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A Relationship of Friendship

Perhaps Christ's most touching and intimate picture of the relationship between the believer and himself is found in his use of the figure of friendship in John 15. This is more than a metaphor, however, for surely here Christ is saying something literal about this relationship. Believers are not to think of themselves as servants or slaves (*δοῦλοι*), for Jesus has told them everything he has heard from his Father. In so doing he has acted not as a master, who does not explain to his servants what he is doing, but as a friend (v. 15). As friends of Jesus rather than slaves, believers have a totally different attitude. There are trust and confidence in Jesus rather than fear and secretiveness.

The same type of warmth and trust is also present in the believer's relationship to the Father. Just as human fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, so also does the heavenly Father. He will not give anything evil or harmful to his child who asks in simple faith (Luke 11:1-13). The heavenly Father knows the child's needs and any danger that might threaten, and in accordance with that knowledge acts for the child's welfare (Matt. 6:25-34; 10:28-31).

The Role of the Law

Now that we have seen that the Christian life is based on our union and friendship with Christ, the question arises: What place does the law have in this scheme? Other than matters directly related to Jesus Christ

The Christian Life

The New Testament has a great deal to say about the basis and nature of the ongoing Christian life. This instruction not only helps us understand God's sanctifying activity in us, but also gives us guidance for living the Christian life.

Union with Christ

In the preceding chapter we examined at some length the concept of union with Christ as in a sense encompassing the whole of salvation. There we noted that justification is possible because, being united with Christ, we share and possess his righteousness. Beyond that, however, it is clear that our continued walk in the Christian life, our sanctification, is dependent on union with him. Jesus made this quite evident in his imagery of the vine and the branches: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). Jesus viewed union with him, which is closely linked to keeping his commandments (v. 10), as the key

12. George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 516-17.

himself, few topics have received more extensive treatment by Paul than has the place of the law. In order to understand what the New Testament has to say about the place of the law in the Christian life, we must first determine the role it played under the Old Testament scheme of things.

It is popularly held that whereas salvation in the New Testament era is obtained through faith, Old Testament saints were saved by fulfilling the law. A close examination of significant Old Testament texts belies this assumption, however. In actuality, the important factor was the covenant which God established with his people by grace; the law was simply the standard God set for those people who would adhere to that covenant.¹³ So it is said of Abraham that "he believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Paul makes clear that Abraham's salvation was by faith, not by works of the law (Gal. 3:6). In numerous ways the Old Testament itself points out that it is not fulfilment of the law that saves a person. The law itself prescribed complete and unqualified love for God: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). It similarly commanded love for one's neighbor: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). If personal fulfilment of this law had been required of the Old Testament saints, none of them would have been saved. Clearly, salvation came through faith rather than works. Furthermore, although the covenant between God and man was certified by an external ritual, namely, circumcision, that act alone was insufficient to make a person right with God. There had to be a circumcision of the heart as well (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4).¹⁴ That act of faith was the crucial factor.

During the intertestamental period the law took on a different status within Judaism. The idea of the law came to overshadow the covenant. Observance of the law came to be regarded as the basis on which God passes judgment upon humanity.¹⁵ It was said to be the grounds of hope (Testament of Judah 26:1), justification (Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch 51:3), righteousness (Apoc. Bar. 67:6), salvation (Apoc. Bar. 51:7), resurrection (2 Maccabees 7:9), life (4 Ezra 7:20-21; 9:31). It was maintained that obedience to the law would bring in the kingdom and transform the world (Jubilees 23). George Ladd comments, "Thus the Law attains the position of an intermediary between God and man."¹⁶

In the New Testament, and particularly the writings of Paul, the law is seen quite differently. As we look into this matter, we must keep in mind

that the status and significance of the law are never depreciated in the New Testament. Jesus himself says that he did not come "to abolish the law and the prophets . . . but to fulfil them" (Matt. 5:17). Similarly, Paul speaks of the law as "the law of God" (Rom. 7:22, 25). It is not sin (Rom. 7:7); it is holy, just, and good (v. 12); it is spiritual (v. 14).

Judaism at this time considered salvation to be based upon obedience to the law, but realistically recognized that strict obedience was rare. So the teaching that salvation is based upon obedience was supplemented with a doctrine of repentance and forgiveness. In Paul's understanding, however, this new trend in Judaistic thinking mixed two contradictory principles: works and grace.¹⁷ He insisted instead that to be righteous one has to obey the law in all of its particulars (Gal. 5:3). Failure to keep any part of it is violation of all of it (Gal. 3:10). On this point he was in agreement with the teaching of James (James 2:11). There is a problem, of course, in that none of us can obey all of the law.

Inasmuch as we are unable to achieve righteousness by adhering strictly to the law, the role of the law is not to justify, but to show us what sin is (Rom. 3:20; 5:13, 20; Gal. 3:19). By revealing man's sinful condition, the law establishes him as a sinner. The law does not actually cause us to sin, but it constitutes our actions sin by giving God's evaluation of them. That we cannot in ourselves fulfil the law and thus be justified by it does not mean, however, that the law is now abolished. For in Christ, God has done what the law could not do: sending his own Son for sin, he has condemned sin in the flesh, so that what the law requires is now fulfilled by those who walk by the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-4). As faith in Christ frees us from the law, we are actually being enabled to uphold the law (Rom. 3:31). The law, then, continues to have application.

Just as we do not receive the righteousness to enter the Christian life by doing in our own strength the works which the law requires, so the continuance of the Christian life is by grace, not by works which fulfil the law. And yet, although Christians do not acquire and maintain righteousness by fulfilling the specific requirements of the law, they are nonetheless to regard the biblically revealed law as an expression of God's will for their lives, for, as we have seen, the law has not been abolished. Paul notes that we can fulfil several specific commandments of the law by love (Rom. 13:8-10). He reiterates the importance of the command to love one's father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise (Eph. 6:2). Thus, Ladd observes, "It is clear that the

13. *Ibid.*, p. 496.

14. John Bright, *The Kingdom of God* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), p. 94.

15. Hermann Kleinknecht and W. Gutbrod, *Law, Bible Key Words*, vol. 11 (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 69.

16. Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 497.

17. G. F. Moore points out that no rabbi would have seen a contradiction here—*Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of Tannaim* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1962), vol. 3, pp. 150-51.

Law continues to be the expression of the will of God for conduct, even for those who are no longer under the Law.¹⁸

It is important to draw a distinction between attempting to observe the principles embodied in the law and legalism. Scripture does not give us any basis for disregarding God's revealed commands. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15), and "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14). We are not at liberty to reject such commands; to do so would be an abuse of Christian freedom. Therefore, we must seek to guide our lives by these precepts. Such behavior is not legalism. Legalism is a slavish following of the law in the belief that one thereby earns merit; it also entails a refusal to go beyond the formal or literal requirements of the law. It is completely ineffectual in that it ignores the facts that we never outgrow the need for divine grace and that the essence of the law is love.

Separation

One theme which follows from the biblical insistence upon holiness and purity is separation. The Christian is to be removed from certain aspects of the world. This message is proclaimed by James: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (James 1:27). Similarly, Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18). Such appeals to live pure and distinctive lives are based upon the fact that we are God's own people; our relationships and behavior ought to be different from those of the world.

The application of these principles to the actual conduct of life has meant different things to different people. To some it means a shunning of the wisdom of the world, that is, avoidance of secular learning. To others it means separation from churches or church bodies which are not pure in doctrine or lifestyle. To yet others, it means withdrawing from any profound or prolonged contact with non-Christian persons, lest one's own faith and life should be corrupted thereby. It has also meant abstaining from certain personal practices such as smoking, drinking, dancing, and theater attendance. Certain groups have adopted several of these understandings of separation.¹⁹

18. Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 510.

19. See, e.g., John R. Rice, *The Ruin of a Christian* (Murfreesboro, Tenn.: Sword of the Lord, 1944), pp. 13-40.

On the other hand, in recent years there has also been a movement toward secularization in some evangelical circles. This movement has taken several forms. One of them is educational and academic. Among its manifestations are desires to make Christian educational institutions the equal of their secular counterparts, or to obtain one's education, particularly on the graduate level, at a secular institution, or to involve oneself in the scholarship conducted in broader circles.

There has also been an ecclesiastical form of secularization. Conservatives in the first half of the twentieth century often chose to withdraw from groups that they perceived to be theologically liberal. This was the case with the founding of Westminster Seminary in 1929 by J. Gresham Machen, Oswald T. Allis, Robert Dick Wilson, and others who separated from Princeton Seminary and ultimately were forced out of the parent denomination, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.²⁰ The formation of the General Association of Regular Baptists and that of the Conservative Baptist Association are instances of the same phenomenon.²¹ Some evangelicals, however, have in recent years chosen to remain a part of parent denominations which have drifted to the left theologically; it is the feeling of these evangelicals that they can have a greater influence from within than from outside.²²

There has, further, been a movement toward a less separatistic social stance. This is true on the individual level; close personal friendships are maintained with non-Christians. It is also true on a broader level; evangelicals are now choosing to live and work within the non-Christian segments of society, to be members of organizations which make either no explicit claim to a Christian commitment or an inconsistent one. And finally, some evangelicals have adopted personal practices which were formerly taboo. For example, some people who identify themselves as evangelicals now indulge in drinking, smoking, and even the use of four-letter words.²³

There are biblical grounds supporting certain forms of each side of this tension. On the one hand, there certainly is scriptural teaching that since we belong to a pure and holy God, we are to be pure as well. But there is also Jesus' teaching that we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). We are to make our influence felt in a world that needs the tempering effect of Christianity. To be involved

20. Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 430-68.

21. Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1950), pp. 440-52.

22. Edward J. Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), pp. 132-37.

23. Richard Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 119.

66 in the structures of society while still maintaining our distinctiveness, our quality as salt and light, requires a delicate balance; each Christian will need to determine prayerfully just how he or she can best achieve it. The ideal laid down by James should be our goal: both to practice acts of compassion and kindness and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

The Salvation of Old Testament Believers

One issue which may not be of direct practical importance but which has far-reaching implications is the status of the Old Testament believers. Was their salvation on the same basis as that of believers since the time of Pentecost? Was their subjective experience of the Christian life the same as that which we have today? If there were differences, how do they affect the way we interpret and apply the Old Testament?

In our examination of the status of the law, we noted that justification was apparently on the same grounds in Old Testament times as in the New Testament period. It was not by works but by faith. But what of the other aspects of salvation?

Regeneration is a particularly problematic issue with regard to Old Testament believers. Some theologians have quite flatly stated that Old Testament believers were not regenerated, and could not be, since the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, and would not be until Pentecost. A representative of this position is Lewis Sperry Chafer:

Of the present ministries of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer—regeneration, indwelling, baptizing, sealing and filling—nothing indeed is said with respect to these having been experienced by the Old Testament saints... Old Testament saints are invested with these blessings only theoretically.... The Old Testament will be searched in vain for record of Jews passing from an unsaved to a saved state, or for any declaration about the terms upon which such a change would be secured.... The conception of an abiding indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which every believer becomes an unalterable temple of the Holy Spirit belongs only to this age of the church, and has no place in the provisions of Judaism.²⁴

Note that this position is an inferential conclusion drawn from the belief that regeneration can take place only in connection with indwelling by the Holy Spirit. Yet there is an absence of real proof that Old Testament believers were not regenerated. On the other hand, there are several

biblical considerations that do argue for the occurrence of regeneration in the Old Testament (or pre-Pentecost) period.

A major consideration is that the language used to describe the status of Old Testament saints is remarkably similar to that which depicts the regeneration of New Testament believers. Moses distinguished between two groups within Israel. There were those who walked in the stubbornness of their hearts (Deut. 29:19–20). They were referred to as “stubborn” and “stiff-necked” (Exod. 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6, 13; Ezek. 2:4). A similar concept is expressed by Stephen: “stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears” (Acts 7:51). Now contrast with these descriptions the promise of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:6: “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” The contrast is between those who are circumcised of heart and those who are not. Paul clarifies this expression: “For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God” (Rom. 2:28–29). Arthur Lewis comments: “Paul therefore taught and believed that within the total number of Jews there had always been a company of *true Jews*, all of those who were saved by faith and cleansed from within, having their hearts altered (‘circumcised’) to conform to the will of God.”²⁵

In addition to the resemblance in language depicting the condition of Old and New Testament believers, Old Testament descriptions of changes in human hearts strongly resemble the New Testament depiction of the new birth. Samuel told Saul, “The spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man” (1 Sam. 10:6). This promise was immediately fulfilled: “When [Saul] turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs came to pass that day” (v. 9). The Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul and he prophesied. In Isaiah 57:15 God declares his intention, “to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.” The Hebrew verb literally means “to cause to live.”²⁶ Twice in Ezekiel (11:19–20; 36:25–26) God promises to replace the heart of stone with a new heart, a heart of flesh. All of these references appear to be more than mere figurative expressions. What they are describing is a transformation like that which Jesus described to Nicodemus. We should also note that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus well before Pentecost. It is difficult

25. Arthur H. Lewis, “The New Birth Under the Old Covenant,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (January 1984): 37.

26. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Lexicon*, p. 311.

24. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 1948), vol. 6, pp. 73–74.

to believe that he was describing something which would not be available until a few years hence—or that the apostles were not born again until Pentecost.

The issue that concerns us here, however, is whether the Old Testament saints experienced sanctification. It is significant that in the Old Testament we find prominent cases of what the New Testament terms “the fruit of the Spirit.” Note, for example, that Noah and Job were both righteous men, blameless in conduct (Gen. 6:9; Job 1:1, 8). Special attention is given to Abraham’s faith, Joseph’s goodness, Moses’ meekness, Solomon’s wisdom, and Daniel’s self-control. While these men did not experience the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they were certainly under his influence.²⁷

In contrast to the similarities we have noted, there are two ways in which the salvation Old Testament believers possessed and experienced differed from the New Testament variety. While based entirely upon the work of Christ, grace in the Old Testament was indirectly received. The Old Testament believers did not know how that grace had been effected. They did not understand that their righteousness was proleptic—it was achieved by the future death of the incarnate Son of God. That grace was also mediated by priests and sacrificial rites; it did not come about through a direct personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The second point of difference lies in the relative externality of Old Testament grace. The Holy Spirit did not dwell within, but exerted an external influence, for example, through the written and spoken word. The presence of God was visibly represented by the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and temple. The law was an external written code rather than the Spirit’s imparting of truth to the heart, as would later be the case (John 14:26). But despite these differences, the Old Testament saint, like the New Testament believer, grew in holiness through faith and obedience to the commands of God. This spiritual progress was the work of God.

If there were radical differences between the salvation of Old Testament believers and that of Christians from Pentecost on, we might be inclined to think that the pattern which we find in the New Testament is also a variable form subject to change. But the fact that the essence of salvation has remained unchanged across widely differing times and cultures, with only minor variations attributable to progressive revelation, indicates that the New Testament pattern of salvation is to be ours as well.

The Christian life, as we have seen, is not a static matter in which one is saved and then merely reposes in that knowledge. It is a process of growth and progress, lived not in the Christian’s own strength, but in the power and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And it is a process of challenge and satisfaction.

27. Lewis, “New Birth,” p. 40.

ROMANS

An Introduction to the New Testament

Carson, Moo, Morris

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Romans is the longest and most theologically significant of the letters of Paul, “the very purest gospel” (Luther). The letter takes the form of a theological treatise framed by an epistolary opening (1:1–17) and closing (15:14–16:27). The opening contains the usual prescript (1:1–7) and thanksgiving (1:8–15) and is concluded with a transitional statement of the theme of the letter: the gospel as the revelation of God’s righteousness, a righteousness that can be experienced only by faith (1:16–17).

The gospel as the righteousness of God by faith (1:18–4:25). Righteousness of God by faith is the theme of the first major section of the letter. Paul paves the way for this theme by explaining why it was necessary for God to manifest his righteousness and why humans can experience this righteousness only by faith. Sin, Paul affirms, has gained a stranglehold on all people, and only an act of God, experienced as a free gift through faith, can break that stranglehold (1:18–3:20). God’s wrath, the condemning outflow of his holy anger, stands over all sinners (1:18–19). And justly so. For God has made himself known to all people through creation; their turning from him to gods of their own making renders them “without excuse” (1:20–32). Even less excusable are Jews, for they have a clear and detailed statement of God’s will in their law. Mere possession of that law or bearing the outward mark of God’s covenant (circumcision) does not suffice to protect the Jews from God’s wrath (2:1–3:8). So, Paul concludes, all people, both Jews and Gentiles, are helpless slaves of sin and cannot be brought into relationship with God by anything they might do (3:9–20).

Only God can change this tragic state of affairs, and this he has done by making available through the sacrifice of his Son a means of becoming righteous, or innocent, before God (3:21–26). This justification, Paul insists, can be gained only by faith (3:27–31), as is illustrated clearly in the case of Abraham (4:1–25).

The gospel as the power of God for salvation (5:1–8:39). Having shown how sinful human beings can be declared right before God through faith, Paul in the second major section of the letter draws out the significance of this act both for the future judgment and for the present earthly life. Being justified means “peace with God,” or reconciliation to God, and especially a secure hope for vindication on the day of judgment (5:1–11). The ground for this hope is the believer’s relationship to

Christ, who, undoing the effects of Adam's sin, has won eternal life for all who belong to him (5:12-21). Nevertheless, although transferred into the new realm, where Christ, righteousness, grace, and life reign, the Christian still must battle the powers of this present realm: sin, the law, death, and the flesh. But we battle with confidence, knowing that Christ has set us free from the tyranny of these powers. Therefore sin can no longer dictate terms to us (6:1-14); God is now our master, which our lives must reflect (6:15-23). Likewise the law, which, because of sin, made the situation of people worse instead of better, no longer holds sway over the believer (7:1-25). Through the agency of God's Spirit, the Christian is assured of final victory over death and the power of the flesh (8:1-13). That same Spirit, making us God's children (8:14-17), provides additional assurance that the work God has begun in us will be brought to a triumphant conclusion: justification will assuredly lead to glorification (8:18-39).

The Gospel and Israel (9:1-11:36). A key motif throughout Romans 1-8 is the question of the relationship between law and gospel, Jew and Gentile, God's old-covenant people with his new-covenant people. This is the theme of the third major section of the letter. Does the transfer of covenant privileges from Israel to the church mean that God has spurned his promises to Israel (9:1-6a)? Not at all, Paul answers. First, God's promises were never intended to guarantee salvation to every Israelite by birth (9:6b-29). Second, the people of Israel themselves are to blame for failing to embrace God's righteousness in Christ, despite God's clear word to them (9:30-10:21). Furthermore, some Israelites, like Paul, are being saved, and in them God's promises are being fulfilled (11:1-10). Finally, in the climax to his argument, Paul counters the arrogant boasting of some Gentile Christians by reminding them that it is only through Israel that salvation has come to them and that there awaits a day when God's promise to Israel will come to full realization and "all Israel will be saved" (11:12-36).

The gospel and the transformation of life (12:1-15:13). The last major section of Paul's theological treatise is devoted to the practical outworking of God's grace in the gospel. In an initial summary statement, Paul reminds his readers that this grace of God should stimulate sacrificial giving of themselves in service to God (12:1-2). This service can take various forms, as the manifold gifts God has given his people are exercised (12:3-8). The many detailed aspects of this service to God are to be permeated by love (12:9-21). Serving God does not mean, Paul cautions, that the Christian can ignore the legitimate claims that government makes on us (13:1-7). Nor, though free from the law, can Christians ignore the continuing validity of the commandment that summarizes the law: loving our neighbor as ourselves (13:8-10). The Christian is to serve God in this way, recognizing that the day of salvation is already casting the rays of its light on our path, and our lives must reflect that light (13:11-14). Finally, Paul tackles an issue that was apparently a very divisive one in the church at Rome and, no doubt, elsewhere: the observance of certain dietary codes and rituals (14:1-15:13). Some of the Christians in Rome prided themselves on being strong in faith and looked down on others who were not convinced that their faith allowed them to eat any kind of food or to ignore set days of worship. They in turn condemned the so-called strong in faith as compromisers. Paul, while aligning himself with the strong, demands that each side respect the opinions of the other side and learn to live in mutual tolerance.

The epistolary conclusion (15:14-16:27) contains information about Paul's situation and travel plans (15:14-29), a request for prayer as he prepares to bring the collection to Christians in Jerusalem (15:30-33), a commendation of a sister in Christ and a long series of greetings (16:1-16), and a final warning about false teachers, followed by personal notes and a benediction (16:17-27 [vv. 25-27 are textually uncertain]).

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Romans claims to have been written by Paul (1:1), and there has been no serious challenge to this claim. Tertius, identified in 16:22, was probably Paul's amanuensis or scribe. While Paul may sometimes have given his amanuensis some freedom in choosing the wording of his letters, there is little evidence that this was the case in Romans. A few have wondered whether parts of Romans may have been written by someone else and incorporated into the letter by Paul, but none of these theories has proved convincing (see section "Integrity" below).

PROVENANCE AND DATE

If there is little debate about whether Paul wrote Romans, neither is there about the general situation in which he wrote. According to 15:22-29, three localities figure in Paul's travel plans: Jerusalem, Rome, and Spain. Paul's immediate destination is Jerusalem. As his prayer in 15:30-33 reveals, Paul looks upon this trip to Jerusalem with considerable trepidation. Paul is bringing to the impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem an offering gathered from the Gentile-Christian churches he has planted (15:25-27), and he is uncertain how the offering will be received. It is his hope that the offering will be acceptable to the Jewish believers and that this will help to cement relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians. But Paul is unsure about this and requests the Roman Christians to pray for this outcome.

The second stop Paul plans to make is in Rome, but only as a stopping-off point on his way to Spain (15:24, 28). This is not to minimize the strategic importance of Rome but reflects Paul's sense of calling to "preach the gospel where Christ [is] not known" (15:20). Paul's gaze is fixed on faraway Spain because the task of initial church planting in the eastern Mediterranean has been completed: "From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ" (15:19). As a result of his first three missionary journeys, thriving churches have been planted in major metropolitan centers throughout this region. These churches can carry on the task of evangelism in their respective areas while Paul pursues his calling in virgin territory.

When we compare these indications with the details of Paul's career from Acts, it is clear that Paul must be near the end of his third missionary journey as he writes Romans. It was then that Paul was preparing to return to Jerusalem, with Rome as his next destination (see Acts 19:21; 20:16). Corinth is the most likely place of writing. When Luke tells us that Paul spent three months in Greece (Acts 20:3), it was most likely Corinth where Paul stayed (see 2 Cor. 13:1, 10). Confirmation that Corinth was the place of composition comes from Paul's commendation of a woman who lived in Cenchrea, a neighboring city to Corinth

(16:1–2); and the Gaius who sends greetings in 16:23 may be the same Gaius whom Paul baptized in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). Some have also thought that the city treasurer Erastus (16:23) can be identified with the Erastus mentioned on an inscription found at Corinth.¹

The date at which Paul wrote Romans will accordingly depend on the date of Paul's three-month stay in Greece; fixing this date depends, in turn, on the chronology of Paul's life and ministry as a whole. While we cannot be certain within a year or two, A.D. 57 is the best alternative (see table 6 in chap. 7).²

ADDRESSEES

Assuming that the text printed in our Greek and English Bibles is correct (for which see the next section), the letter is addressed to "all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints" (1:7; cf. also 1:15). We have no definite evidence about the origin of the church in Rome or about its composition at the time when Paul wrote to it. In about A.D. 180, Ireneus identified Peter and Paul together as founders of the Roman church (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2), while later tradition names Peter as the founder and first bishop of the church (e.g., the *Catalogus Liberianus* [A.D. 354]). But neither tradition can be accepted. The letter itself makes clear that Paul was a stranger to the church in Rome (see 1:10, 13; 15:22), and it is unlikely that Paul would be planning the kind of visit described in 1:8–15 to a church founded by Peter. Nor is it likely that Peter went to Rome early enough to have established a church there.³ Since no other apostle is associated with the founding of the church in Rome, we may agree with the assessment of the fourth-century "Ambrosiaster" that the Romans "have embraced the faith of Christ, albeit according to the Jewish rite, without seeing any sign of mighty works or any of the apostles."⁴ If, then, we are to speculate, the most likely scenario is that Jews converted on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:10) were the first to bring the gospel to the great capital.

"Ambrosiaster" is probably also correct in thinking that Christianity in Rome began among Jews ("according to the Jewish rite"). Jews made up a significant part of the citizenry of Rome by the end of the first century B.C.⁵ Here, as Paul found, was the most fertile seedbed for the planting of the gospel—especially if returned pilgrims from Pentecost first planted the seed. That there were Jewish Christians in Rome by (probably) A.D. 49 is attested by the statement of Suetonius

¹See the discussion in David W. J. Gill, "Erastus the Aedile," *TynB* 40 (1989): 293–302.

²Most introductions and commentaries agree on this approximate date. Minimizing the historical value of Acts, Charles Buck and Greer Taylor date Romans in A.D. 47 (*Saints Paul: A Study of the Development of His Thoughts* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969], pp. 170–71). Gerd Lüdemann in 51/52 or 54/55 (*Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984], p. 263), while J. R. Richards puts it in 52–54 because he thinks on internal grounds that Romans must precede 1 Corinthians ("Romans and I Corinthians: Their Chronological Relationship and Comparative Dates," *NTS* 13 [1966–67]: 14–30).

³See the discussion in Oscar Gullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 72–157.

⁴Ambrosiaster, *PL* 17, col. 46.

⁵See, e.g., Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*; and note the discussions in Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960), pp. 4–9; and Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl Donfried (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), pp. 101–8.

that Claudius the Roman emperor "expelled the Jews from Rome because they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Chrestus" (*Life of Claudius* 25.2). It is generally agreed that "Chrestus" is a corruption of the Greek Χριστός (*Christos*, "Christ") and that Suetonius's remark refers to violent debates within the Jewish community in Rome over the claims of Jesus to be the Christ. That this incident occurred in 49, as the fifth-century writer Orosius claims, is less certain, although the date receives indirect confirmation from Acts 18:2, where Luke says that Aquila and Priscilla had recently come to Corinth from Italy "because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome."⁶

Since the Romans at this point would not have distinguished Jews from Jewish Christians, both would have been affected by Claudius's expulsion. But as with similar expulsions on other occasions, the edict probably did not stay in force for long, and less than a decade later we find Aquila and Priscilla back in Rome (Rom. 16:3). During its enforcement, however, the edict must have had a profound impact on the church in Rome. In the absence of Jewish Christians, those Gentiles who had been attracted to Christianity would have taken over the church, and Jewish Christians who then returned would probably be in a minority, and perhaps viewed with some condescension by the now-dominant Gentile wing.⁷

When Paul writes his letter, then, we may be certain that there were both Gentile and Jewish Christians in Rome, probably meeting in several house churches rather than in one large gathering.⁸ Does Paul write to this mixed community as a whole? Or does he address himself to one segment of the community only? Only the evidence of the letter itself can answer these questions.

In turning to the letter, however, we are confronted with apparently conflicting data. On the one hand, there are indications that Paul had a Jewish-Christian audience in mind: (1) he greets the Jewish Christians Priscilla and Aquila and his "kinsmen" Andronicus, Junias, and Herodion (16:3, 7, 11); (2) he addresses himself to a Jew in chapter 2 (e.g., v. 17); (3) he associates his readers with the Mosaic law: they are "not under law" (6:14, 15) because they have "died to the law" (7:4); and note 7:1: "I am speaking to those who know the law"; (4) Paul calls Abraham "our forefather" (4:1); and (5) much of the letter is devoted to issues that would be of particular interest to Jewish Christians: the sin of the Jews (2:1–3:8); the Mosaic law, seen in terms both of its inadequacy (3:19–20, 27–31; 4:12–15; 5:13–14, 20; 6:14; 7:1–8:4; 9:30–10:8) and of its establishment in Christ (3:31; 8:4; 13:8–10); the significance of Abraham, the fountainhead of Israel (chap. 4); and the place of Israel in salvation history (chaps. 9–11).

On the other hand, indications of a Gentile-Christian audience are equally evident: (1) in his address of the letter as a whole, Paul includes his readers among the Gentiles to whom he has been called to minister (1:5–6; cf. also 1:13 and 15:14–21); (2) he directly addresses "you Gentiles" in 11:13 (continued in

⁶See esp. E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, SJLA 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 210–16; and F. F. Bruce, "The Romans Debate—Continued," *BJRL* 64 (1982): 338–39. For a dissenting opinion, see Leon, *Jews*, pp. 23–27.

⁷See esp. Wiefel, "Jewish Community," pp. 109–13.

⁸It is noted, e.g., that the word "church" is absent from Romans; see F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 385–89. The Christian community may then have reflected the lack of centralization that characterized the Jewish community in Rome; see Romano Penna, "Les Juifs à Rome au temps de l'apôtre Paul," *NTS* 28 (1982): 327–28; Leon, *Jews*, pp. 135–70.

the second person plural throughout 11:14–24); and (3) Paul's plea that the Christians in Rome "accept one another" (15:7) appears to be directed especially to Gentiles (see vv. 8–9).

We must consider several options in trying to reconcile these apparently conflicting indications of Paul's audience in the epistle to the Romans. First, we could downplay the evidence of a Gentile-Christian audience and conclude that the letter is addressed entirely or mainly to Jewish Christians.⁹ It has been argued, for instance, that 1:6 simply designates the Roman Christians as being "among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" or that *τὰ ἔθνη (ta ethnē)* in verse 5 means "nations" rather than "Gentiles" (see *RSV*). But neither alternative is convincing. In a context dealing with Paul's apostleship, *τὰ ἔθνη* almost certainly means "Gentiles," and the connection between verses 5 and 6 (*ἐν οἷς ἔστε καὶ ἰμeis [en hois este kai hmeis]*, "among whom you also") is most naturally construed as numbering the readers of the letter among these Gentiles.¹⁰

In light of these verses, then, we might be inclined to the opposite conclusion: that Romans is directed only to Gentile Christians.¹¹ Indeed, there is more to be said for a Gentile-Christian audience than for a Jewish-Christian one. Not only is 1:5–6 very significant, coming in the address of the letter as a whole, but the evidence for a Jewish-Christian readership is not all that strong. The direct address to "a Jew" in chapter 2 is a literary device and implies nothing about the intended audience. Calling Abraham our father (4:1) would suggest a Jewish audience only if Paul was including all his readers in the designation. But this is not clear: he may be thinking only of himself and other Jewish Christians. Paul certainly suggests that his readers have had some experience with the Mosaic law (6:14; 7:4), but there is a sense in which even Gentiles, according to Paul, have been under the law. Moreover, many of the Gentiles in the Christian community in Rome were probably former God-fearers—worshippers of the God of Israel who had not been circumcised and thus had not been made members of the covenant community. As such, they would have learned much of the Mosaic law in the synagogue.¹² Finally, while much of Romans is indeed a debate with Judaism, it is not at all clear that such a debate would have been irrelevant to a Gentile audience. Quite the contrary. Gentiles as much as Jews needed to understand how the fulfillment of God's plan in Christ related to the Old Testament people of God and his promises to them, and to the historical continuation of that people in contemporary Judaism. In this regard, it is important to observe that Paul's teaching about the future of Israel in 11:12–24 is specifically directed to Gentiles.

While there is much to be said for confining Paul's audience to Gentile Christians, it is doubtful that we can exclude Jewish Christians entirely. Paul addresses himself to "all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints"

⁹This view was first made popular by F. C. Baur ("Über Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefes und die damit zusammenhängenden Verhältnisse der römischen Gemeinde," in *Historisch-kritische Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 2 vols. [Stuttgart: Friedrich Fromman, 1963], 1:147–266). See also Zahn 1:421–34.

¹⁰See Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, vol. 1, WEC (Chicago: Moody, 1991), pp. 10–13, 44–46.

¹¹See esp. Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (London: SCM, 1959), pp. 200–209; Walter Schmithals, *Der Römerbrief als historisches Problem*, SNT 9 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975), pp. 9–89; Jülicher, pp. 112–15.

¹²Schmithals, *Römerbrief*, pp. 69–82; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1988), pp. xlvii–xlvi.

(1:7), and it is certain that there were Jewish Christians in Rome. If, as we maintain (see below), chapter 16 is part of Paul's original letter to the Romans, at least those Jewish Christians mentioned there must be included within Paul's audience. Moreover, the "weak in faith" whom Paul addresses in 14:1–15:13 are quite possibly to be identified with a Jewish-Christian faction.

So it appears that Paul is addressing both Jewish and Gentile Christians in Romans. This might mean that Paul addresses Gentile Christians in some passages and Jewish Christians in others. The most detailed attempt to understand the letter in this way is that of Paul Minear. He discerns no fewer than five separate groups in the Christian community in Rome and thinks each section of Romans has one of these groups specifically in view.¹³ But Paul does not say enough to make clear the existence of so many distinct groups. Nor, with the exception of one or two passages (e.g., 11:12–24), does this epistle hint at an audience restricted to only some of the Roman Christians. We must thus conclude that Paul addresses in Romans a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians.¹⁴ Almost certainly, however, Gentile Christians were in a majority large enough to justify Paul's including the Christian community in Rome within the sphere of those Gentiles to whom his apostleship was especially directed.

INTEGRITY, LITERARY HISTORY, AND TEXT

Thus far we have been discussing Romans on the supposition that the letter Paul sent to the Roman Christians was composed of the entire sixteen chapters printed in our Bibles. But this supposition must now be examined, for a significant number of scholars doubt that this is the case. A few confine their argument to internal considerations. They claim that there are inconsistencies within the canonical Romans and that they can be explained only on the hypothesis that the letter is actually a combination of two or more original letters or that a redactor has inserted various interpolations into the text of Paul's original letter.¹⁵ Not only are such theories bereft of any textual evidence, their proponents have manufactured inconsistencies in a letter that has been lauded through the centuries for its logical rigor and clarity of argument.¹⁶

There are, however, a number of other theories about the original form and literary history of Romans that deserve more serious consideration, for they arise from difficulties within the text of the letter. Central to these theories is the place of the doxology that is included at the very end of the letter in most modern texts and translations (16:25–27). It is omitted in some manuscripts and appears at

¹³Paul Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans* (London: SCM, 1971).

¹⁴This is the conclusion of most introductions and commentaries; see, e.g., Kümmel, pp. 309–11.

¹⁵Schmithals posits a "Romans A" made up of chaps. 1–11 and 15:8–13 and a "Romans B" made up of 12:1–15:7; 15:14–32; 16:21–23 and 15:33, with various other minor interpolations and fragments (see his summary in *Römerbrief*, pp. 180–211). J. Kinoshita also discerns two separate original letters in our Romans; significantly, however, he divides things very differently than does Schmithals ("Romans—Two Writings Combined," *NovT* 7 [1964]: 258–77). Another tack is taken by J. C. O'Neill, who identifies numerous editorial insertions in the text of Romans. (*Paul's Letter to the Romans*, PNIC [Baltimore: Penguin, 1975]).

¹⁶See the review of O'Neill's commentary by Nigel M. Watson, "Simplifying the Righteousness of God: A Critique of J. C. O'Neill's *Romans*," *SJT* 30 (1977): 464–69.

different places in others. The following sequences are found in the Greek manuscript tradition:

1. 1:1–14:23; 15:1–16:23; 16:25–27
2. 1:1–14:23; 16:25–27; 15:1–16:23; 16:25–27
3. 1:1–14:23; 16:25–27; 15:1–16:24
4. 1:1–14:23; 15:1–16:24
5. 1:1–15:33; 16:25–27; 16:1–23

Since a doxology generally closes a letter, the presence of the doxology after chapter 14 or chapter 15 could indicate that the letter at one time ended at one or the other of these points. And this possibility is increased by other evidence.

1. Several MSS of the Latin Vulgate omit 15:1–16:23 entirely.
2. Another codex of the Vulgate (Amiatinus), while containing 15:1–16:24, omits the section summaries from this section.
3. Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Cyprian fail to refer to chapters 15 and 16 in places where they may have been expected to, if they had a sixteen-chapter form of the text.

These data suggest that a fourteen-chapter form of Romans was extant in the early church, which some scholars conclude was the original version. Noting that a few MSS (G and the OL g) omit reference to Rome in 1:7 and 1:15 (and Paul never mentions a particular destination elsewhere in chaps. 1–14), they argue that Paul first wrote chapters 1–14 as a general doctrinal treatise and later added chapters 15–16 when he sent this treatise to Rome.¹⁷ This reconstruction is unlikely. The close connection between chapters 14 and 15 makes it impossible to think that 14 ever existed without at least the first part of 15.¹⁸ How, then, did the fourteen-chapter recension of Romans come into existence? Lightfoot suggests that Paul himself may have abbreviated his letter to the Romans in order to universalize the epistle.¹⁹ But this still fails to explain the abrupt break between chapters 14 and 15.²⁰ The same objection applies to Gamble's theory that the text was shortened after Paul's time in order to make the letter more universally applicable.²¹ Perhaps the best explanation is also the earliest: that Marcion was responsible for cutting off the last two chapters of the letter.²² Given his biases against the Old Testament, Marcion may have been unhappy with the Old Testament quotations in 15:3 and 15:9–12 and considered that 15:1 was the most convenient place to make the break.

¹⁷E.g., Kirsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Rivingtons, 1919), pp. 350–66.
¹⁸See, e.g., William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. xci; Harry Gamble, Jr., *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 84.

¹⁹J. B. Lightfoot, "The Structure and Destination of the Epistle to the Romans," in *Biblical Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1893), pp. 287–320, 352–74; see also James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *EGT* 2:576–82.

²⁰See the criticisms of Lightfoot's view by Hort in *Biblical Essays*, pp. 321–51.

²²See, e.g., Kümmel, p. 316; Guthrie, pp. 421–22; Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. lvi.

In recent decades, however, some scholars have thought that Paul's letter to the Romans did not include chapter 16. The placement of the doxology after chapter 15 in the early and important MS *P*⁴⁶ suggests that some form of the letter may have ended there, and the contents of chapter 16, it is alleged, make it unlikely that it could have been addressed to the church in Rome. Nothing in chapters 1–15 has prepared us for the warning about false teachers in 16:17–20. But more important is the fact that Paul in chapter 16 greets twenty-five individuals by name, two families, one house church and an unspecified number of "brothers" and "saints." All this to a church he has never visited! Surely, it is argued, we must conclude that chapter 16 was originally an independent letter—perhaps a commendatory letter for Phoebe²³—or was tacked on when Paul sent his Romans letter to the church in Ephesus.²⁴

This thesis rests on rather shaky ground. There is no direct textual evidence at all for a fifteen-chapter form of the letter. Warnings about false teachers are by no means out of keeping with passages such as 3:8, and Paul often includes such a last-minute reminder in his letters.²⁵ Nor are the number of greetings in chapter 16 incompatible with a Roman destination. Many of those greeted may have been, like Priscilla and Aquila, Jewish Christians who had been forced to flee Rome and who met Paul in the course of his travels. What more natural than that believers from Rome would have spent their enforced exile in the kind of Roman-influenced cities of the East in which Paul was busy establishing churches?

We have, then, good grounds for concluding that Paul's letter to the Roman Christians contained all sixteen chapters.²⁶ Whether the doxology should be included at the end of chapter 16 is another question. Although omitted entirely in only a few MSS, its varied placement suggests that it may have been added to round off one of the recensions of the letter in the early church.²⁷ Moreover, a concluding doxology is unparalleled in the letters of Paul, and the language of this one is said to be un-Pauline. But these arguments are not conclusive,²⁸ and we think it likely that 16:25–27 was Paul's own conclusion to this letter.

NATURE AND GENRE

Romans has occasionally been viewed as a timeless treatise, a "compendium of Christian doctrine" (Melanchthon) that transcends time. However, while it

²³E.g., Edgar J. Goodspeed, "Phoebe's Letter of Introduction," *HTR* 44 (1951): 55–57; Schmithals, *Römerbrief*, pp. 125–51; Moffat, pp. 135–39; Jülicher, pp. 109–12. J. I. H. McDonald has shown that so compact a letter of introduction is possible ("Was Romans XVI a Separate Letter?" *NTS* 16 [1969–70]: 369–72).

²⁴This view is associated esp. with T. W. Manson; see his "Letter to the Romans—and Others," *BJRL* 31 (1948): 224–40. Some who adopt a similar view include G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: British Academy, 1953), pp. 276–77; McNeile, pp. 154–58; and Martin 2:194–96.

²⁵Gamble, *Textual History*, p. 52. Ollrog, who thinks that chap. 16 belongs to the original letter, argues that 16:17–20a is a post-Pauline interpolation ("Die Abfassungsverhältnisse von Rom 16," in *Kirche, Fs. Günther Bornkamm*, ed. D. Lührmann and G. Strecker [Tübingen: Mohr, 1980], pp. 221–44).

²⁶In addition to other works cited in these notes, see Bruce N. Kaye, "To the Romans and Others' Revisited," *NortT* 18 (1976): 37–77.

²⁷See, e.g., Lake, *Earlier Epistles*, pp. 343–46; Manson, "To the Romans and Others," p. 8.
²⁸See Larry W. Hurtado, "The Doxology at the End of Romans," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis*, Fs. Bruce M. Metzger, ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 185–99.

certainly speaks to every generation of Christians, the message of Romans is embedded in a document written to a particular audience in a definite situation. To put it simply, Romans is a letter.

But what kind of letter? There were many types of letters in the ancient world, ranging from brief requests for money from children away from home to long essays intended to reach a wide audience.²⁹ Paul's letters generally fall somewhere between these extremes, but Romans is further toward the latter end of the spectrum than any other letter of Paul's (with the possible exception of Ephesians). To be sure, Romans is written within a set of definite circumstances that are enumerated in the epistolary opening and closing of the book (1:1–17; 15:14–16:27). But within this framework, Paul pursues an argument that develops according to the inner logic of the gospel. This stands in marked contrast to, say, 1 Corinthians, where Paul's agenda is set by the needs and questions of the Corinthians. The questions that occur in Romans (e.g., 3:1, 5, 27; 4:1; 6:1, 15) are literary devices by which Paul moves his own argument along.³⁰ Not once in chapters 1–13 does Paul allude to a specific circumstance or individual within the Roman Christian community. When he addresses his audience, he does so with terms that could be applied to any Christian group: "brothers" (7:4; 8:12; 10:1; 11:25); those "who know the law" (7:1); "you Gentiles" (11:13). Not even chapters 14–15 need have a specific situation at Rome in mind.³¹

We may, then, describe Romans as a tractate letter, one that has as its main component a theological argument or series of arguments.³² Attempting a more definite genre identification is perilous. Bultmann and others have compared Romans to the diatribe, an argumentative genre popular with Cynic-Stoic philosophers.³³ Features of the diatribe found in Romans are the direct address of an opponent or interlocutor (see 2:1, 17), rhetorical questions, and the use of *ῥέπορο* (*mē genoito*, "may it never be!") to reject the inference found in such questions (see 3:3–4, 5–6; 6:1–2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11). Bultmann viewed the diatribe as polemical in orientation, but recent study has focused rather on its educative role and has raised the question whether the diatribe should be considered a genre at all.³⁴ In any case, while sharing some features of the diatribe, Romans as a whole cannot be classified as such.

Other attempts have been made to fit Romans into ancient literary categories: it has been labeled a memorandum,³⁵ an "epideictic" letter,³⁶ an ambassadorial

²⁹See the section "Paul's Letters" in chap. 7 above.

³⁰See esp. Günther Bornkamm, "The Letter to the Romans as Paul's Last Will and Testament," in *The Romans Debate*, p. 28.

³¹See Robert J. Karris, "Romans 14:1–15:13 and the Occasion of Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 75–99.

³²See Richard N. Longenecker, "On the Form, Function, and Authority of the New Testament Letters," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), p. 104; Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, p. 315.

³³Rudolf Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe*, FRLANT 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910).

³⁴Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57 (Chico, Calif.: SP, 1981).

³⁵Klaus Haacker, "Exegetische Probleme des Römerbriefs," *NTW* 20 (1978): 2–3.

³⁶Wilhelm Wuellner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 160–65.

letter,³⁷ a "protreptic" letter,³⁸ and a letter essay,³⁹ to name only a few. But Romans does not quite fit. To be sure, Romans has similarities to all of these genres. But this proves nothing more than that Paul has utilized various literary conventions of his day in getting his message across.⁴⁰

PURPOSE

The treatise style of the letter to the Romans gives rise to one of the most debated questions about the letter: What was Paul's purpose in sending so heavy a theological exposition to the Christians in Rome? If we first turn to explicit statements of purpose in the letter itself, we find little to help answer this question. Paul writes about his reasons for visiting Rome, but not about his reason for writing to Rome. The only statement he makes on this latter point is too general to be of any real help: "I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again" (15:15).

The only remaining method of determining Paul's purpose is to fit the contents of the letter to its occasion. The general occasion of the letter is sketched above (see the section "Provenance and Date"). But it is the particular occasion, Paul's motivations in writing, that will lead to conclusions about purpose. Opinions on this question tend to move in two different directions: those that focus on Paul's own circumstances and needs as the occasion for the letter, and those that stress the circumstances of the Christian community in Rome as its immediate occasion. Few solutions ignore one or the other of these factors entirely; the differences come in the importance accorded to each one.

1. We begin with those views that single out Paul's own circumstances as decisive. For the sake of convenience, these may be divided according to the location that is seen as central to Paul's concerns.

Spain. Paul's missionary-campaign plan is to travel to Spain in order to plant new churches in virgin territory (15:24–29). He is stopping in Rome on the way, and one of his undoubted purposes is to enlist the support of the church in Rome for his outreach there. Paul alludes to these hopes in 15:24 with the verb *προπέμπω* (*propempō*), which connotes "help on the way with material support." One of Paul's purposes in writing, then, may have been to introduce himself to the Roman Christians as a way of preparing for his visit and for his request for sponsorship. Indeed, some find this to be Paul's chief reason for writing.⁴¹ They claim that the general theological tenor of the letter is due to Paul's desire to prove that he is orthodox and worthy of support.

Preparation for the mission in Spain was probably a major reason for the writing of Romans. But it cannot stand alone as a reason for the letter. Had this been Paul's overriding purpose, we would have expected mention of Spain long

³⁷Robert Jewett, "Romans as an Ambassadorial Letter," *Int* 36 (1982): 5–20.

³⁸Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), pp. 113–14.

³⁹Martin Luther Stirewalt, Jr., "Appendix: The Form and Function of the Greek Letter-Essay," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 175–206.

⁴⁰According to James Dunn, "The distinctiveness of the letter far outweighs the significance of its conformity with current literary or rhetorical custom" (*Romans* 1–8, p. lix).

⁴¹E.g., Thordlief Boman, "Die dreifache Würde des Völkerapostels," *ST* 29 (1975): 63–69; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), pp. 7–17.

before chapter 15. Furthermore, the contents of Romans, while theological in nature, focus on a limited number of topics, treating these from a certain perspective: the salvation-historical disjunction of law and gospel, Jew and Greek. Something more definite than a desire to introduce himself is required to explain Paul's purpose in Romans.

Corinth/Galatia Paul's concern with Jewish issues in Romans may be explained as stemming from his reflection on the struggle with the Judaizers that occupied him in Galatia and Corinth (see Galatians; 2 Cor. 3, 10–13). On this understanding of Romans, Paul's purpose in writing to Romans is to set forth his mature views on these issues as they have emerged from the rough-and-tumble of theological polemics. Paul's three-month stay in Corinth affords him the perfect opportunity to sum up these issues before he launches forth on a new stage of missionary activity with its own problems and challenges. Lending support to this view is the relatively neutral stance that Paul in Romans takes on such issues as the law, circumcision, and Judaism.⁴²

There is much to be said for this view, and probably it has captured part of the truth. But it leaves one crucial question unanswered: Why send this theological monograph to Rome?⁴³

Jerusalem. This same objection applies to the view that Paul's letter to Rome embodies the speech he anticipates giving in Jerusalem when he arrives there with the collection.⁴⁴ That this upcoming visit and its consequences were on Paul's mind as he wrote Romans is clear (see 15:30–33). Moreover, this understanding of Paul's purpose would explain his preoccupation with issues pertaining to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, since this was his underlying concern as he looked ahead to Jerusalem. But in addition to its failure to explain the Roman destination of the letter, this view shares with the previous one the problem of leaving the purpose of the letter separate from Paul's desire to visit Rome. His stress on this last point in both the introduction and the conclusion implies that the purpose for the letter must be related to the purpose for his visit.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, F. C. Baur initiated a new way of looking at Romans. He rejected the then-popular "timeless treatise" approach to Romans and insisted that it be treated like any other letter of Paul's—one directed to issues arising from the church to which it was written.⁴⁵ Baur's general approach has enjoyed a resurgence in the last few decades. Unlike Baur, however, who thought Romans was a polemic against Jewish Christians, most modern scholars who share his approach think that other concerns are primary. Attention in this regard is directed particularly to the one text in Romans in which it appears that Paul has in mind a problem in the community at Rome: 14:1–15:13. This

⁴²For this approach, see particularly Bornkamm, "Last Will and Testament," p. 29; Muncck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, p. 199; Kümmel, pp. 312–13 (with some modifications); Manson, "To the Romans— and Others," p. 2; Kaye, "To the Romans and Others' Revisited," pp. 41–50.

⁴³Bernhard Weiss suggested that it was the significance of Rome as the "capital of the world" that led Paul to send this tractate there (1:300–307), but nothing in Paul suggests this attitude toward Rome.

⁴⁴See esp. Jacob Jervell, "The Letter to Jerusalem," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 61–74; note also Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Münneapopolis: Augsburg, 1977), p. 77.

⁴⁵Baur, "Zweck und Veranlassung des Römerbriefes," pp. 153–60.

text rebukes two groups—the "weak in faith" and the "strong in faith"—for their intolerance of each other. It is likely that the weak are mainly Jewish Christians, and the strong are Gentile Christians. Here, it is argued, is the center of Romans. The treatise that precedes these chapters provides the necessary theological groundwork for this rebuke. And the rebuke, as the letter as a whole, focuses on the Gentile Christians, who are becoming arrogant toward the increasingly smaller minority of Jewish Christians.⁴⁶

To be sure, this interpretation has been rejected on the grounds that 14:1–15:13 is general paraenesis, ethical guidance that has no basis in a specific circumstance.⁴⁷ But this is not convincing: the section is more naturally interpreted as arising from known divisions in the community in Rome.⁴⁸ One of Paul's purposes was to heal this division in the Christian community in Rome. But we doubt whether this was his primary purpose. Were this so, it is hard to understand why Paul would have waited until chapter 14 to make a practical application of his theology. Moreover, much of what Paul says in chapters 1–11 cannot serve as a basis for the exhortations in 14:1–15:13. Nor is it necessary that Romans be directed to the needs of the church addressed in just the same way that some of his other letters are. After all, Romans stands apart from all the other letters Paul wrote to churches (except perhaps Colossians), as being the only one not written to a community that Paul had founded or been closely related to. Moreover, we have too few letters from Paul to justify any dogmatic judgments about the kinds of letters Paul could or could not have written. Finally, we must insist that even a theological treatise without specific reference to problems in Rome could still be directed to the needs of the church there—what church is without need of clear theological guidance?

Paul's purpose in Romans cannot be confined to any of these specific suggestions. It may be better to speak of Paul's several purposes in Romans.⁴⁹ Several intersecting factors come together to form what we might call Paul's missionary situation, and it is out of that situation that he writes to the Romans. The past battles in Galatia and Corinth, the coming crisis in Jerusalem, the need to secure a missionary base for the work in Spain, the importance of unifying the divided Christian community in Rome around the gospel—these circumstances led Paul to write a letter in which he carefully set forth his understanding of the gospel, particularly as it related to the salvation-historical question of Jew and Gentile, law and gospel, continuity and discontinuity between the old and the new.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Some important exponents of this general approach are Marxsen, pp. 92–104; W. S. Campbell, "Why Did Paul Write Romans?" *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 264–69; Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Historical Situation of Romans, with Notes by W. Gray," *Encounter: Creative Theological Scholarship* 33 (1972): 329–38; Karl P. Donfried, "A Short Note on Romans 16," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 58–59.

⁴⁷Karris, "Occasion," pp. 75–99.

⁴⁸Donfried, "False Propositions," pp. 137–41.

⁴⁹Note the title of the recent monograph on the subject by A. J. M. Wedderburn: *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989).

⁵⁰For this general approach, see Wikenhauser, pp. 456–58; John Drane, "Why Did Paul Write Romans?" in *Pauline Studies*, Fr. F. Bruce, ed. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 212–23; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again," *ExpTim* 90 (1979): 137–41; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975–79), 2:814; Dunn, *Romans* 1–8, pp. iv–lviii.

We should note another factor that probably influenced Paul to focus on these questions: polemic against his theology as being antilaw, and perhaps anti-Jewish. Paul's need to combat Judaizers in Galatia and Corinth could very well have led to this false picture of the apostle to the Gentiles; and 3:8, where Paul mentions some who are slandering his teaching, suggests that Paul knew he had to defend himself against such accusations at Rome.⁵¹

ROMANS IN RECENT STUDY

Recent scholarship on Romans has focused on three issues: its nature/genre, its purpose, and its treatment of the Jews and the Mosaic law. We have considered the first two in previous sections; here something must be said about the last. Study of Romans in this regard must be seen against the background of what has been hailed as the new perspective on Paul.⁵² This way of looking at Paul is the result of a new understanding of the Judaism that Paul opposed, and against which he hammered out so much of his theology. In the past, it is argued, most Christian scholars assumed that Paul was dealing with legalistic Jews who counted up their good works in order to get into heaven. But many modern scholars are convinced that first-century Judaism was nothing like this. While this case has been argued in the past, E. P. Sanders's 1977 monograph *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* is the touchstone for the contemporary discussion.⁵³ The heart of Sanders's argument is that the Judaism Paul knew was not a religion in which works were the means of becoming saved, or justified. Rather, in a pattern Sanders calls "covenantal nomism," first-century Jews believed that they were saved by means of their corporate election as a covenant people. Works or obedience to the law in this scheme does not save the Jew but maintains his or her status in the saving covenant relationship. If Paul's Jewish opponents were covenantal nomists rather than legalists, quite a different picture of Paul's teaching on fundamental issues such as justification and the law emerges. In fact, contemporary scholarship witnesses several different, and sometimes mutually exclusive, pictures of Paul's teaching about this covenantal nomism. And since Romans from beginning to end contains teaching about justification, Jews, and the law, these revised pictures of Paul are evident in many recent studies of Romans.⁵⁴

While Sanders's view of Judaism is a necessary corrective to unfair caricatures of Jewish theology in some Christian circles, his own reconstruction has not met with universal acceptance. Questions about sources, method, and his interpretation of key documents have been raised.⁵⁵ It has been pointed out that his own

⁵¹Jülicher, pp. 115–18; Bruce, "Romans Debate," pp. 334–35; Peter Stuhlmacher, "The Apostle Paul's View of Righteousness," in *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 76–77.

⁵²See James Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *BJRL* 65 (1983): 95–122.

⁵³E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

⁵⁴This can be seen most readily and in greatest detail in James Dunn's commentary on Romans. See also Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*; idem, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983); Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, SNTSMS 56 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁵⁵See, e.g., G. B. Caird, "Review of Paul and Palestinian Judaism," by E. P. Sanders, *JTS* 29 (1978): 539–40; D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (Atlanta: Knox, 1981), pp. 86–95.

covenantal nomism continues to give such a role to works that they are still, in some sense, necessary for salvation.⁵⁶ And we may justly question whether Sanders has ruled out the possibility that there were some Jews in the first century who were more legalistic than nomistic.⁵⁷

Second, and most important, is a methodological point: Sanders's reconstruction (or any other reconstruction, for that matter) of the background against which Paul wrote should not *dictate* our exegesis of Romans. That it might, and should (if we accept it), *influence* our exegesis is acknowledged. But when all is said and done, we must interpret the text as we have it, not force unnatural meanings on it in order to conform to Sanders's reconstruction. Some current exegesis, in our opinion, succumbs to this error. When Paul, for instance, insists that justification is by faith and not by works of the law, the Reformers and most of their heirs have taken him to mean that a person is declared right before God only by faith and not by anything that that person might do. This interpretation, which is now often criticized as assuming a view of Judaism out of keeping with Sanders's Judaism, still seems to be the most natural way to read the relevant texts.⁵⁸ Similar things could be said about other passages and issues, such as the nature of Paul's criticism of the Jews in chapter 2, and the contrast between "the righteousness of God/of faith" and "the righteousness of their own/of the law" in 10:1–8.

THEME AND CONTRIBUTION

Opinions about the theme of Romans have tended over time to move the center of attention from the beginning to the end of the letter. The Reformers, following the lead of Luther, singled out justification by faith, prominent especially in chapters 1–4, as the theme of the letter. At the beginning of this century, however, Albert Schweitzer argued that justification by faith was no more than a "battle" doctrine—a doctrine Paul used only to fight against Judaizers—and that the true theme of Romans is to be found in the teaching of Romans 6–8 about union with Christ and the work of God's Spirit.⁵⁹ Romans 9–11 was the next section to take center stage in the debate. Far from the excursus that some have found in these chapters, scholars such as Krister Stendahl think that the central theme of Romans is to be found here: the history of salvation and of the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, within this history.⁶⁰ Finally, it has been argued that the practical exhortation to unity in 14:1–15:13 is the true heart of the letter (see the previous section).

Each of these positions is alive in current scholarship, though sometimes in ⁵⁶See particularly R. H. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Bib* 66 (1985): 1–38. ⁵⁷The suggestion of Richard Longenecker in his *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (1964; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), pp. 65–85 that Judaism probably featured at least two tendencies—"acting legalism" and "reacting nomism"—has (despite Sanders's criticism) much to be said for it. ⁵⁸See, in this regard, Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). ⁵⁹Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (London: A. & C. Black, 1931), the first draft of which was finished in 1904. For this general approach, see also W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907).

⁶⁰See particularly Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *HTR* 56 (1963): 199–215.

modified form. For example, the centrality of justification by faith is upheld by Ernst Käsemann—but only as one facet of the larger category “righteousness of God,” interpreted to mean God’s intervention in history to reclaim his creation for himself and to bring salvation to his people.⁶¹ E. P. Sanders has followed Schweitzer in putting the stress on the “participationist” language of Romans 5–8.⁶² A large number of scholars think that Romans is about the role of Israel in salvation history.⁶³ And other themes have also been singled out: God,⁶⁴ hope,⁶⁵ and salvation,⁶⁶ to name only a few.

It is possible that Romans does not have a single theme, that the most we can do is note recurring motifs within several distinct topics. But if we are to single out one theme, a good case can be made for the “gospel.” This word and its cognate verb “to evangelize” are prominent in the introduction and in the conclusion of Romans, that is, in its epistolary frame, where we might expect to encounter any overarching topic. It is the word “gospel” that has pride of place in 1:16–17, which is so often (and probably rightly) taken to be the statement of the letter’s theme. Moreover, as we have seen, Romans grows out of Paul’s missionary situation, which makes natural a focus on that gospel with which Paul had been entrusted by his Lord. Romans, then, is Paul’s statement of his gospel.⁶⁷

This summary of the gospel in tractate form has rightly furnished theologians throughout the centuries with prime material for their work. While not a timeless summary of Paul’s theology, Romans is nevertheless much less tied to specific first-century circumstances than almost any other book of the New Testament. Less translation from first-century culture to ours is needed than is usually the case. As James Denney says, “Is it not manifest that when we give [the conditions under which Paul wrote] all the historical definiteness of which they are capable, there is something in them which rises above the casualness of time and place, something which might easily give the epistle not an accidental or occasional character, but the character of an exposition of principles?”⁶⁸ On this point, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin have seen more clearly than their latter-day critics.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, as we have seen, this statement of the the gospel is made against a first-century background. The most important element in this background is also the most important issue that the early church had to face: the nature of the continuity between God’s first “word” and his second, and between the people of

that first word, Israel, and the people of that second word, the church. At this point in particular, Romans makes its contribution to the formulation of New Testament faith. For the way in which the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, between law and gospel, Israel and church, is expressed—the degree of continuity and discontinuity—is fundamental to the construction of any *Christian* theology. Romans supplies the basic building blocks for the construction of that foundation.

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⁶¹See esp. Ernst Käsemann, “The Righteousness of God’ in Paul,” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), pp. 168–82, as well as *ibid.*, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

⁶²Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 434–42.

⁶³See, e.g., H. Boers, “The Problem of Jews and Gentiles in the Macro-Structure of Romans,” *Neot* 15 (1981): 1–11; Jervell, “Letter to Jerusalem,” p. 69; R. David Kaylor, *Paul’s Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), pp. 18–19; Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, pp. lxii–lxiii (“the intergrating motif”).

⁶⁴Leon Morris, “The Theme of Romans,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 249–63.

⁶⁵John Paul Heil, *Romans: Paul’s Letter of Hope*, AnBib 112 (Rome: BIP, 1987).

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⁶⁷For the theme “gospel” as central, see also Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3 vols., EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978–82), 1:91.

⁶⁸Denney, “Romans,” p. 570.

⁶⁹See Westertholm, *Israel’s Law*, p. 222.

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Fortress, 1986), pp. 68–93; Francis Watson *Paul, Judaism, and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach*, SNTSMS 56 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Nigel M. Watson, "Simplifying the Righteousness of God: A Critique of J. C. O'Neill's *Romans*," *SJT* 30 (1977): 464–69; A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The Purpose and Occasion of Romans Again," *ExpTim* 90 (1979): 137–41; idem, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989); Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 100–19; Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 3 vols., EKKNT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1978–82); W. Wrede, *Paul* (London: Philip Green, 1907); Wilhelm Wuelner, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in Romans: An Alternative to the Donfried-Karris Debate over Romans," in *The Romans Debate*, pp. 152–74; G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: British Academy, 1953).

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

I. THE CHURCH IN ROME

At an early stage in his missionary labours Paul recognized the importance of strategic centres for the propagation of the gospel, and Rome, the metropolis of the world, was an obvious choice. Although he did not himself found the church he cherished it as part of his field as apostle to the Gentiles and clearly set great store upon it. But before discussing the apostle's own relations with the Roman church it is relevant to enquire into its origin and composition.

a. The origin of the church

On this subject we know virtually nothing for certain but there are some indications which help us to suggest a possible reconstruction. Paul had never visited the church at the time of writing the Epistle and it seems by that time to have become fairly well established. The data available may be tabulated as follows.

1. It is almost certain that no apostle founded it. Paul claims, in Romans xv. 20, that he did not build on another man's foundation, and yet he seems to regard the Roman church as within the sphere of his own commission. The claim that Peter founded it is brought under serious suspicion by the fact that Peter was still in Jerusalem at the time of the Council (c. AD 50) whereas it is almost certain that a church existed in Rome prior to this.¹ Suetonius records that Claudius banished Jews from Rome in AD 49 because there had been rioting at the instigation of one called Chrestus. While this may not be a reference to Christ, there is a strong possibility that Christians were somehow mixed up in this matter.

2. There is no reference in this Epistle to Peter and it is difficult to imagine that Paul could have written as he did if Peter had in fact

¹ This is admitted by the Roman Catholic scholar A. Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction* (1958), p. 399. Cf. the discussion of O. Cullmann, *Peter, Apostle and Martyr* (1953), pp. 70-152. On the recent excavations of Peter's tomb in Rome, see J. Toynbee and J. W. Perkins, *The Shrine of St. Peter* (1958).

founded the church. This inference is supported by the further suggestion that Acts xviii. 2, 3 implies that Priscilla and Aquila, who came from Rome, were already Christians when they arrived at Corinth and became companions of Paul. If so the church existed before AD 49, since Priscilla and Aquila were banished under the edict of Claudius. But this date is before Peter moved from Jerusalem.¹

3. There is mention in Acts ii. 10 of visiting Jews and proselytes from Rome who were among the crowds and may well have been among the converted on the day of Pentecost. Could these have been the founders of the church? Sanday and Headlam dismiss this suggestion because in their opinion it would have taken more than what these people brought away with them at Pentecost to lay the foundations of a church.² But is this a valid assumption? These converts would have been well grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures and it is surely not impossible for the work already begun in them to be brought to fruition without apostolic intervention. To maintain that a church of believers could not have come into being without apostolic agency is not only unhistorical³ but denies the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit. Their knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus would be continually increasing as Christian travellers brought back with them accounts of apostolic preaching and teaching. In this way the Roman church must have heard a good deal about the work and ministry of the apostle Paul before he wrote to them, and there is a fair presumption that they had heard from other sources about the primitive Christian tradition.⁴

4. Early external evidence connects the names of both Peter and Paul with Rome. Clement of Rome⁵ suggests that they were both martyred there, while by the time of Tertullian the tradition of a double martyrdom was generally accepted. There is strong possibility that this tradition is correct, but it tells us nothing about the origin of the church at Rome.⁶

¹ Cf. W. Michaelis, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*² (1954), pp. 154 f.

² Cf. *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC, 1895), p. xxviii.

³ Cf. B. Weiss, *Manual Introduction to the New Testament* (1887), p. 295.

⁴ Hort, *Prolegomena to St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians* (1895), pp. 15-18, thought that the type of Christianity at Rome prior to Paul's personal contact with them was nevertheless Pauline.

⁵ *Ad Cor.* v. 4.

⁶ Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-152, discusses the external evidence for Peter's residence in Rome very thoroughly.

b. *The composition of the church*

Of greater importance than its origin is the question whether the church was Jewish Christian, Gentile Christian, or a mixture of both, for the answer to this question affects the understanding of the historical situation to which the apostle addressed himself.

(i) *Mainly Jewish Christian.* The Tübingen school of criticism considered that chapters ix-xi were the main portion of the Epistle, but this opinion largely passed with the general discarding of their presuppositions.¹ Recently, however, William Manson² resuscitated the notion that the major portion of the church was Jewish on the grounds that the argument throughout the Epistle is more applicable to Jews than to Gentiles (note the reference to Abraham as our father and the constant appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures).

(ii) *Mainly Gentile Christian.*³ In Romans i. 5 ff. Paul includes the readers among the Gentiles to whom he has been particularly commissioned, while in i. 12-14 he compares them with the 'other Gentiles'. When in vi. 19 Paul states that the readers had yielded their members 'servants to uncleanness' it might seem to support a Gentile group rather than a Jewish group. Moreover in xi. 13 the apostle says, 'I speak to you Gentiles' and it cannot easily be maintained that a minority is here being addressed in view of xi. 28-31, where the readers are said to have obtained mercy through Jewish unbelief. The reference to Abraham as 'our father' (iv. 1) need not indicate a Jewish church in view of 1 Corinthians x. 1 where 'our fathers' is used in a letter sent to a definitely Gentile church.

(iii) *A mixed community.* This is the view advocated by Sanday and Headlam,⁴ who nevertheless considered that it was the Gentile element which gave it its colour. Dodd⁵ agrees on the fact of mixed membership but thinks that the Jewish influence was probably stronger than it

¹ Renan, *Saint Paul* (n.d.) (p. 254), thought that, together with Judaeo-Christians, Ebionites formed the main content of the church. Proselytes and converted pagans were in the minority.

² *Epistle to the Hebrews* (1951), pp. 172-184; and *New Testament Essays, Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson* (1959), pp. 150 f.

³ Cf. J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (1959), p. 200, who regards all Paul's churches as Gentile Christian because of the negligible number of Jewish Christians.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. xxxiii; cf. also Hort, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-33 *

⁵ *Romans* (MC, 1932), p. xxviii.

would have been in a church of which Paul was the founder. The former of these views seems the more probable in view of the evidence given under section (ii) above, and because in xv. 16 the apostle particularly appeals to his commission among the Gentiles, which would clearly have less weight if directed mainly to Jews. From the evidence of *I Clement* vi. 1 and Tacitus (*Annals*, xv, 44) it would seem that the church was of a considerable size by the time of the Neronian persecutions.

II. OCCASION AND DATE

These questions are affected by decisions about the integrity of chapters xv and xvi (see discussion below); but assuming these belonged to the original Epistle they supply clear data for fixing the occasion which gave rise to the composition of the whole.¹

1. Paul had been intending to visit the church but had been prevented (xv. 21 f., i. 13). His purpose was to preach the gospel among them and to impart some spiritual gift (i. 11, 15).

2. He has just completed his collection for the poverty-stricken believers at Jerusalem (xv. 22 ff.), after having preached the gospel throughout the district from Jerusalem to Illyricum. His face is set towards Jerusalem and this would identify the occasion with Acts xx. 1 ff., and date the Epistle in the year after Paul left Ephesus on the third missionary journey. It may therefore be confidently concluded that Paul was in Greece at the time of writing.

3. This conclusion is confirmed by the commendation of Phoebe (xvi. 1, 2) who belonged to the church at Cenchreae, the port of Corinth;² the greeting of Gaius (xvi. 23), Paul's host at the time, who may possibly be identified with the Corinthian whom Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians i. 14; the greeting of Erastus, who held the important post of city treasurer (xvi. 23) and who may possibly be identified with the man of the same name (who was left at Corinth) as mentioned in 2 Timothy iv. 20 (although this identification cannot be proved); and

¹ If chapter xvi is not original to the Epistle there is very little indication of the place of writing. T. M. Taylor (*JBL*, 67, 1948, pp. 281-295) suggested Philippi as Paul was then prepared for his Jerusalem journey.

² Cf. W. Michaelis, *Einführung*³ (1954), pp. 165-166, for the view that the Cenchreae of Rom. xvi. 1 was near Troas and that the Epistle to the Romans was written in Philippi (cf. also his article in *ZNTW*, 25, 1926, pp. 144-154). But most scholars prefer the identification with the better known Corinthian Cenchreae.

the mention of Timothy and Sopater (or Sosipater) as sending greetings, since these were Paul's companions when he left Greece on his last journey to Jerusalem.

4. Paul's future missionary plans are directed towards work in Spain (xv. 24, 28) and he hopes to gain the goodwill and support of the Roman Christians for this venture.

If the unity of the Epistle is maintained the date may be fixed approximately without much difficulty. Working from the time of Gallio's appointment to the proconsular office at Corinth, it is possible to calculate that Paul's departure from Corinth on his third missionary journey *en route* for Jerusalem took place either in AD 57 or 58 (see pp. 566, 662 f. for a discussion of the alternative dates for Gallio's proconsulate). C. H. Dodd¹ favours a year later because it fits better the termination of Paul's Roman imprisonment (Acts xxviii. 30) as AD 64, about the time Nero's persecutions broke out. But those who, unlike Professor Dodd, adhere to the second Roman imprisonment hypothesis favour a date just before the outbreak of persecution for the termination of the first imprisonment (i.e. AD 63) and a date some three or four years later for Paul's martyrdom. Any date for this Epistle between 57 and 59 would fall within the quinquennium of Nero when law and order was established throughout the provinces, and this would agree with Paul's exhortations to the readers to respect the 'authorities' (see Rom. xiii. 1).²

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Epistle arises naturally out of the occasion, but is not as easy to define with any precision. Paul's immediate purpose is to create interest in his Spanish mission, but that would not seem to account adequately for the theological character of the letter. Various explanations have been given.

¹ *Romans* (MC, 1932), p. xxvi.

² If chapter xvi is regarded as an Ephesian letter (see the discussion below) it cannot with such cogent reasons be assigned to Corinth as the place of dispatch. It may, therefore, under this hypothesis be dated earlier in Paul's Asian ministry. Duncan (*ET*, LXVIII, 6, March 1956, p. 165), who inclines to the view that Romans is earlier than Colossians and Ephesians, which according to him belong to the Ephesian ministry, assigns this Epistle to the middle of the Asian ministry.*

a. *The purpose was polemical*

F. C. Baur¹ and his school maintained that the main target at which Paul was aiming was Jewish Christianity. But this contention has found little favour.

b. *The purpose was conciliatory*

Some who have maintained the church to be Jewish Christian considered that Paul was attempting to vindicate his Gentile commission and to reconcile Jewish and Gentile elements.² But this too is based on the presuppositions of the Tübingen school. Others have maintained a conciliatory purpose even if the Gentile element was in the majority, but Paul's exposition clearly goes far beyond this.

c. *The purpose was doctrinal*

This is the traditional explanation which sees in the Epistle a full statement of Paul's doctrinal position. This really means that it was more a treatise than a letter and bore little reference to the historical situation out of which it arose. But this view is not entirely satisfactory for the following reasons. (1) There are some important truths which the apostle does not here enlarge upon, such as cosmic reconciliation and developed eschatology. (2) The section ix-xi cannot be accounted for without some reference to a historical situation. (3) The personal allusions and especially the section i. 7-15, which show the letter to have been written specially to the Roman community, are an integral part of the letter and must be taken into account when discussing its purpose.

d. *The purpose was to sum up Paul's present experience*

The apostle had reached a turning-point in his missionary career in that his face was turned towards Jerusalem and Rome and he could not be certain what the outcome would be. He therefore casts his mind back and gathers up almost unconsciously the fruits of his past work.³

¹ Cf. F. C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ* (1876), I, pp. 308 ff.

² So Mangold; cf. B. Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

³ Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. xlii; G. G. Findlay, *The Epistles of Paul* (1892), p. 137, called the Epistle a formal manifesto. Cf. T. W. Manson, *BJRL*, xxxi (1948), p. 140: Goguel suggestively speaks of the Epistle as a balance sheet of Paul's ideas, *The Birth of Christianity* (1953), pp. 316 ff.

His mind had been dwelling on many great themes and he now proceeds to write down his conclusions. He may well have chosen to send the results of his meditations to the church at Rome because he foresaw its strategic importance for the future.¹ Or he may have had in mind these maturing thoughts and the occasion to commit them to writing arose with the need to write to the Roman church about his coming visit.² Another factor in the apostle's desire to commit these thoughts to some more permanent form may have been the general incapacity of even his own disciples to understand and appreciate them.

e. *The purpose was to meet the immediate needs of the readers*

Although undoubtedly much weight must be given to the last proposition, full account must be taken of the situation of the readers. Much primitive doctrine is taken for granted.³ The apostle has probably received a fairly comprehensive report of the state of the church from Aquila and Priscilla and others of his associates and converts who had had contact with the church. He seems to have been aware of certain intellectual problems which were of some concern to the Christians and sets out to answer them. The main problem appears to have arisen from the need to frame what McNeile calls 'a comprehensive apologia for the principle of a universal religion as set over against Jewish nationalism'.⁴ For this reason Paul deals with the fundamental Christian principle of 'righteousness' as contrasted with the Jewish approach, and then discusses the problem of Israel's failure and her relationship to the universal Christian Church.⁵

¹ J. Denney, in *Expositor's Greek Testament II* (1900), p. 569, suggests that in writing to the Romans Paul would naturally have made his communication catholic and comprehensive in proportion to his realization of the coming importance of their church. J. Munck, *op. cit.*, p. 196, following T. W. Manson's suggestion, regards the Epistle as a prepared manifesto based on material from Paul's debates over the relation of Judaism and Christianity.

² A. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 407, suggests Paul may have wondered whether what the Romans had heard about his gospel was true, in view of the possible intrigues of Judaizers.

³ Cf. Rom. vi. 17.*

⁴ *St. Paul* (1932), p. 190.

⁵ F. J. Leenhardt, *L'Épître de Paul aux Romains* (1957), pp. 10-15, maintains that the central idea of the Epistle is the problem of the Church and that justification by faith cannot be considered in isolation from the Church. He admits, however, that it is paradoxical that the Epistle does not mention the word *ἐκκλησία* (except in chapter xvi, which he detaches from the main Epistle).*

There may have been other practical difficulties which are reflected in the apostle's ethical injunctions in chapters xii-xv. The unexpected warning in xvi. 17-19 suggests that the apostle had also heard of some who were making trouble, but the fact that this reference occupies so insignificant a place in the Epistle shows that he either lacked detailed information about them or else knew that they had so far caused no difficulties. In the latter case he merely wished to warn the church that the best procedure is to avoid those who teach any other doctrine than the teaching they had already received and that Paul was now expounding to them.

IV. STRUCTURE AND INTEGRITY

The last two chapters of the Epistle have given rise to a great deal of discussion based on two separate lines of evidence. The first concerns the contents of chapter xvi, which according to some scholars is not original to this Epistle; and the second concerns the textual history, which suggests that there was more than one recension involving the circulation of a shorter edition of our existing Epistle. These problems will be separately considered although they bear some relation to each other.

a. The problem of chapter sixteen

There are several reasons which have prompted the hypothesis that this chapter was the whole or part of an Epistle sent not to Rome but to Ephesus.

1. Paul had never visited Rome and yet sends greetings to a large number of people in the church. This is considered unlikely. But it would be quite reasonable if these greetings were sent to Ephesus, where he had worked for about three years. Moreover, none of those mentioned in this chapter is mentioned in any of the later Epistles which are generally thought to have been sent from Rome, i.e. the Captivity Epistles (this point would of course have no relevance if the Ephesian hypothesis held good, see pp. 472 ff.).

2. Priscilla and Aquila and the church in their house are mentioned in 1 Corinthians xvi. 19, written shortly before the Roman Epistle, but at that time they were residing at Ephesus. By the time Paul writes to Rome after an interval of not more than two years at the most, probably much less, they had not only transferred their household to Rome but

had established another Christian centre there. The unlikelihood of this is said to be further accentuated by the fact that when 2 Timothy iv. 19 was written they were once more at Ephesus.

3. Epaphroditus (see xvi. 5) is called the 'firstfruits of Asia unto Christ'. This is said to be a suitable description if he were then in Ephesus but would have little point if he were in Rome.¹

4. Phoebe is commended in xvi. 1, 2 and it is maintained that Paul would have been more likely to send such commendation to a church he knew well than to a church he had never visited.

5. The tone of the warnings in xvi. 17-19 is thought to be alien to the tone of the rest of the Epistle, in which the apostle's chief concerns about disunity centre in Jewish-Gentile relationships (cf. xv. 1-13). The warnings in xvi. 17-19, however, appear to be against a form of antinomianism which is known to have thrived at Ephesus.

6. Chapter xv ends with what might have been the conclusion of a letter, which would support the contention that the final chapter was appended later during the transmission of the Epistle.

These reasons have appeared to some scholars conclusive for the hypothesis that the chapter was originally sent to Ephesus but became attached to the Epistle to the Romans when the letters of Paul were collected into a corpus.² But the grounds for the hypothesis are less conclusive than they appear as the following counter-considerations show.

1. There would be no parallel if this long series of greetings were sent to a church such as Ephesus which Paul knew well, for the only other occasion when he appended many personal greetings was when writing to Colossae which he had never visited. It was apparently against his policy to single out any individuals in churches that he knew well since he considered all the Christians to be his friends. But in a church like Rome, where he was not personally known, it would serve as a useful commendation that so many of the Christians there were his former acquaintances. That the apostle does not refer to any of those mentioned in chapter xvi in any other letter need occasion no surprise for the great majority of them were clearly not his intimate circle of

¹ Cf. McNeile-Williams, *INT* (1953), p. 155.

² Cf. the discussion in J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (1912), pp. 134-139. For a more recent discussion of the view that chapter xvi was sent to Ephesus, cf. T. M. Taylor, *JBL*, 67 (1948), pp. 281-295.

fellow-workers and in all probability had had no connection with those churches to which he wrote later.

2. Not only were there at that time extraordinary travel facilities to and from the imperial capital which would make it not so improbable as it seems at first that so many of Paul's acquaintances had migrated to Rome,¹ but the position of Aquila and Priscilla may possibly be explained in the same way. The fact that both at Rome and Ephesus they had a church in their house suggests that they may have been well-to-do. In fact, Dodd² has argued with much plausibility that they might have had a business establishment in both cities at once. On the edict of Claudius they were obliged to leave, but this does not necessarily mean that they had to close down their business. The appointment of a non-Jewish manager would have been enough.

3. There seems to be no particular reason why the first convert in Asia must have remained there, and so the reference to Epaphroditus contributes nothing of value to the discussion. If he had gone to Rome there would have been good reason for Paul's greeting to him, for he would warmly remember the encouragement this first convert gave him. The description 'firstfruits' would naturally be associated in Paul's mind with this Christian.³

4. In the case of the commendation of Phoebe, it is by no means cogent reasoning to claim that this was more probable when Paul was writing to a church where he was known. It would be so only if the writer were some obscure person of whom the church in question had no knowledge. But in this case if Paul has no authority to commend anyone to a church where he is unknown he would equally have no authority to write to them as he has done in chapters i-xv.

5. The objection raised over the schismatics is no more convincing. True there is no record of any such problems confronting the Roman church except in Romans xvi, whereas Acts xx. 19, 29 f. predicts a situation at Ephesus which closely resembles that described in the Romans passage. But this is no proof that the words could have had no

¹ Cf. *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. x (1927), pp. 387, 421 f.

² Cf. *Romans (MC)*, p. xxi. Dodd cites evidence from early inscriptions which might support the connection of Aquila and Priscilla with Rome (*op. cit.*, *ad loc.*).

³ Montgomery Hitchcock, *A Study of Romans XVI*, a reprint from *The Church Quarterly Review* (January 1936), p. 193, cites an interesting parallel from Cicero to support his contention that this reference to Epaphroditus does not indicate an Ephesian destination.

relevance to Rome, unless of course the idea is considered to be out of keeping with the character of the church reflected in the earlier part of the Epistle. In any case the difficulty would be removed altogether if the trouble-makers were as yet no more than a threat. It may on the other hand be objected that Paul's words of warning would lose a good deal of their point if the people in mind were as yet unknown to the readers.¹ They could hardly then mark and turn away from them (Rom. xvi. 17). Moreover, as Dodd² suggests, it may be that in the earlier part of the Epistle Paul has been scrupulously correct, but at the close he takes the pen from his amanuensis and adds a pastoral appeal about these teachers. This might account for the sudden change of tone, for he had bitter memories of the struggles he had had with similar false teachers in other churches.

6. Although xv. 33 could be the ending of an epistle it is without precedent among Paul's Epistles.

Quite apart from the inconclusive nature of the evidence brought in support of an Ephesian destination, the proposal that chapter xvi was originally a commendatory letter for Phoebe³ is pointedly criticized by Lietzmann⁴ who calls it a monstrosity in any age prior to the advent of the picture postcard. Two alternative suggestions which have been made have not much more to commend them. If Romans xvi is but a fragment of a lost letter to Ephesus the hypothesis becomes even more hypothetical, for some reasonable explanation must be given for the

¹ Cf. Moffatt, *ILNT*, p. 137.*

² *Romans*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxiii ff., 242.

³ E. J. Goodspeed (*New Chapters in New Testament Study*, 1937, pp. 25, 26) calls chapter xvi an 'epistole systatike' (a letter of introduction), for which he claims many papyrological parallels exist.*

⁴ Cited by C. H. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. xix. Sir F. Kenyon also found difficulty in imagining how a commendatory letter, without beginning or ending, could ever have been attached to Romans: *Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, Fasc. III, Supplement* (1936), p. xviii. This objection would, of course, be lessened if xvi. 1, 2 formed a postscript for the Roman Epistle and xvi. 3-24 formed a fragment of another Epistle to Ephesus (cf. W. Michaelis, *Einleitung*, p. 159). In this case it would be necessary to assume that Phoebe was the messenger who took the Roman Epistle (cf. Feine-Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*¹¹ (1956), pp. 146 ff.; Hort, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53). Goodspeed, however, criticized Dodd on the ground that the list of names in chapter xvi represented a list of suitable people in Ephesus who would offer Phoebe hospitality (*HTR*, 44, 1951, pp. 55-57). He is forced to regard the loss of the opening salutation as 'natural enough', but this is not a satisfactory solution since it involves a purely subjective assessment.

strange preservation of the greetings and the loss of the Epistle. Common sense would suggest the reverse. The other theory is that Paul enclosed the Roman letter with the commendatory letter for Phoebe and sent them both to Ephesus. But he did not resort to this method when he wished the Colossians to read the letter sent to the Laodiceans, although it must be admitted that in this latter case the close proximity of the churches would make such interchange reasonably easy compared with Rome and Ephesus.

Further corroboration of a Roman destination for chapter xvi has been sought in the names found in Paul's greetings which correspond to those found in Roman inscriptions. The list of correspondences is impressive,¹ but it has been criticized on the grounds that many of the names were very common in the Roman world and are found in provincial inscriptions as well as in Rome itself.² This evidence would be of value only if some link could be shown between the names and Roman Christianity. This can reasonably be supported only in the cases of Rufus, Narcissus, Aristobulus, Amplias and Nereus which may inferentially be associated both with the church (as in Rom. xvi) and with the imperial city.

Since there is one name only which is known to have been connected with Ephesus and which lacks any supporting connection with Rome (i.e. Epänetus) and since the remaining evidence may be explained at least as adequately of a Roman destination, Harnack's³ conclusion that this Ephesian destination theory is a 'badly supported hypothesis' is fully justified. There is no ms support for the contention that the Epistle ever circulated without the concluding chapter, in spite of the complicated textual history affecting the ending of the Epistle. The Chester Beatty papyrus, the only early ms which places the doxology at the end of chapter xv, ends with chapter xvi, and cannot easily be used in support. Moreover the theory of an Ephesian destination for chapter xvi does nothing to solve the textual problems of the last two chapters, but on the contrary introduces further confusion.

¹ See J. B. Lightfoot, *Philippians* (1898), pp. 171 ff., and Sanday and Headlam, *op. cit.*, p. xciv, for details.

² Cf. H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer*⁴ (1933), p. 73; and K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Paul* (1911), pp. 324-335.

³ *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus* (1926), pp. 13 ff. Cf. A. M. Hunter, *Romans* (1955), p. 129, who ends his discussion on the destination of Rom. xv: by considering it wiser to prefer tradition to speculation.*

b. *The recensions of the Epistle*

The problems raised by the textual history of the Epistle must now be briefly stated and discussed.

(i) *The references to Rome.* The words ἐν Ῥώμῃ (in Rome) (i. 7, 15) are entirely lacking in one bi-lingual ms Gg while the reference in verse 7 is also omitted in one minuscule (1908mg) and in the text used by Origen who understood the remaining words to mean 'those who are really saints'.

(ii) *The doxology* (xvi. 25-27). Its appearance in various positions constitutes the biggest problem of the textual history.

1. The best mss, both Alexandrian and Western, place it at the end of chapter xvi (NB²CD, Latin, Peshitta Syriac, Boharic and Ethiopic versions).¹

2. Many less important mss place it at the end of chapter xiv. Among the more weighty of these are Codex L, many minuscules, some codices used by Origen (according to the Latin translation) and the Harklean Syriac.

3. A few late authorities place it after both chapter xiv and chapter xvi (the Codices A and P, minuscules 5 and 33).

4. The Chester Beatty papyrus (P46) places it after chapter xv.

5. The Graeco-Latin ms Gg, supported by Marcion, omits it altogether. In Gg, however, a space is left.²

(iii) *The benediction* ('The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all').³ This is placed in various positions in chapter xvi as follows:

1. At the end of verse 20 by the best Alexandrian mss and some others (NB²ABC, *al.*) together with the Vulgate.

2. At verse 24 in some good Western authorities only (D, G, and other uncials, Old Latin, Harklean Syriac). As some of these omit the doxology, the benediction then forms the conclusion of the Epistle (F, L, G).

3. After verse 27 in a few late authorities (Codex P, 33, 436, the Syriac Peshitta, Armenian version and Ambrosiaster).

¹ Origen in his Greek texts knew the doxology in this position.

² This omission looks like a scribe's attempt to solve the problem, and little weight can be attached to it.

³ The 'all' is omitted in position 1, and 'Amen' is added in positions 2 and 3; while in 2 ὑμῶν becomes ἡμῶν.

(iv) *Chapters xv and xvi*. There is some evidence that Marcion's text did not contain these chapters.

1. In Rufinus' Latin version of Origen's works Origen states that Marcion removed (*abstulit*) the doxology and cut out (*dissecuit*) chapters xv and xvi. There is some doubt whether he himself excised the text or whether he found an already existing shorter recension.¹

2. Tertullian when referring to Marcion's treatment of xiv. 10 refers to it as 'in clausula' (i.e. at the end of the Epistle).

3. Tertullian, Irenaeus and Cyprian make no quotations from chapters xv and xvi. This has little evidential value as the same might be said of 1 Corinthians xvi.

4. The chapter headings which occur in several mss of the Latin Vulgate suggest that the Epistle was circulating without chapters xv and xvi. The evidence of Codex Amiatinus and Codex Fuldensis is particularly important, as the headings in the former can be traced to a text earlier than Jerome.

To sum up this mass of textual evidence, it would seem certain that a shorter recension of the Epistle was in circulation at one time in its textual history. That this recension was also very early is at least probable. But to account for all the variations is by no means an easy matter and a number of explanations have been suggested, and these will need to be briefly considered.

Nevertheless, before the various solutions are mentioned some attention must be given to the integrity of the doxology itself since this will clearly bear on the textual problem. Some scholars have pointed out that the style and language differ from the remainder of the Epistle and approximate more closely to Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles.² If the Pauline authorship of these latter is disputed³ a problem may arise over the doxology. But in any case historical criticism has found it

¹ McNeile-Williams, *INT*, p. 156, states that *dissecuit* 'may mean either the same as *abstulit*, or "separated off", i.e. treated as not belonging to the epistle'. Cf. P. Corssen, *ZNTW*, 10, 1909, pp. 13 f.*

² G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* (1953), p. 227, and T. W. Manson, *BJRL*, xxxi (1948), pp. 224-240, regard the doxology as Marcionite but later adapted for orthodox use. C. K. Barrett inclines to the same view after emphatically disputing its Pauline origin, *The Epistle to the Romans* (1958), pp. 11, 12. The reference to the prophetic writings is so clearly contrary to Marcion that it is suggested that this wording is an attempt to counteract the Marcionite character of the remainder (cf. C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, p. 287).*

³ See the discussions on pp. 589 ff.

notoriously difficult to establish any conclusive tests of style.¹ Objection has been made to the expression 'the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested' (Rom. xvi. 25, 26, RV), because it is not in keeping with Paul's teaching elsewhere. Moffatt,² for instance, considered it went beyond Colossians i. 26 and was hardly in agreement with Romans i. 2, iii. 21. But there is nothing in this use of the word which is opposed to Paul's theology. Corssen³ suggested that the doxology was the work of a Marcionite and others have suggested that the collector of the Pauline Corpus placed the Epistle at the end of the collection and composed the doxology to round it off.⁴ Appeal is made to the position of Romans as the last of the church Epistles in the Muratorian Canon, but the value of this evidence is lessened by the fact that Philemon and the Pastoral Epistles are placed in the same list after Romans, which shows that the latter Epistle did not then stand at the end of the Pauline Corpus.

The opinion of Hort, followed by Sanday and Headlam, seems more in harmony with the facts. The doxology is claimed to be a résumé of the main subject-matter of the Epistle,⁵ a procedure which would be quite in accordance with Paul's mind. If this opinion is correct it must

¹ This is not to deny the possibility of using literary criteria in stylistic questions but it is doubted whether the validity of the method can be maintained in the case of so small a section as the Roman doxology. Karl Barth, following Corssen, Lietzmann and Harnack, rejects the Pauline character of the doxology on stylistic grounds, although he seems to have been mainly influenced by differences from the parallel passage in Eph. iii. 20 (*The Epistle to the Romans* (Eng. Tr. 1933 from 6th German edition by E. C. Hoskyns), pp. 522, 523). ² *INT*, p. 135.

³ For Corssen's view, cf. *ZNTW* (1909), pp. 32 f. C. K. Barrett favours this suggestion (*Romans*, pp. 11, 12). So also K. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁴ So J. Weiss, *History of Primitive Christianity*, II, p. 284, cited by McNeile-Williams, *INT*, p. 155. R. Scott (*The Pauline Epistles*, 1909, p. 246) considered the doxology was almost certainly Luke's, but this was based mainly on linguistic and stylistic similarities to the Pastorals which he also attributed to Luke. W. Michaelis (*Einleitung*, pp. 163, 164) does not regard the doxology as belonging to chapter xvi. 3-24 which he considers to be a fragment of an Ephesian letter, but he does not dispute its Pauline authorship. He agrees with Feine-Behm that the two fragments were probably attached to the Epistle (at the conclusion of the collection) by the collector of the Pauline Corpus. K. and S. Lake, *Introduction to the New Testament* (1938), p. 98, dispute its Pauline authorship but consider it to be the work of the collector or a Catholic redactor.

⁵ Cf. Sanday and Headlam, *Romans* (1895), pp. xcvi, xcvi; cf. Hort, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 ff. This is also maintained by A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Eng. Tr. 1952), p. 457.

of course mean that chapter xvi was an integral part of the original Epistle. But not all the theories regarding the ending admit this. Indeed the major themes such as justification, grace, righteousness, sin, flesh, find no place in the doxology and throw doubts on this theory. Nevertheless, even if it does not gather up the themes of the Epistle, it does form a fitting conclusion to the Epistle.¹

c. *Suggested solutions to the textual history*

(i) *Theories that maintain that the longer recension is original.* These commence with the decided advantage of having the best MSS supporting them, and the problem is therefore to account for the existence of the shorter recension and the various positions of the doxology and benediction. Three different theories have been proposed.

1. That the longer Epistle was shortened by Paul. J. B. Lightfoot² contended that the original was the longer recension minus the doxology. This was later turned by Paul himself into a circular letter which necessitated the elimination of the last two chapters and the references to Rome. The doxology was then added after xiv. 23 because Paul did not consider this a suitable ending. During later textual transmission the doxology was transferred from the shorter to the longer recension.

The major criticism of this theory is that it leaves unexplained the unnatural break at xiv. 23. The argument is continued until xv. 13 and it is difficult to believe that the apostle would ever have cut this part of the discussion, especially as he found it necessary on this hypothesis to compose a doxology to sum up the main themes of the Epistle.

2. That the longer Epistle was shortened by the church. This view was firmly advocated by Hort,³ who suggested that for lectionary pur-

¹ Cf. the careful discussion of F. R. M. Hitchcock, *A Study of Romans XVI* (1936), p. 202. Barth finds it impossible to conceive of Paul adding a 'solemn liturgical conclusion' after xvi. 24 (*op. cit.*, p. 523), but this is no more than a subjective opinion with which many scholars would not agree. It may, in any case, be doubted whether 'liturgical' is an exact description, unless it be used in the sense in which all doxologies share a liturgical character. No canon of criticism can be made out excluding the possibility that Paul would so conclude. Yet Barth is not drawn to the theory of a separate Ephesian destination of chapter xvi on the grounds that the whole Epistle would be incomplete if not addressed to particular men with human names (*op. cit.*, p. 536).

² *Biblical Essays* (1893), pp. 287 ff.

³ *Prolegomena to St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians* (1895); E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament* (1932), propounded a similar view but, unlike Hort, considered a later hand added the doxology.

poses the church omitted the concluding section of the Epistle (i.e. chapters xv and xvi) because of their lack of much edifying material. The noble doxology, however, was in a different category and was consequently retained at the end of chapter xiv. The omission of allusions to Rome was a transcriptional error, while the omission of the doxology was due to Marcion or was omitted from an earlier text which Marcion used. The omission may in fact have arisen purely by accident.

But this suggestion is faced with the same difficulty as the last over the arbitrary division at xiv. 23, although the problem is here lessened by attributing the unnatural break to some ecclesiastical editor.¹ Why it should ever have been made there is a mystery to which the only answer seems to be what Dodd² calls 'the illimitable stupidity of editors'. Yet that is hardly an adequate explanation.

3. That the longer Epistle was shortened by Marcion. This view claims to have strong support from both external and internal evidence.³ Marcion is the only positive evidence for the excision of the last two chapters, although as mentioned above there is dispute whether he made the excision himself or found it in his existing text.⁴ But Origen's word *dissecuit* describing Marcion's treatment of the text most naturally means that Marcion himself cut off the latter chapters. In view of Marcion's whole approach to the canon, we may assume that he would not have hesitated to excise what did not suit him. Since parts of chapter xv were contrary to Marcion's tenets it seems the most reasonable solution that he himself made the mutilation. This is further borne out by the omission of the doxology in Marcion's text.

The sections to which Marcion would have objected are verse 8, which describes Christ as a 'minister of the circumcision', i.e. a minister

¹ This difficulty would be lessened if on the evidence of P46 it is assumed that from the original Epistle a 'liturgical' version consisting of chapters i-xv was prepared for ecclesiastical use with the doxology added.

² *Op. cit.*, p. xvi.

³ This is held in two different forms: (a) assuming the doxology to be included in the original (as Sanday and Headlam); (b) assuming the original ended at xvi. 23 (as Lietzmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 f.).

⁴ Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer*¹⁰ (1955), p. 350, mentions the suggestion that the two concluding chapters dropped out and a solemn conclusion became necessary after xiv. 23. It would, as Michel points out, seem to be more necessary there than after xvi. 23. Barth also considers it to be a liturgical conclusion to xiv. 23 (*op. cit.*, pp. 522, 523).

to the circumcised, and verse 4 which declares that 'whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning'. Both of these statements would have cut right across Marcion's rejection of the Old Testament and his strong dislike of Judaism. There are also four citations from the Old Testament in verses 9-12 which would possibly have contributed to Marcion's dislike of these verses. If he took exception to xv. 1-13 he would have had little interest in retaining the remainder of the Epistle and would have no scruples about omitting it. His omission of the doxology may similarly be accounted for because of its reference to the value of the prophetic writings. Those who dismiss this theory¹ generally base their objections on the grounds that Marcion received an already mutilated text, but the evidence for this, as we have seen, turns on the precise meaning of one Latin word and this is hardly sufficient to overthrow a hypothesis which has such strong historical probability. If Marcion's edition was due to his own shortening process, the position of the doxology after xv. 33 in P46 may be due to a later interaction between the shorter and longer editions.²

(ii) *Theories that maintain that a shorter recension is original.* There are three different solutions which have been proposed on the basis of a shorter recension.

1. That the original Epistle consisted of chapters i-xv, later expanded by part of an epistle to Ephesus. Moffatt³ suggested rather tentatively that the original Epistle ended at xv. 33, that xvi. 1-23 was added when the Pauline letters were collected at Ephesus, and that the doxology was then added by an editor to provide a climax to the whole collection. The omission of 'in Rome' in i. 7 and the change of position of the doxology to the end of xiv were due to liturgical procedure. The speculative character of this view is demonstrated by the fact that no definite evidence exists for the independent circulation of chapters i-xv, unless P46 can be said to support this theory. The position of the doxology after chapter xv is certainly suggestive, especially as this MS is the oldest text of the Pauline letters. Yet even in this text chapter xvi is added and there is no means of knowing whether the Epistle ever

¹ Cf. A. H. McNeile, *St. Paul*, p. 186.

² H. Lietzmann (*op. cit.*, pp. 130 f.) considers that the peculiar positions of the doxology were due to different expansions of Marcion's shorter recension after the doxology had been added to supply a satisfactory conclusion.

³ *ILNT*, pp. 139-142. This view is supported by Goodspeed, *INT* (1937), p. 85, and F. J. Leenhardt, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Romains* (1957), pp. 16-18.

circulated without it in this form.¹ Moffatt's own theory is in fact built on the hypothesis that chapter xvi was sent to Ephesus and not to Rome and that the doxology is not original.² If either of these is disputed the theory falls to the ground.

2. That the original (i-xiv) was a circular, later expanded by Paul himself. This was expounded by Lake,³ who considered that the circular was designed for mixed churches which he had not visited and was written at the same time as Galatians.⁴ He later had occasion to write to Rome and adapted the circular by the addition of the specific reference to Rome and chapters xv and xvi as a covering letter. Lake attempted to explain the fact that xv. 1-13 continues the argument of chapter xiv by suggesting that Aquila had told him that such a continuation would be desirable. Burkitt⁵ suggested with little more probability that xv. 1-13 was a mere weld or adaptation to join the existing Epistle with the additional material which Paul wished to add.

Apart from the lack of an adequate explanation for the addition of xv. 1-13, the theory cannot account for the personal allusions in i. 7-15. It is quite inconceivable that these words belonged originally to a general circular, and there is no textual evidence that the Epistle ever circulated without them. This consideration seems fatal to the theory. Another objection to this theory is that it offers no explanation of Marcion's activities.⁶

¹ Sir F. Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible* (1936), p. 122, hesitated to accept this theory in the absence of other support.

² J. Knox, *Romans (IB)*, p. 368, who adopts a similar view, tentatively suggests that after the corpus of Paul's letters was collected, one chapter (i.e. xv) was removed in one edition (or manuscript) and in another edition a chapter (xvi) was added. Chapters i-xvi became the sole survivor. But this solution is highly mechanical, and Knox can suggest no adequate reason for the removal of chapter xv from the original form.

³ *The Earlier Epistles of Paul*, p. 362. In their *Introduction to the New Testament* (p. 108) K. and S. Lake suggest that only the shorter recension was sent to 'some other church', apparently dropping the general letter idea.

⁴ Renan's earlier solution has some affinity with Lake's but was much more complicated, involving four letters to the churches of Rome, Macedonia, Thessalonica and Ephesus respectively, each comprising chapters i-xi plus certain parts of chapters xii-xvi according to Lightfoot (cf. *Biblical Essays*, pp. xxvii-xxx). It was strongly criticized by Lightfoot (cf. *Biblical Essays*, pp. 287 ff.).

⁵ *Christian Beginnings* (1924), pp. 126, 127.

⁶ W. Manson, in *New Testament Essays, Studies in memory of T. W. Manson* (1959), pp. 150 ff., on the basis that Marcion shortened the text, maintained he must have worked on the longer recension.

3. That the original Epistle consisted of chapters i-xv, expanded by Paul himself. This is substantially the view advocated by T. W. Manson,¹ who maintained that i-xv was sent to Rome; that i-xvi was at the same time sent to Ephesus; that Marcion was responsible for shortening the first letter, and his edition influenced the Western textual tradition. The Alexandrian tradition was based on the letter to Ephesus, but the Chester Beatty papyrus (P46) shows a tradition stemming from the letter to Rome with its doxology at the end of chapter xv. The fact that P46 also included chapter xvi means, however, that it has been influenced by the Alexandrian tradition.²

Although this rather complicated theory seems to provide a solution to many of the textual variations, it is based on an original form of the letter to the church at Rome (i.e. i-xv) for which no direct evidence is forthcoming. Moreover, the problem of the personal data in chapter i still remains, since these would have no relevance if sent to Ephesus.

A modification of this type of theory is that proposed by Montgomery Hitchcock,³ who maintained that Romans xvi was not a part of the Roman Epistle but consisted of a letter of recommendation for Phoebe on the occasion of her being involved in a legal case referred to the Roman courts. Its destination was, therefore, Rome, but it was dispatched some years later than the Roman Epistle. When the Pauline Canon was constituted it was added to the earlier Epistle. This theory gives an account of the differences between chapters i-xv and xvi, and yet furnishes a more reasonable explanation of the ultimate linking of the two. But if both shared a common destination it is difficult to see what is gained by separating them by an interval of time. The evidence for the doxology placed at the end of chapter xv would seem strange

¹ BJRL, xxxi (1948), pp. 237-240. Cf. also the similar suggestion of R. Heard, INT (1950), pp. 195, 196.

² K. E. Kirk, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Clar. B, 1937), pp. 12-22, has much the same theory, but thinks the spurious doxology added to the original copy accounts for all the variations in the tradition. Thus three forms developed: (a) i-xvi. 23 (as in G); (b) i-xvi. 25 (as in \aleph BCD); and (c) i-xv, xvi. 25-27, xvi. 1-23 (as in P46). But it should be noted that the peculiar position of the doxology in P46 may have arisen through a scribal error.

C. S. C. Williams, ET, lxi (1949-50), pp. 125 f., supports Manson's theory but shows that the text of P46 is based on the Western form of Rom. i-xv and not the later form i-xvi (found in the Alexandrian tradition), although it was certainly influenced by the later form. Cf. J. Munck's discussion, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 ff.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 187 ff.

under this theory for the change in the position of the doxology must *ex hypothesi* have taken place after the two letters were joined, which is highly improbable.

It is not easy to decide which of these theories provides the best solution, but on the whole that which traces the recensions of the Epistle to Marcion is perhaps least open to objection.

d. *Theories of interpolation and redaction*

In addition to the problems arising from chapter xvi and, to a lesser extent, xv, there have been other theories which have questioned the integrity of the text. One such theory concerns the passage xiii. 1-7, in which is discussed the attitude to be adopted towards the State. It has been maintained¹ that the passage interrupts the context and can be treated as an independent unit. Moreover, in the preceding passage (xii) and the succeeding passage, Paul seems to show reminiscences of the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, but not so in xiii. 1-7. It is the contents of this passage which are seen to be non-Pauline, mainly on eschatological grounds. Paul believed in an imminent *parousia*, but xiii. 1-7 suggests a continuing world. Moreover, the 'authorities' in Paul are usually demonic, but not in this passage. Paul's world-view is said to involve the basic evil of this world, and yet he speaks of its rulers here as ministers of God. Many commentators have noted the difficulties, but have maintained the Pauline origin of the passage. C. H. Dodd², for instance, takes the view that Paul had come to see the empire as 'a providential instrument'. But J. Kallas³ considers that the only satisfactory solution is to treat it as an interpolation alien to Paul's thought. But this is not as convincing as it first appears, for the fact that Paul uses the term 'authorities' in a different sense shows that he is not contradicting his view that the spiritual powers are evil. The whole question of Paul's view of the *parousia* is also more complex than Kallas supposes.⁴ Digressions in Paul's letters are, moreover, not unknown.

Another theory of a non-Pauline fragment concerns Romans iii. 25,

¹ Cf. J. Kallas, NTS, 11 (1965), pp. 365-374. For a monograph on this passage see C. D. Morrison, *The Powers that Be* (1960). Cf. also C. E. B. Cranfield, NTS, 6 (1960), p. 241, and E. Barnikol, 'Römer 13', *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zur Patristik* (für E. Klostermann) (1961), pp. 65-133.

² *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 202.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 374. ⁴ See p. 571.

26, which C. H. Talbert¹ considers to be untypical of Paul. This is based on use of terms unique in Paul's Epistles, on the supposed liturgical style, on non-Pauline theology and on the inappropriateness of the passage in the context. But this method of redaction-criticism could jeopardize the genuineness of many other Pauline statements if it be admitted as a valid principle of criticism that any idea which occurs only once is suspect. Talbert admits the difficulty of the lack of textual evidence for the interpolation, but curiously appeals to the similar lack of such evidence in other theories of interpolation in Paul's Epistles (in Corinthians and Philipppians).

A compilation theory is advanced by J. Kinoshita,² who sees our present Epistle as an editing of two original epistles. One was a manual for a mixed community (ii. 1-5; ii. 17-iii. 20; iii. 27-iv. 25; v. 12-vii. 25; ix. 1-xi. 36; xiv. 1-xv. 3; xv. 4-13). The remainder was specifically addressed to Gentiles. But the Epistle does not read like a combination of two such letters, and it is more reasonable to suppose that a double purpose was in view throughout.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION (i. 1-15)

a. Greeting (i. 1-7)

This is more formal than in most of Paul's letters and brings out more clearly the commission to preach the gospel which had been entrusted to him by God. By this means he summarizes the content of the gospel and the divine origin of his apostleship.

b. Paul's relation to the Roman church (i. 8-15)

He has heard good reports of them and expresses his desire to visit them that he and they may be mutually encouraged. Above all he desires to preach the gospel at Rome, and the main part of the Epistle is an exposition of that gospel.

¹ C. H. Talbert, *JBL*, lxxxv (1966), pp. 287-296. The kind of interpolation criticism proposed by this writer has support from R. Bultmann's earlier article on glosses in Romans (*ThLZ*, 72, 1947, cols. 197-202).

² *Nov. Test.*, 7 (1965), pp. 258-277.

II. DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION (i. 16-viii. 39)

a. Statement of the theme (i. 16, 17)

Paul summarizes his gospel as righteousness obtained by faith. It concerns the true method of man's acceptance with God.

b. Evidence of the need for righteousness (i. 18-iii. 20)

Paul begins by demonstrating that all sections of mankind are under condemnation before God. First, the Gentiles are notorious for vice and idolatry, which are indisputable evidence of their rebellion against the Creator (i. 18-32). But then the Jews are in no better condition, for although they are not chargeable with idolatry they are nevertheless addicted to self-righteousness. Whether man disobeys the voice of conscience (as the Gentiles) or the voice of special revelation (as the Jew), the disobedience involves guilt. Circumcision cannot gloss over this fact. But does this mean that the Jew has no advantage? Paul admits the privileges of the Jews in that they were entrusted with the revelation, but he denies that such privileges carry any immunity from guilt for Jewish offenders (ii. 1-iii. 8). The conclusion reached is that none, neither Gentile nor Jew, is righteous and this is supported by an appeal to Scripture, to the very revelation entrusted to the Jews. Their own oracles condemn them (iii. 9-20).

c. The divine method of meeting the need (iii. 21-v. 21)

Having shown that the need is universal Paul next considers God's answer.

1. Righteousness can be attained only by faith in God, who has provided a propitiatory sacrifice in Christ, on the basis of which pardon is freely granted and man is justified. This passage contains the doctrinal key to the whole Epistle (iii. 21-26).

2. There are therefore no grounds of boasting on the part of the Jew since this righteousness by faith is equally open to Gentiles (iii. 27-31).

3. The case of Abraham is cited because of a possible Jewish objection that Abraham's justification was really by works, but Paul shows that the righteousness reckoned to him was essentially on the basis of his trust in God. Nor could anyone claim that Abraham's covenant came through circumcision, for the promise was given before he was circumcised. Paul enlarges upon the circumstances in which Abraham be-

lied God to make abundantly clear that it was not Abraham's achievements (in which every Jew gloried) but his faith that was the ground of his justification (chapter iv).

4. Paul next mentions the blessings attending justification. The righteous in Christ experience peace, joy, perseverance, hope, all because of the indwelling Spirit, through whom they become aware of the greatness of God's love in providing a means of reconciliation through the death of Christ (v. 1-11).

5. The efficacy of God's free gift to mankind is then illustrated by a comparison between Adam and Christ. The universality of sin through the former is outmatched by the abundance of grace through the latter (v. 12-21).

d. *The application of righteousness to individual life* (vi. 1-viii. 39)

If it is faith rather than works that counts, how does justification affect conduct? This is the question that Paul next answers.

1. By means of the symbolism of baptism Paul shows that the believer, through union with Christ, dies to sin and rises to a resurrection life. This means a new approach to sin. It cannot be indulged in view of the abundance of grace, for it no longer has dominion over the believer (vi. 1-14). This is borne out by experience, for those who have been freed from the slavery of sin have in fact become slaves of God, committing themselves to His service (vi. 15-23).

2. By an illustration from the marriage laws, Paul proceeds to show that the old bond to the law is dissolved, leaving the believer free for a new union, that is to Christ Himself in a life of loving service (vii. 1-6).

3. But the question arises whether the law might not assist in the subduing of the sinful nature, and Paul answers this with an emphatic negative by citing his experience under the law. It resulted only in inner conflict, from which Christ alone could deliver (vii. 7-25).

4. The Christian is in fact called to a new kind of life energized by the Spirit who wars against the flesh. The law of the Spirit sets free from the guilt and the power of sin and gives liberation even to the body (viii. 1-13).

5. This new life conveys a new status, that of sons, by means of the process of adoption. Such a thought leads to the climax that we are joint-heirs with Christ (viii. 14-17).

6. God's redemptive action is so great and comprehensive that it envelops the material creation, whose yearning is cited to illustrate

the greatness of the contrast between present sufferings and future glory (viii. 18-25).

7. Life in the Spirit is not, however, confined to future hope. It provides present help through the Spirit's intercession (viii. 26, 27) and through the security and blessings which abound to those who love God (viii. 28-39). So ends Paul's doctrinal exposition on a triumphant note.

III. AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM (ix. 1-xi. 36)

Paul introduces the important question of Israel's rejection of the gospel at this juncture possibly because he is impressed by the contrast between Israel's blindness and the blessedness of the Christian position he has just expounded. This cannot be considered an interlude for it must have been a burning question in Paul's mind and is well prepared for by the earlier discussion. He sums up this present section in ix. 6—the word of God has not failed, however perplexing the historic facts might be.

a. *The fact of Israel's rejection* (ix. 1-5)

In spite of its many privileges, Israel's attitude fills the apostle with intense sorrow.

b. *The justice of Israel's rejection* (ix. 6-29)

God's choice was not indiscriminate nor all-inclusive. Only some of Abraham's seed were chosen and this demonstrates the sovereignty of God's choice. But there is no possibility of injustice with God, for man cannot pronounce on the rightness or wrongness of divine actions. There is undoubtedly a mystery here but the creature must recognize his fundamental difference from the Creator (illustrated by the potter's power over the clay). This whole section is designed to demonstrate the sovereign freedom of God.

c. *The real cause of Israel's rejection* (ix. 30-x. 21)

Paul next shows that God is absolved from the responsibility for Israel's rejection. They themselves are at fault because they sought a righteousness through self-effort. This kind of righteousness is contrasted with that received by faith, which is open to all who call upon the name of the Lord. Jews, therefore, have an equal opportunity with Gentiles and cannot charge God with rejecting them. Nor is it a question of the Jews not having heard, for in that case they might have had an excuse. But

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the scriptures bear abundant witness to the opportunities they have rejected.

d. The partial character of the rejection and hopes of restoration (xi. 1-36) In spite of the previous adverse statements there are mitigating circumstances for the rejection has never been total. There has always been a remnant chosen by grace and it is with this remnant that the hope of the future lies. In any case the fall of Israel has prompted the conversion of the Gentiles, through whose agency they will themselves be restored. This is illustrated by the olive-tree allegory. But there is no place for Gentile boasting for God intends the full restoration of Israel. Such thoughts as these call forth in the apostle's mind an expression of amazement at the inscrutable wisdom of God.

IV. PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS (xii. 1-xv. 13)

In this section of the Epistle, Paul shows the application of the principle of righteousness to practical duties.

a. General duties (xii. 1-21)

Christians are to learn the duty of dedicated lives (xii. 1, 2), to develop a sober estimate of themselves (xii. 3-8) and to cultivate a regard for the claims of others and live peacefully as far as possible with all (xii. 9-21).

b. Civic and social duties (xiii. 1-14)

The Christian's attitude towards the State must be one of loyalty and orderliness (xiii. 1-7), while his duty towards his neighbour must be conditioned by the law of love (xiii. 8-10). Right conduct is particularly important in view of the approaching day of the Lord (xiii. 11-14).

c. A special problem (xiv. 1-xv. 13)

The problem of what foods are permissible for a Christian is singled out because of its special relevance to the contemporary situation, although Paul's enunciation of the principle of toleration (let the strong bear with the failings of the weak) has a universal application. Personal convictions are secondary to the spiritual welfare of the kingdom of God since full glory to God can be maintained only where there is harmony.

V. CONCLUSION (xv. 14-xvi. 27)

The apostle gives an explanation of the motives which led to the writing of the Epistle and then gives a general outline of his plans. He hopes to visit the readers, but only for a while since his real objective is mission work in Spain. He appears to have some misgivings about his Jerusalem visit for he makes a special plea for their supporting prayers.

After a list of greetings unparalleled for length in any other Pauline Epistle (xvi. 1-16), the apostle gives a parting warning against false teachers who cause dissensions (xvi. 17-19), adds a few personal greetings from his companions, during which he allows his amanuensis Tertius to express his own (xvi. 21-23), and then concludes with a benediction and a magnificent doxology (xvi. 24-27).

ADDITIONAL NOTES

395. ⁴ W. G. Kümmel (*INT*, 1965, p. 219), in favouring a mixed congregation, rightly points out that Rom. ix-xi would be incomprehensible if no Jewish Christians were involved.

397. ² In a recent article J. R. Richards (*NTS*, 13, 1966, pp. 211-230) argues that Rom. i-xv preceded the writing of 1 Corinthians and was written from Ephesus. He bases this view on a comparison of the two Epistles, in which he examines common words and expressions and also doctrinal parallels and concludes that 1 Corinthians is best understood if placed after Romans. This clearly affects the date of Romans, since it affects the generally accepted understanding of Paul's movements. Richards argues that Paul suddenly changed his plans after writing Romans and delayed longer at Ephesus than he originally intended. The cause of the sudden change was the death of Claudius (whom he understands as ὁ χερῆων, 2 Thes. ii. 7). According to this theory 1 Corinthians was issued almost immediately after Romans.

399. ³ Cf. K. H. Rengstorf, 'Paulus und die älteste römische Christenheit' (*Studia Evangelica*, II, 1964, pp. 447-464).

399. ⁵ E. Schweizer has advanced the view that Romans, because it presents God's relationship to His own people, shows the Gentile mission in relation to the Old Testament *Heilsgeschichte* (*EvTh*, xxii, 1962, pp. 105-107). A similar view is supported by M. Baillet (*RB*, lxxviii, 1961, pp. 199 ff.) by appealing to the evidence from Qumran. The apostle clearly writes against an Old Testament background and his purpose must be related to this.

There is much to be said for the view that the major focal point of the Epistle is ix-xi rather than i-viii (cf. B. Noack, *StTh*, 19, 1965, pp. 155-166; S. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 1964, pp. 183 f.). It is easier to relate ix-xi to a specific historical situation than i-viii. The problem of Israel's position in a Church

which had become predominantly Gentile was a real one. According to J. Knox (*JBL*, LXXXIII, 1964, pp. 1-11), Paul did not believe that he had to preach to all nations before the *parousia* (as J. Munck suggested). It is important to recognize that Paul did not see the Roman church as a missionary sphere, but as a base for further missionary operations (cf. G. Schrenk, 'Der Römerbrief als Missionsdokument', *Studien zu Paulus, AbThANT*, 26, 1954, pp. 81 ff.). This occasion must be borne in mind in discussions of the purpose. Cf. N. Krieger, *Nov. Test.*, 3 (1959), pp. 146-148.

E. Trocmé (*NTS*, 7, 1961, pp. 148-153) points out that Romans deals with a situation which must have occurred whenever a new church was founded in an area where Jewish Christians formed part of the Church. The type of argumentation in this Epistle would help to convince new believers that the new community was as capable as Judaism in sustaining them in their new moral life. For various theories of the polemical purpose in Romans, cf. W. G. Kümmel, *INT* (1965), p. 221. Kümmel considers that all that can be said with certainty is that Paul opposes Jewish teaching of salvation and antinomian charges against his message. A. Roosen (*Studia Evangelica*, II, 1964, pp. 465-471) argues that Romans is essentially a proclamation of the gospel, accompanied by a letter in the form of an appendix.

G. Bornkamm (*ABR*, II, 1963, pp. 2-14) considers this Epistle to be Paul's last will and testament, since he regards Philemon and Philippians as earlier than Romans, and Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles as non-Pauline.

403. ¹ For an attempt to identify these false teachers as Gnostics, cf. W. Schmithals, *StTh*, 12 (1958), pp. 51 ff. This writer is a strong contender for the theory of Gnostic influence in several Pauline churches (cf. his theory for Corinthians, pp. 422 f.; Galatians, p. 467; Philippians, p. 543).

403. ³ W. G. Kümmel (*INT*, 1965, p. 225) rejects Goodspeed's theory.

404. ³ Cf. Kümmel (*op. cit.*, pp. 224 ff.) for the view that Rom. xvi is integral to the Epistle.

406. ¹ For a more detailed yet concise survey of the textual evidence for the last two chapters of Romans, cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans (TNT, 1963)*, pp. 25-31. For an older monograph on the subject, cf. R. Schumacher, *Die beiden letzten Kapitel des Römerbriefs* (1929).

406. ² For literature on the doxology, cf. J. Dupont, *Revue Bénédictine*, 58 (1948), pp. 1 ff.

LIII.

A PRIEST FOR EVER—IN THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

VII.—15. And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest,

16. Who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

17. For it is witnessed of him,

Thou art a priest for ever
After the order of Melchizedek.

IN the words of Psalm cx. each expression is full of meaning. We saw (v. 4-6) that the word, **Thou art Priest** is the proof that Christ did not glorify Himself to become Priest, but was appointed of God. We have seen the deep significance of the words, **after the order of Melchizedek**. We now come to what is implied in its being said, **Thou art a Priest for ever**.

The word **ever** or **eternal** is one of the most important in the Epistle. It is found seventeen times. It contains all that distinguishes the New Testament from the Old; the healthy Christian life of *the perfect*, from the stunted sickly growth of *the babes*. To understand what it means we must connect it with God, the eternal One. Eternity is an attribute of Deity and of the divine life, and has its true existence only in the fellowship of that life. In God there is no change, or ageing, or fading; He is all that He is in an ever-fresh, never-changing, youth. As some one has said: "He is the Ancient of Days, and yet the youngest of all, for He lives ever in the freshness of the

eternal strength that knows no past." The eternal life is that which always remains the same, because it is always in God. And when God speaks to His Son, **Thou art Priest for ever**, it not only means that the priesthood will never cease, but it points to what is the root and cause of this; it roots in the life and strength of God. Christ is become a Priest **after the power of an endless life**. Unceasingly, without one moment's cessation, in unbroken continuity, He lives and works in the power of the divine life.

The contrast will make the meaning clear. He is made Priest, **not after the law of a carnal commandment**, as Aaron, **but after the power of an endless life**, even as Melchizedek who abideth a priest continually. Law and life are the contrasts. Every creature naturally acts according to the life that is in it, without any law or compulsion from without. The bird needs no law to bid it fly, or the fish to make it swim: its life makes it a delight. A law is a proof that the life is wanting. The law that forbids stealing is a proof that the life of those for whom it is made is wrong. And a law is not only a proof that the right life is wanting, but it is helpless to produce it. It may check and restrain, but cannot inspire. It can demand, but cannot give; it has power to command, but not to create what it seeks. Aaron became priest after the law of a carnal commandment, a law that made nothing perfect, and was disannulled for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; Christ, after the power of an endless life. Every act of His holy and blessed priesthood, every application of the fruits of His eternal redemption, is wrought in **the power of an endless life**.

These two principles mark two systems of religion, two ways of worshipping God, two experiences of the inner life.

The one is that of the law, with atonement and acceptance with God, as typified in Aaron. The Christian trusts in Christ as his Redeemer, and seeks, by the great motive of gratitude, to compel himself to love and obedience. His life is one of unceasing effort. But he is painfully conscious of failure; obedience is not his life and delight. The New Testament offers a better life. Through unbelief and sloth the majority of Christians know little of it. But here it is, opened up by the Holy Spirit, as the mystery of Melchizedek. **Jesus Christ is become a Priest after the power of an endless life.** These precious words are the key to the higher life. Jesus lives in heaven as High Priest in **the power of an endless life.** And as He lives, so He works in that power. This is the meaning of His being **a Priest for ever.** His work does not consist, like that of Aaron, in a series of successive acts, that ever cease, and ever need to be renewed. No, each work He does for us He is able to do **in the power of an endless life.** He works it within us *as a life*, as our own life, so that it is our very nature to delight in God and in His will. His priesthood acts as an inner life within us, lifting us up, not in thought but in spirit and in truth, into a vital fellowship with God. He breathes His own life in us. And He works it in as *the power of life*, a life that is strong and healthy, because it is His own life from heaven. And He works it **in the power of an endless, an indissoluble life**, a life that never for a moment need know a break or an interruption, because it is the life of eternity, the life maintained in us by Him who is **a Priest for ever**, a Priest who abideth continually.

And why is it so many Christians experience and prove so little of this power of the endless, the unchanging life that abides continually? Some know nothing of it, they only know of

Christ as Aaron. And some hear of it but are not willing to give up all to purchase this pearl of great price; to give up the world for this heavenly life. And some, who would fain give up all, cannot, dare not, will not, believe that Christ is indeed Melchizedek, a Priest for ever, a Priest who does everything in eternal life-power.

He abideth a Priest continually. The continuity of His priesthood is never interrupted or broken; as little the continuity of the action of His priesthood; as little the experience of that action. Everything Christ as my High Priest in heaven does for me He does in **the power of an endless life, as a Priest who abides continually**; what He works can abide continually too. Oh for faith to consider and know and trust Christ Jesus, **Priest for ever, Priest after the power of the endless life!**

1. The power of an endless life. There is not a more significant or important expression in the whole Epistle. It is life we need, and a strong life, and a life that never gives way. Here we have it—the life more abundant.

2. We shall often have occasion to refer to these words. We are so accustomed to think of a priest as a man who does certain things on behalf of other men, separate from himself, that we apply this mode of thinking to the Lord Jesus. Christ is no outward Saviour, nor can He give us any salvation as an outward thing. All He does for us and to us. He puts into our heart, makes it our life. We need to know that all He does as High Priest for us in heaven. He also does within us as a life He gives. He is Priest, and can save in no other way, than after the power of an endless life. It is only as a life within us that His priesthood can attain its object.

3. Jesus was crucified in weakness, but raised in the power of God. He won the power through the weakness, the sacrifice of all unto the death. Let all who would know Him in the power of the endless life enter into the fellowship of His death, walk in deep humility and meekness and dependence upon God, in the path in which He trod to reach the throne.

