

**‘Mercy and Righteousness have met’**

**Literary Structure as Key to the Centrality of Mercy in Romans**

A Thesis

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Submitted to: The University of Limerick

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work in gratitude to my students, past and present. They have been my teachers and my inspiration.

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Lastly, but most importantly, I thank my Presentation Congregation for encouraging me to pursue my lifelong passion for biblical studies, and for facilitating this research in every possible way.

Mary T. Brien PBVM  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **‘Mercy and Righteousness and have met’<sup>1</sup> Literary Structure as Key to the Supremacy of Mercy in Romans**

Mary T. Brien

The aim in presenting this dissertation is to establish the thesis that one fundamental literary structure identifiable in Romans provides a clue to a satisfactory reading of the Letter. By ‘satisfactory reading’ I mean a reading which respects all of the data while making sense of the totality of Paul’s message to Roman Christians. I discover that message to be what Paul says it is in Rom 1:1: “The Gospel of God” – The Revelation of God’s Good News for the world. This, in turn, is nothing less than God’s magnificent and merciful plan of salvation for all, Jew and Gentile alike. It includes the stunning revelation of God as being both righteous and merciful. Chapters 9-11 present this truth within a rather surprising, yet thoroughly biblical, context.

The methodology used is described in detail in Chapter Three. In summary, it involves exercises in text delimitation, leading to the identification of literary panels/ dyads/triads. A fundamental and leading literary structure may be identified in Romans, firstly by a careful study of both Prologue and Epilogue. Both are shown to consist of two distinct but complementary ‘panels’ which function

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 84:10 (LXX)

dialogically and complementarily. A similar pattern of ‘panels in dialogue’ is then detected to be a feature found elsewhere in Romans. Sample texts from the beginning, middle and end of the Letter are found to bear this out (1:1-15; 1:16-3:20; 8:1-39; 12:1-13:14, 13:15-16:27). Eventually, that structure is shown to be pervasive throughout, with one notable exception corresponding to a climactic phase in the Letter (Rom 9-11). The outcome is quite illuminating: A ten-fold literary structure can be discovered, using the tools of contemporary delimitation criticism. This ten-fold structure consists of nine dyads (‘panels’ in dialogue) and one important variant, which is crucial. This variant corresponds with the climax of Paul’s argumentation and the heart of his Gospel for Christians in Rome.

If structure is a pointer to meaning in any literary work, as I believe it is, this fundamental structure in Romans provides an important signpost. It is not the only important structure in the Letter, but it is a basic and pervasive one which deserves attention. The thesis presented here is that this underlying structure opens the door to a fresh reading of Romans – a reading which respects both the integrity of the entire sixteen-chapter text and the rich complexity of Paul’s thought.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

### **BIBLE TEXTS**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| LXX   | The Septuagint. Ancient Greek Text                    |
| MT    | Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Scriptures               |
| NA 27 | Nestle-Aland 27 <sup>th</sup> Edition of the Greek NT |
| JB    | Jerusalem Bible                                       |
| NAB   | New American Bible                                    |
| NJB   | New Jerusalem Bible                                   |
| NRSV  | New Revised Standard Version                          |
| RSV   | Revised Standard Version                              |

### **JOURNALS AND SERIES**

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| AB         | Anchor Bible  |
| ABD        | Anchor Bible Dictionary                               |
| ABRL       | Anchor Bible Reference Library                        |
| ANTC       | Abingdon New Testament Commentaries                   |
| AnBib      | Analecta Biblica                                      |
| BETL       | Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum<br>Lovaniensium |
| <i>Bib</i> | <i>Biblica</i>  |
| BNTC       | Black's New Testament Commentaries                    |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>Bib T</i> | <i>Bible Today</i>  |
| BTB          | Biblical Theology Bulletin                                      |
| CBQ          | Catholic Biblical quarterly                                     |
| CBQMS        | Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series                    |
| ETL          | Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses                             |
| <i>Exp T</i> | Expository Times  |
| HCBD         | HarperCollins Bible Dictionary                                  |
| HCHCB        | Hermeneia. A Critical and Historical Commentary<br>on the Bible |
| HTR          | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i>                               |
| IBR          | Bulletin for Biblical Research                                  |
| IBS          | Irish Biblical Studies  |
| IBT          | Interpreting Biblical Texts                                     |
| <i>Int</i>   | <i>Interpretation</i>   |
| <i>ISBE</i>  | <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>                |
| <i>JBC</i>   | <i>Jerome Biblical Commentary</i>                               |
| <i>JBL</i>   | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>                           |
| <i>JSNT</i>  | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>               |
| JSNTS        | Journal for the Study of the New Testament Series               |
| JSNTSS       | Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series               |
| JSOT         | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament                      |
| <i>JTS</i>   | <i>Journal for Theological Studies</i>                          |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| NCBC          | New Century Bible Commentary                                 |
| <i>Neot</i>   | <i>Neotestamentica</i>                                       |
| NICNT         | New International Commentary on the New Testament            |
| <i>Nt</i>     | <i>Novum Testamentum</i>                                     |
| <i>NTS</i>    | <i>New Testament Studies</i>                                 |
| PIBA          | Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association                |
| <i>RB</i>     | <i>Revue Biblique</i>  |
| <i>RSR</i>    | <i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>                      |
| <i>RTL</i>    | <i>Revue Théologique de Louvain</i>                          |
| SBL           | Society of Biblical Literature                               |
| SBLSBS        | Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical<br>Study |
| SBLDS         | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series           |
| <i>Sem</i>    | <i>Semeia</i>  |
| SNTSMS        | Society for the NT Studies Monograph Series                  |
| SPS           | Sacra Pagina Series  |
| <i>ST</i>     | <i>Studia Theologica</i>                                     |
| <i>TB</i>     | <i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>                                      |
| <i>TD</i>     | <i>Theology Digest</i>                                       |
| <i>T Greg</i> | <i>Tesi Gregoriana</i>                                       |
| WBC           | World Bible Commentary                                       |
| WUNT          | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen<br>Testament      |



## LIST OF TABLES

| <b>Number/Title</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| 1. God’s Righteousness revealed through faith.....   | 82          |
| 2. God’s Righteousness revealed in Christ.....   | 83          |
| 3. God’s Righteousness revealed in daily life .....  | 84          |
| 4. The Literary Structure of Romans .....  | 85          |
| 5. God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works .....                                    | 159         |
| 6. Panel 1: Proto-Prologue (Rom 1:1-7).....  | 161         |
| 7. Panel 2: Deutero-Prologue (Rom 1:8-15) .....  | 163         |
| 8. The First Dyad (Two-fold Prologue): General Structure .....                                     | 166         |
| 9. The Second Dyad: God’s Righteousness revealed through Faith<br>(Rom1:16-3:20).....              | 184         |
| 10. The Second Dyad: Dialogical Structure in detail.....   | 185         |
| 11. The Second Dyad: Internal Dyadic Structure .....   | 186         |
| 12. The Third Dyad: God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law in Christ<br>(Rom 3:21-4:25)..... | 196         |
| 13. Block 2: God’s Righteousness revealed in Christ (5-11).....                                    | 201         |
| 14. The Fourth Dyad: Realm of Christ/Realm of Adam (Rom5:1-11).....                                | 212         |
| 15. Mirror-Dyad: Adam-Christ Typology.....   | 213         |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 16. The Fifth Dyad: Freedom, Sin and the Law (Rom 6:1-7:25).....           | 222 |
| 17. Mirror-Dyad: Paul and the Law.....                                     | 223 |
| 18. The Sixth Dyad: The Spirit -Source of Life/hope of Glory (8:1-39)..... | 231 |
| 19. The ‘Discordant Seventh’ – a Triad (Rom 9-11).....                     | 253 |
| 20. Block 3: God’s Righteousness revealed in Daily Life (Rom12-16).....    | 258 |
| 21. The Eighth Dyad: The Gospel Applied (Rom 12:1-13:14).....              | 271 |
| 22. Mirror-Dyad: Civic and Divine Authority (Rom 13:1-7).....              | 272 |
| 23. The Ninth Dyad: Love in Practice (Rom 14:1-15:13).....                 | 280 |
| 24. The Tenth Dyad: Two-part Epilogue (Rom 15:14-16:27) .....              | 288 |
| 25. Romans at a Glance .....   | 311 |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Dedication   | i        |
| Acknowledgements                                     | ii       |
| Abstract   | iii      |
| Abbreviations  | v        |
| List of Tables                                       | viii     |
| <br>   |          |
| INTRODUCTION   | 1        |
| <br>   |          |
| CHAPTER ONE  |          |
| <b>Romans through the Ages: A Brief Overview</b>     | <b>6</b> |
| i.    The ‘Problem’ that is Romans                   | 7        |
| ii.   From Marcion to Luther                         | 9        |
| iii.  From Luther to Barth                           | 22       |
| iv.   From Barth to Käsemann                         | 25       |
| v.    The New Perspective                            | 30       |
| vi.   New Approaches: Structural Criticism           | 35       |
| vii.  Contemporary emphasis on Literary<br>Structure | 36       |
| vii   Analysis of sample structural divisions        | 37       |
| viii  Diatribal cues: Traditional divisions          | 37       |
| ix   Romans as Literature: C.H. Talbert              | 38       |
| x    Thematic cues: Luke T. Johnson                  | 42       |

|      |   |    |
|------|---|----|
| xi   | Chain-link Transitions: The contribution<br>of Bruce W. Longenecker | 44 |
| viii | Aim of the present study  | 47 |

## CHAPTER TWO

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
|       | <b>Literary Structure as Important Clue in Interpretation</b>                      | 48 |
| i.    | The Greco-Roman Letter Form  | 49 |
| ii.   | The Diatribe   | 50 |
| iii.  | Literary Structure as Key to Meaning   | 51 |
| iv.   | Paradigmatic Examples on the Functioning<br>of Panels: Examples from New Testament | 52 |
| v.    | Paradigmatic Examples on the Functioning<br>of Panels: Examples from Old Testament | 53 |
| vi.   | Demarcation of Structural Literary Units   | 56 |
| vii.  | Respecting Unity and Complexity  | 58 |
| viii. | Towards an Organic Reading of Romans   | 59 |

## CHAPTER THREE

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
|       | <b>Scriptural Unit Division: Methods and Criteria</b>                                | 61 |
| i.    | Limits and Scope of this Study   | 62 |
| ii.   | Terminology and ‘Terminology keys’   | 64 |
| iii.  | Methodology to be employed   | 65 |
| iv.   | Criteria employed in the Delimitation of<br>Meaningful Units                         | 66 |
| v.    | Sample Preliminary Exercise in Scriptural<br>Unit Division – Rom 1:1-15 /15:14-16:27 | 69 |
| vi.   | A Two-part Prologue and a Two-part Epilogue  | 71 |
| vii.  | An Emerging Pattern  | 72 |
| viii. | Preliminary Observations regarding the<br>Structure of Romans                        | 73 |
| ix.   | Outline of Proposed Study  | 79 |

|     |  |    |
|-----|--|----|
| x.  | The ‘Shape’ of Paul’s Argument exists in the Structure | 79 |
| xi. | A Preview  | 80 |

## CHAPTER FOUR

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
|      | <b>Sample Preliminary exercises in Text Delimitation</b> | 86  |
| i.   | Introduction   | 86  |
| ii.  | Establishing the Dyadic Structure of 1:16-3:20           | 87  |
| iii. | Establishing the Dyadic Structure of 8:1-39              | 109 |
| iv.  | Establishing the Dyadic Structure of 12:1-13:14          | 125 |

## EXCURSUS

### Clarifying a Central Concept

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
|  | A Note on the Translation of <i>δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ</i> in Romans | 143 |
|--|---|-----|

## CHAPTER FIVE

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
|      | <b>God’s Righteousness revealed through Faith (Rom1-4)</b>                          | 157 |
|      | <b>Thesis Demonstrated: Structure illuminates Content</b>                           |     |
| i.   | An Analysis of the Functioning of dyads in Rom 1-4                                  | 158 |
| ii.  | Introduction  | 159 |
| iii. | The First Dyad: Twofold Prologue (1:1-15)   | 159 |
| iv.  | An Analysis of the functioning of Structural Panels in the First Dyad               | 163 |
|      | Summary   | 164 |
| v.   | The Second Dyad (1:16-3:20). God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works | 167 |
| vi.  | Gentiles under Sin’s Dominion (1:18-32)   | 168 |
| vii. | Jews under Sin’s Dominion (2:1-3:8)   | 172 |

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| viii. | Closing Statement of Theme : (3:9-20)  | 177 |
| ix.   | Dialogical Functioning of Panels in the<br>Second Dyad (1:16-3:20)   | 177 |
| x.    | Summary  | 181 |
| xi.   | The Third Dyad (3:21-4:25): God's<br>Righteousness revealed outside the Law -<br>in Christ, in Abraham's faith | 186 |
| xii.  | First Panel: God's Righteousness<br>revealed in Christ (3:21-31)   | 186 |
| xiii. | Second Panel: God's Righteousness<br>revealed in Abraham's faith (4:1-25)                                      | 190 |
| xiv.  | Dialogical Functioning of Panels<br>in the Third Dyad (3:21-4:25)  | 192 |
| xv.   | Summary  | 193 |
| xvi.  | General Observations on Block 1 (Rom 1-4)  | 196 |

## CHAPTER SIX

### **God's Righteousness revealed in Christ (Rom 5-11)** 198

#### **Thesis Demonstrated: Structure illuminates Content**

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| i.    | Introduction  | 198 |
| ii.   | An Analysis of the Functioning of<br>Dyads/Triads in Rom 5-11               | 199 |
| iii.  | The Fourth Dyad: The Realm of Christ<br>surpasses that of Adam (Rom 5:1-21) | 201 |
| iv.   | First Panel: The Realm of Christ (5:1-11)                                   | 206 |
| v.    | Second Panel: The Realm of Christ<br>surpasses that of Adam (5:12-21)       | 205 |
| vi.   | Dialogical Functioning of Panels in<br>the Fourth Dyad                      | 207 |
| vii.  | Summary   | 209 |
| viii. | Fifth Dyad: Freedom from Slavery<br>(6:1-7:25)                              | 213 |
| ix.   | First Panel: Freedom from Sin<br>(6:1-23)                                   | 213 |

|        |  |     |
|--------|--|-----|
| x.     | Second Panel: Freedom and the Law<br>(7:1-25)                                    | 214 |
| xi.    | Dialogical Functioning of Panels<br>in the Fifth Dyad                            | 216 |
| xii.   | Summary  | 219 |
| xiii.  | Sixth Dyad: The Spirit - Source of Life<br>(8:1-39)                              | 223 |
| xiv.   | First Panel: Freedom for the Law of<br>the Spirit (8:1-13)                       | 223 |
| xv.    | Second Panel: Freedom for Glory<br>(8:14-39)                                     | 224 |
| xvi.   | Dialogical Functioning of Panels in the<br>Sixth Dyad                            | 227 |
| xvii.  | Summary  | 228 |
| xviii. | ‘The Discordant Seventh’ (9:1-11:36)   | 231 |
| xix.   | First Panel: Lament over Israel (9:1-29)   | 232 |
| xx.    | Second Panel: Israel’s Unbelief<br>and Acceptance of the Gentiles (9:30-10:21)   | 237 |
| xxi.   | Third Panel: Israel’s Restoration/God’s<br>Righteousness/Mercy for Jew & Gentile | 241 |
| xxii.  | Triadic Functioning of Panels in the<br>pivotal ‘Discordant Seventh’             | 244 |
| xxiii. | Summary  | 250 |
| xxiv.  | General Observations on Block 2 (Rom 5-11)                                       | 253 |

## CHAPTER SEVEN

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
|      | <b>God’s Righteousness revealed in Daily Life (Rom 12-16)</b>     | 255 |
|      | <b>Thesis Demonstrated: Structure illuminates Content</b>         |     |
| i.   | Introduction  | 255 |
| ii.  | The Eighth Dyad: God’s Mercy<br>in Daily Life (12:1- 13:14)       | 258 |
| iii. | First Panel: Reflect God’s Mercy by<br>love of neighbor (12:1-21) | 258 |
| iv.  | Second Panel: Respect civic authority<br>(13:1-14)                | 262 |

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| v.    | Dialogical Functioning of Panels in<br>the Eighth Dyad (12:1-13:14) | 268 |
| vi.   | Summary   | 269 |
| vii.  | The Ninth Dyad: Concern for ‘the weak’                              | 272 |
| viii. | First Panel: Do not judge (14:1-23)                                 | 273 |
| ix.   | Second Panel: Do not scandalize (15:1-13)                           | 275 |
| x.    | Dialogical Functioning of Panels in<br>the Ninth Dyad               | 276 |
| xi.   | Summary   | 276 |
| xii.  | Tenth Dyad: Future Plans for Paul<br>and the churches               | 280 |
| xiii. | First Panel: Focus on Paul’s Future plans<br>(15:14-33)             | 280 |
| xiv.  | Second Panel: Focus on the churches.<br>Commendations (16:1-27)     | 283 |
| xv.   | Dialogical Functioning of Panels<br>in the Tenth Dyad (15:14-16:27) | 284 |
| xvi.  | Summary   | 286 |
| xvii. | General Observations on Block 3 (Rom 12-16)                         | 288 |

## CHAPTER EIGHT

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
|       | <b>Overview. Summary and Conclusions</b>                  | 289 |
| i.    | Introduction  | 289 |
| ii.   | Overview  | 290 |
| iii.  | Methodology reviewed                                      | 290 |
| iv.   | Dialogical Patterns and their Significance                | 293 |
| v.    | Results of Detailed Analysis of Panels,<br>Dyads, Triad   | 294 |
| vi.   | The ‘Discordant Seventh’ – Climax                         | 295 |
| vii.  | The Climax of the Argument proclaimed in the<br>Structure | 296 |
| viii. | The lived Gospel reveals God’s<br>Righteousness/Mercy     | 296 |
| ix.   | Integrity and Intra-Panel Connections                     | 297 |



|       |  |            |
|-------|--|------------|
| x.    | Organic Cohesiveness: The Triad and the rest of Romans | 298        |
| xi.   | Righteousness and Mercy                                | 299        |
| xii.  | Righteousness, Mercy and Hope                          | 300        |
| xiii. | Reading Romans Organically                             | 302        |
| xiv.  | Further Confirmatory Internal Dialogical Features      | 304        |
| xv.   | Summary of Findings and Conclusion                     | 307        |
| xvi.  | Final Remarks  | 308        |
|       | <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>                                    | <b>311</b> |

**Appendix I:** Sample Structural Unit Divisions in Romans from recent scholarship.

**Appendix II:** The Role of Deuteronomy 32 and the Jealousy Motif in the revealing of God's Mercy in Romans 9-11.

**Supplement:** *Romans at a Glance*

The Greek Text presented separately in a ten-page supplement.

**‘Mercy and Righteousness have met’<sup>1</sup>**  
**Literary Structure as Key to the Centrality of Mercy in Romans**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Statement of the Problem**

Paul’s Letter to the Romans has generated endless debate in the past. It continues to do so today. There is disagreement first of all, regarding the integrity, focus and purpose of the Letter. Secondly, and consequently, there is no general consensus among scholars regarding the content of Paul’s message to Christians in Rome: What is he really saying to them? The fact remains that, despite the torrents of literature which Romans has generated, the Letter remains for many today an intractable puzzle.

**The Problem in Context**

Down through the centuries Romans has been the locus of intense debate. Chapter 1 of this study will chart some of the most vigorously fought battles and their impact on Western culture, on church unity and on the development of theology. Rightly it has been noted that “one can almost write the history of Christian theology by

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 84:10 (LXX).

surveying the ways in which Romans has been interpreted.”<sup>2</sup> Yet, the richness of Paul’s Letter to a community in Rome – a community not founded by him and not previously visited by him - continues to provide an extraordinary challenge today in church and academy. I count myself fortunate to be among those captivated by Romans, by its intriguing excursions into what Paul calls ‘the mystery’, and by its power to engage, to inspire, even to mystify! A great part of Paul’s genius, as I have discovered, is his ability to transpose data from one plane to another and to set up dialogues which advance his arguments in rather unpredictable ways. Demystifying Romans means coming to terms with this Pauline proclivity as it manifests itself in the structure of the Letter. Chapter 2 will explain this further as a phenomenon not restricted to the Pauline corpus. It will offer samples of paradigmatic studies from Old Testament and New Testament scholarship in the field of scriptural unit division and the functioning of literary ‘panels’ within the hermeneutical circle. Chapter 3 will deal with literary scriptural unit division and its potential for unlocking meaning in a text. Exemplars will be provided from the Prologue and Epilogue. The establishing of further exemplars from the rest of Romans (from beginning, middle and end) will be the subject of Chapter 4, while detailed analysis of ten samples will be the subject of Chapters 5-7. The final Chapter 8 will summarise the findings and the significance of the research for a possible fresh reading of Paul’s greatest Letter.

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, cited in Greenman and Larsen (eds.), *Romans Through the Centuries* (Ada ML: Brazos Press, 2005), 14.

## **Objective of the present Study**

The objective of this study is to present a way of reading Romans as a literary entity that makes sense. In other words, it hopes to offer a pathway towards deciphering the message and meaning of the letter-essay which Paul addressed to first-century Christians at Rome. It takes for granted that Paul did not write to confuse or to dumbfound Christians at the heart of the Empire, or to amuse them with a display of his diatribal skills! I believe that he had something really important to say to them, something that addressed their real-life situation and some fundamental human problems. I believe that Paul's message was intelligible to his audiences in the first century and that its relevance for Christians today has not diminished with time. The literary structure of Romans proclaims that message, as will be shown in Chapters 5-7 inclusive, in the 25 Tables distributed throughout those chapters and in the Greek Supplement which accompanies this dissertation.

The focus of this research, however, will not be on the finer details of Romans, although many of those will be addressed incidentally, but on getting a clearer picture of the text in its entirety. In other words, within the hermeneutical circle it focuses on the moment when the circle deals with the whole, in the hope that the way is thereby made easier for those who later focus on the details.

## **Methodology**

The methodology employed is described in detail in Chapter 3. In summary the method of proceeding is as follows:

1. Identification of structural literary dyads/triads in Romans
2. Identification of some verbal/semantic linkage
3. Detailed analysis of the literary functioning of these dyads/triads
4. Establishing some indicators of the significance of these dyads/triads and their patterns of functioning for a valid reading of the Letter
5. Identification of some pervasive and significant literary patterns through a study of the overall positioning and functioning of dyads/triads
6. Drawing some conclusions in relation to a satisfactory interpretation of Romans.

### **Scope and limits of the work**

This study is limited in its scope. It does not pretend to address all of the questions raised by Romans, or to claim that the ten-fold structure presented here is the only literary structure in the Letter. However, it offers a key to one satisfactory reading of Romans which, it is hoped, is also a reasonably accurate one. Dealing as it does primarily with the broad canvas, rather than with minutiae per se (though many of these are addressed in passing) it invites others to address the finer details from a vantage point as yet untried.

Because this is a limited study, it will not pretend to establish *the definitive meaning* of Romans, since any literary work is capable of communicating several meanings, depending on how, when, where and by whom it is received and interpreted. However, the research presented here will attempt to identify one

crucial, underlying literary structure which is hermeneutically important, and to address in some detail the significance of that structure for a satisfactory reading of Romans. It is hoped that the procedures and outcomes outlined here will contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation, while complementing the many approaches already made and currently being made to the Romans debate.

### **Significance of the research**

It will be for others to decide whether the ‘reading’ of Romans presented here is a valid one, offering new possibilities. If it is not valid at that foundational level, my years of research have been wasted! However, I believe that it is a valid reading, consonant with the Paul that I have come to know and respect. Regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of the hermeneutical key offered here, that will also be for others to determine. Does the key work? Does it open a door to a way of seeing Romans whole, of making sense of the whole? And does that key, which is the tenfold literary template suggested here, respect all of the data involved? My answer is ‘Yes’ to all three questions. Others may disagree.

If the outcome of this research happens to make Romans more accessible and more widely appreciated in church and in academy, I will be glad. If it offers a broad framework and perspective within which some detailed studies may be pursued in a fresh light, that will be a dream come true. As for the author, the work done appears like a mere beginning – like the setting out of one’s stall, where the treasures on offer are mainly keys!

# **‘Mercy and Righteousness have met’**

## **Literary Structure as Key to the Centrality of Mercy in Romans**

### **CHAPTER ONE**

#### **Romans through the ages: A brief historical overview**

**The Romans dilemma – From Marcion to Luther – From Luther to Barth – From Barth to Käsemann – The New Perspective – The Contemporary Scene – Contemporary Emphasis on Literary Structure - Analysis of some Structural Divisions – Aim of the Present Study**

Paul’s Letter to the Romans, his longest and arguably his greatest letter, the only one available to us which claims to be written by Paul in a solo capacity, has been endlessly analysed and interpreted over centuries. Its influence on Church history has been phenomenal, a fact attested by the vast number of commentaries and scholarly writings it has provoked, and by the role it has played at key moments in the history of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Yet for many readers today it still looks like a tangled skein that

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf von Harnack argues that ‘Pauline reactions’ have characterised the critical moments in theological development. He writes, “One might write a history of dogma as a history of Pauline reactions in the Church, and in doing so would touch on all the turning points of history: Marcion, after the Apostolic Fathers; Irenaeus, Clement and Origen after the Apologists; Augustine after the

resists unravelling. Notorious ‘knots’ (a handful of contentious verses) have obstinately refused scholarly undoing. The resulting undue focus on these problematic texts and on certain aspects of Paul’s message, to the neglect of balancing aspects, has led much research on Romans into a cul-de-sac, where the overall message has often been neglected or relegated to a secondary position. Indeed it may be argued that interpretation of Romans is in crisis because the ‘knots’ have been taken for the whole skein. In more common parlance, the wood has been confused with the trees. We are not surprised then to discover that an eminent contemporary Pauline scholar, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, echoing the words of another great Pauline scholar, M.-J. Lagrange, can describe his actual encounter with Romans as *écrasant!*<sup>2</sup>

### **The ‘Problem’ that is Romans**

The crucial question is this: What is the Letter essentially about? What is its core message? A related set of questions follow: If there is a core message, is that message accessible to us today? And if it is, how is it discovered? How was it accessible to those Roman Christians who first heard it read or proclaimed to them in their houses or assemblies in the first century CE? What did they think Paul was

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Fathers of the Greek Church; Luther after the Scholastics; Jansenism after the Council of Trent...Paulinism has proved to be a ferment in the history of dogma” (Cited by John D. Godsey, “The Interpretation of Romans in the History of the Christian Faith” *Interpretation*, No.34 (1980), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB, Vol. 33, 1993) xiii. He writes, “I still think that any contact with this Letter is *écrasant*. It overwhelms the reader by the density and sublimity of the topic with which it deals, the justification and salvation of Jew and Gentile alike by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, revealing the uprightness and love of God the Father”.



really saying to them? And how important was that message? Satisfactory answers to these and similar questions have not surfaced so far, despite the huge volume of secondary literature that Romans has generated. That Letter has engaged saints and scholars ever since Origen (185-254 CE) presented his fifteen-part commentary on Romans. In our time there seems to be no lessening of the torrent of literature – commentaries, monographs, articles and academic papers – addressing some aspect or aspects of the ‘problem’ that is Romans.<sup>3</sup> Controversy attends almost every contemporary attempt at unravelling this important Letter, just as opposing interpretations of it have generated fierce and devastating divisions among Christians in the past.

A brief overview of the history of the reception of Romans in the West will be helpful at this point. By any standard, the influence of that Letter on Western society has been enormous. “One can almost write the history of Christian theology by surveying the ways in which Romans has been interpreted”.<sup>4</sup> Bart Ehrman introduces his commentary with the statement: “No book of the New Testament has proven to be more influential in the history of Christian thought than Paul’s Letter to

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<sup>3</sup> According to a 1995 reckoning, 2,109 studies on Romans were published in the twentieth century. See Watson Mills, *Bibliographies for Biblical Research. New Testament Series. Vol. 6. Romans* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press), 1996. The Select Bibliography attached to this study (just a fraction of published research in the last decade) shows a huge increase on the 1995 calculation above.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, cited in Greenman and Larsen (eds.), *Romans through the Centuries* (Ada ML: Brazos Press, 2005), 14.

the Romans.”<sup>5</sup> Robert Jewett goes a step further in arguing for the centrality of Romans in Christian history. He writes: “The heart of Christianity has been located in Paul’s theology, and the heart of Paul’s theology has been found in Romans.”<sup>6</sup>

### **From Marcion to Luther.**

In a paper entitled, ‘The Battle for Paul in the Second Century’, Judith Lieu paints a picture of Paul and of Pauline writings as highly controversial in the decades immediately succeeding the death of the apostle. The pseudepigraphical 3 Corinthians presents Paul asking the question: “Why am I still persecuted?”<sup>7</sup> Romans must be included among those texts which generated the hottest conflict, because (more than any of his writings, with the possible exception of Galatians) it could justifiably be read as Paul’s attempt to initiate among Christian converts a clean break with Judaism. Such a severance would not meet with general approval, especially among those Christians with strong allegiance to their Jewish roots. Christianity in Rome probably found its origins in Jerusalem,<sup>8</sup> and it has been well-documented that the Jerusalem Church, under the leadership of James and Peter, had

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<sup>5</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament. A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 356.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Jewett, “Major Developments in the Theological Interpretation of Romans since Barth,” *Interpretation* 34 (1980), 17-31.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Lieu, *The Battle for Paul in the Second Century*, Lecture delivered at St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, Ireland, 24/02/2009.

<sup>8</sup> Raymond E. Brown & John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome. Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 95.

shown itself from the beginning to be critical of Paul and his writings. The influence of Jerusalem in the first century CE was considerable,<sup>9</sup> and we know from internal evidence in Romans and elsewhere in the New Testament that both Paul and his teachings were regarded with suspicion, if not with outright contempt.<sup>10</sup> “Jewish Christianity” says Richard Pervo, “can be defined, in part, through its rejection of Paul.”<sup>11</sup> Intense hatred of the Pauline version of the Gospel was incorporated into the Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies*.<sup>12</sup> These texts, preserved because of links between Peter and Clement of Rome, identified Paul with Simon Magus, and published a falsified version of Paul’s conversion. Until the demise of “Jewish Christianity” in the third century, Paul’s position as an apostle and the status of his teachings were not assured. “What is hard for us to realize today is the disuse of those (*sic* Pauline) letters, and even the relative unimportance, even low esteem, of Paul in the second century. This is made perfectly clear in Walter Bauer’s brilliant study, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 29.

<sup>10</sup> Rom 3:8b deals with an accusation made against Paul, to which he replies in 6:1-14. Besides, 2 Peter 3:15-17 speaks of ‘some things in them (Paul’s writings) that are hard to understand’ (*ἐν αἷς ἐστὶν δυσνόητά τινα...*).

<sup>11</sup> Richard I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul. Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 232.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., Vol III, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Godsey, *Ibid.*, 6.

On the other hand, there were many among the Church Fathers who held Paul in admiration. For example, Clement of Rome (d. 101 AD?) writing to the Corinthians, speaks of “Paul of blessed memory...who taught righteousness to the whole world”, and he urges the Corinthians to read the Letters Paul had addressed to them.<sup>14</sup> Two centuries later, John Chrysostom, who became known as “John of the Golden Mouth” (347-407) writes: “Some people do not know how many letters he (Paul) wrote...but I love this man.”<sup>15</sup>

While it is difficult to extract distinct interpretations of Romans from the early Patristic period, because the texts are scattered and often used for apologetic purposes, it seems that the influence of Romans as a philosophical document in Patristic times was immense. Thanks to computer research it is possible to trace thousands of quotations and allusions to Romans in Patristic writings.<sup>16</sup> The Letter played a significant part in developing, in that era, a philosophy of Christian

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<sup>14</sup> 1Clement, 5. 6. Trans. J. B. Lightfoot. Adapted by Athena Data products (1990). The passage continues, “Having reached the farthest bounds of the West, and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went to the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.”

<sup>15</sup> Meeks, Wayne A. and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 228.

<sup>16</sup> “The combined resources of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and of the Centre de Textes et Documents (*Cetedoc*) have made it possible to obtain a virtually complete collection of patristic references to Romans, which, if they were all reproduced, would take up several volumes....Indirect allusions to the text of Romans are almost all that we have to go on from the earliest period (before A.D.200).” Gerald Bray (ed). *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament VI* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2005), xxii.

Platonism which has had enormous influence on education among the upper classes for centuries afterwards.<sup>17</sup> Verse by verse commentaries on Romans did not come into existence until the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, though Origen's monumental commentary, extending to fifteen books, stands out as a noteworthy exception.

Thanks in large part to the repercussions of the dispute instigated by Marcion of Sinope (c.144) the Letters of Paul had established themselves in Christianity by the end of the second century, together with the Gospels and the Septuagint, as authentic bearers of God's Word. The fact that Marcion favoured Paul as the 'first apostle', and that all of Paul's writings together with 10 Chapters of Luke's Gospel were included in the widely-favoured Marcionite Canon, meant that a serendipitous boost was given to Paul and his teachings, even as Marcion and his followers were destined for eventual condemnation as Gnostics by Eusebius a century later. Because of the Marcionite controversy, Paul became known as 'the apostle of the heretics'. His writings as theological documents were catapulted into the limelight.<sup>18</sup>

More formal scholarly approaches to interpreting Romans were developed in the second century in the Eastern church, beginning with the School of Alexandria in Egypt. The School of Alexandria was known for using an allegorical method of exegesis. It was founded by Pantaenus, who was succeeded by the more famous interpreters, Clement and Origen.

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<sup>17</sup> Ed. Kathy L. Gaca & L.L. Welborn, "Romans through History & Culture", in *Early Patristic Readings of Romans* (New York/London: T & T. Clark, 2005), ii.

<sup>18</sup> Pervo, 249ff.

Origen (185-254), though not proclaimed a Church father, dominates the scholarly scene in the second and third centuries. In his *Commentary on Romans* he sees Paul as arbiter between Jew and Gentile. In countering Marcion and his followers, Origen deals with the underlying questions of election, predestination and free will. Chapter 7 of Romans is invoked as Paul's address to the Gentiles. Romans 3:21-28 is understood as dealing with natural law rather than Mosaic Law. Origen favours an objective genitive interpretation of *πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (3:22) but allows for an alternative interpretation too. He interprets *ἰλαστήριον* (3:25) allegorically as representing Christ, and makes a distinction between Law and 'works of the Law'. In this he is anticipating some New Perspectivist approaches to Romans.<sup>19</sup> Tertullian (160-225?) regularly quoted Romans as Scripture, but the thrust of his work is refutation of Marcion.<sup>20</sup>

More than a century passed after Origen before another significant commentary on Romans appeared. It was the work of an unknown scholar named Ambrosiaster, writing in Rome between 366 and 384. An attempt was made by Euthalius the Deacon (fourth century?), but only the Prologue and a list of headings survive. Full-length commentaries were written by Eusebius of Emesa (d. 359) and by Acacius of Caesarea (d. 366). Of these, only fragments remain.<sup>21</sup> John

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<sup>19</sup> Brendan Byrne, "Interpreting Romans. The New Perspective and Beyond" in *Interpretation*, Vol. 58, 3, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 5:13-14, cited in John H. Hayes, General Editor, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation K-Z* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 412.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald Bray, *op. cit.*, xxiii.

Chrysostom adopted a position similar to that of Origen. Both Origen and John Chrysostom contributed much towards rescuing Romans from Gnostics who used it as a key-text in their arguments against free will.<sup>22</sup> Besides, these two early commentators on Romans established allegorical interpretation as Christological interpretation, laying the foundations of theological readings of Romans for centuries to come. *Peri Archon*, a catechetical compendium compiled in Alexandria in 229, discourages ‘literal reading’ as a Jewish occupation. Christians are therefore urged to shun this in favour of seeking the allegorical or ‘spiritual sense’, because “Scripture is written for our sake”.<sup>23</sup> Theological interpretation, relying on allegory as a primary access route to underlying meaning, is characteristic of Patristic and early Church readings of Pauline writings. In all of this the figure of Origen is dominant. “Origen remains the unacknowledged ancestor in the two millennia of conversations that have occurred over Romans interpretation”.<sup>24</sup>

A network of scholars emerged in Syria in the fourth century. Based in Antioch, these scholars rejected the Alexandrian approach in favour of a more literal interpretation of biblical texts. Among the earliest teachers at the Antiochene school was Diodore of Tarsus, who taught the most famous scholars in the Antiochene tradition, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom. The School at Antioch influenced two other famous schools, those at Edessa and Nisibis. These two

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<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, both Gnostics and ‘orthodox’ Christians appealed to Paul in support of their views. See Richard I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. Gaca & Welborn, *Romans through History & Culture* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2005), 159.

<sup>24</sup> Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005) 145.

Mesopotamian schools developed their own unique approach to scriptural interpretation called ‘Verse Homily’ – a poetical form of exegesis. Their work was influenced very much by the earlier work of Ephraim the Syrian (306-373), who wrote hymns, poems and commentaries on the Old Testament and on the Letters of St Paul.

Fifth century interpretation of Romans is marked by the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy centred on free will and grace, original sin and predestination. The proof-texts used on both sides were quarried mainly from Romans 5 and 7, but also from 3:20, as well as Chapters 8 and 9-11. While Augustine did not write a complete commentary on Romans, most of his writings deal with some section of it, and many of his works deal exclusively with the interpretation of it. Soon after his conversion, due, as he tells us in his *Confessions*,<sup>25</sup> to a spiritual encounter with the text of Rom 13:11-14, while studying Romans with a group of clergy in Carthage, he wrote his *Expositions*.<sup>26</sup> From Romans 5 Augustine developed the seeds of the doctrine of original sin, a doctrine which has had a significant influence on theology in mainline Christian traditions through the centuries.<sup>27</sup> Augustine has been accused of misinterpreting Romans 7 by imposing a personal psychological superstructure on Paul’s assertions about doing what is right

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<sup>25</sup> *Confessions*, 8.12

<sup>26</sup> The full title in English translation is *Exposition of Certain Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans*. This became the basis of a further exegetical study of Rom 7:7-25 and 9: 10-29) entitled *To Simplician – On Various questions*. See Whitney J. Oates (ed.), *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*. 2 Vols. (New York: Random House, 1948).

<sup>27</sup> Richard I. Pervo, op.cit.,5.



and avoiding evil (Rom 7:14-24).<sup>28</sup> Yet it cannot be denied that Augustine's contribution to the interpretation of Romans is noteworthy.<sup>29</sup> Thomas F. Martin, well-known Augustinian scholar, is of the opinion that Augustine is among the first of Christian thinkers to set out and explain an explicit hermeneutical method for study of the Bible, which he exemplifies by his frequent appeal to Romans.<sup>30</sup> There are more than 40 references to Romans in his treatise *De Correptione et Gratia*, and 51 references to the same Letter in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*.<sup>31</sup> In his monumental work, *De Doctrina Christiana*, he charts a path for interpreting as "a way of discovering what must be understood there" (I. i). He proved himself an expert exponent of the dialectical-rhetorical tradition which outlasted him by centuries, and the text of Romans provided him with an almost inexhaustible source from which to draw. It is in his controversy with Pelagius that his interpretation of Romans 7 and 9 comes into sharpest focus. Engagement with Romans also became part of Augustine's battle with Mani (216-277) and the Manichaeans, who taught

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West", Address given at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, 1961. Printed in *Harvard Theological Review*, 56 (1963).

<sup>29</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson writes, "Augustine's highly personal appropriation of Romans was to prove decisive for the formation of theology in the Christian West". *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 1.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas F. Martin OSA, "Modus Inveniende Paulum" in *Engaging Augustine on Romans*, Daniel Patte and Eugene Te Sell, eds. (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press Intl., 2002), 77.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas F. Martin OSA, *Ibid.*, 77.

that Evil was a spiritual force outside human control. Romans 7 once again became the battleground for metaphysical and moral controversy.

A further set of arguments, marginal to Romans, but determinative of later interpretations of it, was the series of letter-exchanges between Jerome and Augustine (394-405). As these two Patristic scholars wrestled with the implications of the meeting recorded in Gal 2:14 between Peter and Paul, they took up opposing positions on the relation of Jews to Gentiles in the apostolic age. Jerome on his side argued that Paul's attack on Peter as recorded in Gal 2:14 had been 'simulated' or staged in the written records. This gave Jerome a platform to project the relationship between Peter and Paul as amicable. Consequently, he argued that Gentile converts to Christianity should be granted the freedom to abrogate or obey the Law of Moses as they wished. Augustine did not agree. In his last letter to Jerome in 405 he reiterated his position that the Mosaic Law and Jewish institutions were important only as pre-figurations of the Gospel. Christians, according to Augustine, were free to dispense with *Torah* and Jewish prescriptions.

The Jerome-Augustine controversy, representing as it does the Greek and Latin strands in Western tradition, is not without relevance to some interpretations of Romans today. How one reads Romans 1:16, for example, "to the Jew first (πρώτον) but also to the Gentiles", has a direct bearing on how one understands one of Paul's critical messages in Romans. The same may be said of how one reads Chapter 4, dealing with Adam-Christ typology, and also Chapters 9-11, addressing the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation. Does one stand with Jerome or with Augustine on the thorny issue of the place of the Law in Romans? Or does one take an entirely different stance?

Theodoret of Cyr (393-496) is noted for his Greek commentary on Romans, which still survives. It provides an insight into the Antiochene tradition of biblical commentary which moved away from allegory in favour of an historical and grammatical approach. After Theodoret's time, there is the fragmentary Greek commentary by Gennadius of Constantinople (d. 471), and some Latin homilies by Luculentius (5<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> centuries), which demonstrate that Romans occupied an important place in early medieval liturgy.

The year 476 CE marked the end of the Roman Empire in the West. Records of scholarly work on Romans are scarce in the centuries immediately following, though it is most likely that valuable research continued in monasteries, both in the East and in the West, and in their associated schools. The *Confessio* of St Patrick (387-460?) includes several references to Paul's letters, including a direct reference to Romans 8:26: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words".<sup>32</sup> And it is interesting to note that a commentary on the Letters of Paul is included in the oldest body of literature in the Irish language, dating from 750-800 CE.<sup>33</sup> The Golden Age of Christianity (sixth to tenth centuries) in the Celtic world, especially

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<sup>32</sup> *The Confessions of St Patrick*. Lyndhurst NJ: Bieber/Barnes & Noble Publishing, 2011. No 25.

<sup>33</sup> Martin McNamara. "The Legacy of the Apostle Paul. Reflections on the Bi-millennial Jubilee of his Birth" in *Scripture in Church* (Dublin Irl.: Dominican Publications, 2009), 114. He writes, "In Ireland, the earliest body of literature in the Irish language is in a commentary on the Pauline letters from 750-800, a commentary partly in Latin and in Irish, which makes liberal use of the Latin commentary of Pelagius, but avoids his faulty or unacceptable understanding of certain passages". He refers to the Wurzburg Papers, now housed in the University of Wurzburg.

Scotland, Ireland and Britain, while it has yielded inestimable treasure in terms of illuminated bible, like the Book of Kells, the Book of Lindisfarne and others, has not provided direct evidence in relation to study of Romans, other than the examples mentioned.

Back in mainland Europe, meanwhile, Peter Abelard (1079-1142) saw possibilities in Romans for developing a theology of atonement and expiation. His commentary on 3:21-26 follows Augustine in the main, but makes surprising links between Rom 3:22 and John 15:13 in his elaboration of love and faith. Abelard states that God's righteousness is found in the soul (*anima*) of Gentiles as well as Jews and not in their exterior works.<sup>34</sup> He equates the revelation of God's righteousness (Rom 1:16) with God's love made manifest. From the time of Abelard onwards "Romans 3:25 becomes a locus begging for soteriological precision. Later readers of Romans, even if they have not read Abelard, feel a pressure to define exactly what happened in salvation history when God displayed Jesus as ἱλαστήριον".<sup>35</sup> Theories of atonement soon became theologies of atonement or of propitiation, and these found their way, in varying degrees, into official teaching in almost all mainline Christian

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<sup>34</sup> *Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos*, 45. Here Abelard explains his Moral Influence Theory. He suggests that the life and death of Jesus provide a moral example to humanity, inspiring men and women to live a life of charity. Abelard renounces the Ransom Theory of Atonement, which portrays atonement as a ransom paid to Satan for sin, and the Satisfaction Theory of Atonement, which sees God as demanding satisfaction or repayment for sin.

<sup>35</sup> Reasoner, 29. Also Morna D. Hooker, *Paul. A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), 75.

traditions with consequent theological debate and, at times irreconcilable positions.<sup>36</sup>

In this, Paul's Letter to the Romans was understood to make a *prima facie* case for the doctrines of original sin and atonement.<sup>37</sup>

Those who commented on Romans before Stephen Langton (1150-1228) were not bound by chapter divisions in their reading of the text.<sup>38</sup> This had implications for how they interpreted parts in relation to the whole. Some decades later a philosophical approach to reading Scripture came into vogue with Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274). He argues against the Manichaeans and Pelagians by appealing to a range of texts from Romans 7 and 8 dealing with grace, law and the Holy Spirit. He sees "the good" in 7:18 as the grace by which we are freed from sin, and the "grace of God" in 7:25 as in continuity with the question asked in 7:24. "Law" for Aquinas can mean the Holy Spirit (8:2), the Mosaic Law (7:22), the law of the passions (7:23a) and, at times, natural law (7:23b). He even aligns the ethics of Aristotle with Paul's teaching in Romans 8. A series of lectures on Romans by John

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<sup>36</sup> Atonement, propitiation, and expiation were at times understood as interchangeable, at times as denoting totally different theological realities. The German language translates all three with one word, *Versöhnung*, a fact which complicated matters further. For more on this, see Ted Peters, *God, the World's Future* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 221-231.

<sup>37</sup> Ted Peters, *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>38</sup> Reasoner, 165, Note 42. "Those who commented on Romans before Stephen Langton (ca 1150-1228) placed our chapter divisions on the New Testament text were likely to make associations that we who read the sixteen-chapter version of Romans now are not likely to make. We tend to think that Romans 7 describes some sort of person and Romans 8 another, because of the chapter division. Augustine did not have the chapter division and so used Romans 8 to exegete Romans 7."

Colet (1466-1519) introduced the dimension of humanism to biblical interpretation by encouraging critical attention to historical context.<sup>39</sup>

Romans in the medieval age was used as proof-text for supporting philosophical and theological positions and especially for countering what were perceived as erroneous or heretical teachings by some. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not produce much significant commentary on Romans. The nineteenth century, however, introduced a flood of scholarly material to which contemporary research is still hugely indebted.<sup>40</sup> The works of Barth, Käsemann, Stuhlmacher, Cranfield, C.H. Dodd, Boylan and others brought Romans under the searchlight of scientific biblical studies, as will be shown in the next section.

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<sup>39</sup>Richard I. Pervo, *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>40</sup>Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*. Trans. *The Epistle to the Romans* (1922); *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960; C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*. Trans./ed. G. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980; "The Righteousness of God in Paul". *New Testament Questions of Today*. Trans. W. J. Montague. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969; M.-J Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Romains*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Paris: Gabalda, 1931; Eugene Boylan, *St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Dublin: Gill & Son, 1934.

## From Luther to Barth

With Martin Luther (1483-1546) Romans assumes a primary role in his reading of Augustine against Aristotle. The latter had taught that righteous behaviour and good works made a person righteous or pleasing in God's sight. Luther came to a new understanding of God's righteousness in his famous *Türmerlebnis* in Wittenberg. That righteousness, in Luther's new understanding, was an aspect of God's loving-kindness, as expressed in the Psalter and the prophets,<sup>41</sup> and was more akin to mercy than to strict justice. Luther's insight into the mystery of salvation owes much to Romans. It is a variant of the teaching of Paul in Romans 5-8: by faith human beings are justified through God's grace. Luther reads Romans in its entirety, as well as Augustine's writings, as a defence of his position. He points to Rom 1:16 as key to the Letter's message and reads Chapters 1-8 as Paul's primary teaching on justification by faith. His teachings on *sola fides* and *sola Scriptura* were guaranteed to set him on a collision course with Pope Leo X and with the Emperor, which they did. This eventually led to the Protestant Reformation and centuries of division among Christians.

Luther and his associate, Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), were the first to read Romans as a complete theological treatise. Luther believed that "Romans is the

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<sup>41</sup> For example Psalm 36:10 (LXX): "Show your mercy to those who acknowledge you, and your righteousness to the upright of heart" - παράτεινον τὸ ἔλεός σου τοῖς γνώσκουσίν σε καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου τοῖς εὐθέσι τῇ καρδίᾳ. Similar parallelisms between righteousness and mercy are found in Psalms 84:10 (LXX), Psalm 98:3-4(LXX), Psalm 101:1 (LXX) and in Joel2:13-14. It will be seen that the present literary study upholds Luther's view of Righteousness/Mercy from a structural standpoint.

chief part of the New Testament and is truly the purest gospel".<sup>42</sup> Luther is also associated with reading the Bible non-allegorically. This led to a major step in the history of hermeneutics and eventually to the foundation of historical-critical methods.<sup>43</sup>

The legacy of Luther, Melanchthon and of other leading reformers, Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), and John Calvin (1509-1564), consists in their teaching on "passive righteousness", that is, righteousness which is 'imputed', totally gratuitous and unearned by human effort. Influenced by the Augustinian tradition, they expanded the Pauline doctrine of predestination and God's absolute sovereignty in matters concerning the salvation of individuals. To Calvin, Romans was of singular importance. He quotes it 573 times in *The Institutes* and his first biblical commentary, published in 1540, was on Romans.<sup>44</sup>

In 1521 Philip Melanchthon described Romans as 'a compendium of Christian doctrine' and, in so doing, contributed to further theological controversy.

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<sup>42</sup> Timothy George, in J. P. Greenman & T. Larsen, Eds., *Romans Through the Centuries* (Brazos Press, 2005), 16.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle. A History of Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 147. He writes, "While he did not abandon allegory completely, Luther's hermeneutical move was a key step in the process already underway, that resulted in the historical-critical reading of scripture".

<sup>44</sup> Godsey, *Ibid.*, 12.



His opponents pointed out that Romans ignores or omits many tenets of Christian doctrine.<sup>45</sup>

John Wesley (1703-1791), founder of Methodism, experienced a profound spiritual conversion on hearing Luther's Preface to his Commentary on Romans. He founded his doctrine of sanctification on Romans 6-8, while Calvin developed his teaching on double predestination<sup>46</sup> based on his reading of Romans 9-11. Karl Barth (1886-1968), Professor of Theology at Bonn and later at Basel in his native Switzerland, is generally recognised to be the most influential theologian of the twentieth century. He was hailed by Pope Pius XII as the most influential theologian since Thomas Aquinas. He wrote his famous Commentary on Romans (*Der Römerbrief*) in the years 1918-1922, and presented an abbreviated form in a series of lectures given at the University of Basel, 1940-41.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, Barth identifies a ten-part structure in the architecture of Romans, while warning against reading the Letter as a systematic exposition of Christian faith or ethics.<sup>48</sup> Barth develops a theology of creation in which God is known through God's handiwork in the visible world. In the Preface to his Commentary he writes, "If we rightly understand

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<sup>45</sup> Philip Melancthon, *Loci Communes*, 2.1.7.

<sup>46</sup> Calvin followed Luther and the predominant reformed view of predestination as double or two-fold: Because God elects or chooses some to be saved, this implies that some are thereby destined to be lost, hence 'double predestination'. Severe theological battles were fought around the topic, such as the notable one between John Wesley and Augustus M. Toplady, Anglican cleric and hymn-writer (1740-1778).

<sup>47</sup> Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (London: SCM Press, 1950).

<sup>48</sup> Barth, *Ibid.*, 151.

ourselves, our problems are the problems of Paul; and if we be enlightened by the brightness of his answers, those answers must be ours.”<sup>49</sup>

In interpreting Romans 1:18-3:20, Barth makes inter-textual connections with Genesis 3, equating Paul’s construct in Romans with *Der Abfall*. He makes no distinction between religion and *νόμος* and uses the terms interchangeably in *Der Römerbrief*. Barth differs from Luther and Melancthon, both of whom read Romans as a road-map by which an individual may find salvation. Barth set Romans in a wider framework, as Paul’s prophetic interpretation of Israel’s history and of God’s dealings with the whole of humanity. In this Barth is closer to Origen than to Augustine.

### **From Barth to Käsemann**

Late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century biblical scholarship in Germany moved into the arena of the Jesus-Paul debate, which became one of the most hotly disputed topics in New Testament scholarship. The place of Paul as “the second founder of Christianity”<sup>50</sup> and the consequent argument about whether the theology of Paul was consonant with that of Jesus provided grist for decades of scholarly mill-

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<sup>49</sup> Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. E.G. Hoskyns (London: Oxford Up, 1933), 1.

<sup>50</sup> William Wrede, *Paul* (London: P. Green) 1907, p. 180.

grinding.<sup>51</sup> Early twentieth-century German scholarship became famous for new advances in literary criticism, particularly in the areas of source-criticism and form-criticism. These advances took many forms, all of which currently influence the study of biblical literature, including Romans. Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), dealing primarily with the Hebrew Bible and the importance of oral tradition, pioneered the scientific study of sources, known as source-criticism. Almost contemporaneous with Wellhausen is Hermann Gunkel ((1862-1932), father of form-criticism and of *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) carried form-criticism another step, almost depriving biblical texts of any historical value. He is associated primarily with researching the links in literature between myth and symbol. Applied to the biblical text, his literary method is known as demythologising.

The prison-camps of Nazi Germany during the Second World War (1939-1945) became the surprise birth-places of fertile biblical research. In that context the name of Ernst Käsemann (1906-1998) comes to the fore. Käsemann is associated with a movement called *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* and with a seminal and pioneering study of Romans, among other literary works.<sup>52</sup> He challenged

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<sup>51</sup> See John M. G. Barclay, "Jesus and Paul" in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993), 492-503; also Victor Paul Furnish, "The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann" in *Paul and Jesus: Collected Essays*, ed. A. J. M. Wedderburn, JSNT Sup 37 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 17-50.

<sup>52</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, Trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980).

Bultmann's understanding of 'the righteousness of God' as 'the substance of salvation' and the condition for receiving it. Käsemann proposed that "the righteousness of God...is God's sovereignty over the world revealing itself eschatologically in Jesus."<sup>53</sup> For Käsemann and his school, the cosmic dimension of salvation in Romans is vital "if the Christian proclamation is to be the foundation of anything more than private piety."<sup>54</sup>

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), composer, medical doctor, missionary and author of numerous biblical commentaries, is associated with a monumental work, *The Epistle to the Romans*, which rates as a classic in the field, though Schweitzer did not venture into the world of literary criticism. He is remembered especially as an eschatological thinker who rejected the Lutheran reading of Romans as an apologia for justification by faith. Instead, he favoured reading Paul's Letter as a treatise on participation in Christ. From his point of view the theme of justification by faith is secondary. It is "nothing else than a peculiar formulation of the early Christian conception of the possibility of repentance secured by the death of Jesus... It is a subsidiary crater...formed from the rim of the main crater – the mystical doctrine of redemption through being-in-Christ."<sup>55</sup> Some anti-New Perspective contemporary scholars, including Seyoon Kim, support certain aspects of

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<sup>53</sup> Ernst Käsemann, op.cit., " 'The Righteousness of God' in Paul" in *New Testament Questions of Today*, Trans. W.J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 170.

<sup>54</sup> Ernst Käsemann, op. cit., 174.

<sup>55</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, Trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Holt, 1931), 220, 225.

Schweitzer's reading.<sup>56</sup> The influence of the Swedish scholar, Krister Stendahl (1921-2008), on current readings of Romans is considerable. His famous lecture, "*Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West*", delivered in 1961, is regarded as revolutionary - sowing the seeds of New Perspective thinking on Romans. In that landmark lecture and in his later writings,<sup>57</sup> Stendahl argued that Luther and the Reformers projected on to Paul, especially in Romans and Galatians, their own psycho-spiritual problems, born of Western introspection. He also offered a perspective on the Jew-Gentile relationship in Romans which fostered dialogue and reconciliation in a post-Holocaust world.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a re-birth of interest in the Bible as literature and the growth of some new approaches, including the study of semantics, chiasms, chain-linking and internal linguistic patterns. In the case of Romans, the best of this approach in English is exemplified in the work of Charles H. Talbert.<sup>58</sup> Among the most promising developments in biblical literary criticism is the identification of structures and their importance in the interpretive task. The present study hopes to make a contribution to ongoing research in that field with regard to Romans.

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<sup>56</sup> Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective. Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>57</sup> Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

<sup>58</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002).

Rhetorical criticism, pioneered in the case of Romans by Stanley K. Stowers, focused on Hellenistic diatribe as key to understanding the Letter.<sup>59</sup> Stowers' research into rhetorical features in Romans was further developed by Christopher D. Stanley, Stanley E. Porter, Thomas H. Tobin and others.<sup>60</sup> Disputing the value of 'rhetoricizing' Paul, Lauri Thurēn of the Academy of Finland presents an alternative approach and 'a bold new reading of Paul's Letters', which in essence means respecting "Paul's radical theology and his somewhat mystical ethics" combined with "a practical approach to the Law".<sup>61</sup> Feminist readings of Romans, pioneered by Elizabeth A. Castelli,<sup>62</sup> Elsa Tamez,<sup>63</sup> Rosemary Radford Reuther<sup>64</sup> and Ivone Gebara<sup>65</sup> are moving towards a consensus that recognizes Paul as a man of his time -

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<sup>59</sup> Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBL Dissertation Series, 1981.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, SNTS Monograph Series, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Arguing with Scripture*, (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004).

Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004).

<sup>61</sup> Lauri Thurēn, *Derhetoricizing Paul* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press Intl., 2000), 185.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation Series* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>63</sup> Elsa Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace: Justification by Faith from a Latin American Perspective* (Eugene, Or: WIPF & Stock, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> Rosemary Radford Reuther (Ed.), *Introducing Redemption in Christian Feminism* (London: Continuum, 1998).

<sup>65</sup> Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

patriarchal in his thinking which was reflective of the culture of his age, yet revolutionary in praxis – involving women as collaborators and apostles, advocating equality between male and female, slave and master. Significant advances in Pauline studies are attributable to Beverly Roberts Gaventa<sup>66</sup> and Kathy Ehrensperger.<sup>67</sup> The former opens a new furrow in feminist studies by tracing the feminine images of nurturing and childcare in Paul’s writings, while the latter concentrates on the links between identity and power traceable especially in Romans.

### **The New Perspective**

What has come to be known as The New Perspective in Pauline studies was initiated by an American scholar, E.P. Sanders in 1977 with the publication of a groundbreaking study, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.<sup>68</sup> This study, extending to 628 pages in the paperback edition, inaugurated a paradigm shift in Pauline studies,

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\_\_\_\_\_ *Out of the Depths. Women’s Experience of Evil and Salvation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

<sup>66</sup> Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother, Saint Paul* (Princeton: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

<sup>67</sup> Kathy Ehrensperger, *That we may be Mutually Encouraged: Feminism and the New Perspective in Pauline Studies* (New York/London: T. & T. Clark/Continuum, 2004).

Also Yeo Khiok-Khng, (ed.) “A Subversive Reading Of Paul” in *Navigating Romans Through Cultures: Challenging Readings by Charting a New Course*, (New York/London: T. & T. Clark, 2004).

<sup>68</sup> The title ‘New Perspective’ was not given to his work by Sanders. It was used for the first time by James D.G. Dunn in The Manson Memorial Lecture delivered in Manchester University, 4 November 1982.

particularly in the study of Romans and Galatians. Sanders noted a rather unfortunate legacy of Luther and the Reformers in their rediscovery of Paul: Judaism was portrayed as legalistic, works-reliant and grace-denying. Surveying a vast number of texts from the Hebrew Bible, Tannaitic literature, the Mishnah and other Jewish material, Sanders showed that the Judaism of the first century CE was a religion of covenant and response to God's grace. *Torah* was an affirmation of the love of God for Israel. Following its prescriptions was a means of 'staying in' that covenant relationship, never a way of earning entry into it. "There are two aspects of the relationship between grace and works: salvation is by grace but judgement is according to works; works are the condition of remaining 'in', but they do not earn salvation".<sup>69</sup> Part II of Sanders' study is devoted to showing that Paul is not antinomian. On the contrary, Sanders argues, Paul's discovery of Christ rather than dissatisfaction with his Jewish faith was what brought about his new understanding of grace and *Torah*.

The 'New Perspective Movement' found eager followers in James D.G. Dunn of Durham and his graduate student, N.T. Wright. Both have written extensively on Romans. The watershed work by W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*<sup>70</sup> follows Sanders in situating Paul within a Rabbinic context that is both formative and positive. He takes issue with Schweitzer's approach to Paul's mysticism, with 'the speculative character' of his eschatological doctrine and with

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<sup>69</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977), 543.

<sup>70</sup> W.D.Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Mifflintown, Pennsylvania: Sigler Press, 1948, 1955, 1980, 1998).



the ‘unsatisfying nature’ of his emphasis on ‘rising and dying with Christ’.<sup>71</sup> Davies is more critical of Schweitzer’s interpretation of Paul than of the New Perspective *per se*. But the present decade has seen a reaction against the New Perspective by American scholars like Seyoon Kim, as well as by Stephen Westerholm of McMaster University in Ontario.<sup>72</sup> The emergence of Pauline scholarship from a Jewish base has added significantly to current understanding of Paul’s relationship to his Jewish roots, which, in turn, illumines the New Perspective dialogue, and restores the disputed Chapters 9-11 to their rightful and integral place within the argument of Romans.<sup>73</sup>

While The New Perspective on Paul is no longer new and by no means a homogeneous phenomenon, it is still known by the acronym NPP and continues to generate lively debate. Whether it will rescue Romans from the stockpiles of controversy and confusion built up over centuries is difficult to predict. Don

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<sup>71</sup> Davies, *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>72</sup> Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective. Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002).

Stephen Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith* (Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 1998).

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Mark D. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Essay in Paulus Magazine, 2009; Alan Segal, *Paul, the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); “Paul and Judaism. Why not Paul’s Judaism?” in Mark Given, ed., *Paul Unbound. Other Perspectives on the Apostle* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010); *Paul and Judaism in Codex Pauli, 54-55*, 2009; Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007); Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul was not a Christian* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009).

Garlington, in an insightful essay entitled *The New Perspective on Paul: An Appraisal Two Decades On*<sup>74</sup> dares to ask if there is a future for NPP and hazards an answer: “Most definitely, as long as it is able to weigh the historical materials fairly and accurately, bridge the horizons between text and context, and especially as long as it endeavours to preserve the very lifeblood of Paul’s teaching of Christ – *in all things he is to have the pre-eminence* (Col 1:18)”.

The New Perspective has certainly contributed to a positive appreciation of Torah and the vital links between Covenant and the Law in Judaism and in Paul’s reception of his ancestral faith. It has endeavoured to interpret Paul in a way that is not offensive to Jews. More importantly, it has restored the focus of Paul’s argument in Romans to the somewhat neglected Chapters 9-11, where Paul is standing squarely within his Jewish tradition, yet re-interpreting that tradition in the light of the Christ-event.<sup>75</sup>

### **New Approaches**

Research on Romans as literature goes on apace at the present time. “Literary cues are surer guides to the structure of Romans than theologically-oriented topics”, says

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<sup>74</sup> Don Garlington, “The New Perspective on Paul: An Appraisal Two Decades On”, in *Studies in the New Perspective on Paul. Essays and Reviews* (Eugene OR: WIPF & Stock, 2008), 67.

<sup>75</sup> Brendan Byrne SJ, “Interpreting Romans: The New Perspective and Beyond” in *Interpretation*, Vol. 58. No 3, 241-252. Also Kevin B. McCrudden, “The New Perspective on Paul: A Post-New Perspective Consideration”: Paper presented at Annual Meeting of The Catholic Biblical Association, Omaha, Nebraska, August 2009.

Thomas H. Tobin.<sup>76</sup> A recent study by Raymond F. Collins has focused on imagery, particularly metaphor, as a key element in Paul's rhetorical strategy in Romans.<sup>77</sup> He writes, "Romans is a powerful rhetorical composition whose strategically placed metaphors enable Paul to achieve his purpose".<sup>78</sup> New approaches in narrative criticism, such as that of A. Katherine Grieb,<sup>79</sup> place emphasis on 'narrative within narrative'. She argues for a narrative reading of Romans that sets it within the wider narrative of God's faithfulness to Israel. The work of Richard N. Longenecker has opened up critical issues, for example, the importance of ancient epistolary and rhetorical conventions for an understanding of Paul's manner of proceeding in Romans.<sup>80</sup>

Anthropological and sociological readings of Romans continue to throw light on the social milieu in which Paul wrote,<sup>81</sup> while scholars like Neil Elliott advance our understanding of Roman imperial ideology as a factor to be reckoned with in any

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<sup>76</sup> Thomas H. Tobin, op.cit.3.

<sup>77</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> Raymond F. Collins, op. cit., 187.

<sup>79</sup> A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans. A Narrative Defence of God's Righteousness* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

<sup>80</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Jerome Neyrey, *Paul in Other Words. A Cultural Reading of his Letters* (Louisville, KY:John Knox Press, 1998).

reading of Paul's Letter to Christians in Rome.<sup>82</sup> Comparative studies, such as that by David R. Wallace,<sup>83</sup> demonstrate the influence of classical Greco-Roman writings such as Virgil's *Aeneid* on Paul, and dares to view Romans as Paul's own *Aeneid*.

### **Structural Criticism**

Structural criticism, a branch of linguistics, together with its offshoot, semiotics, owe their origin to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Transferred to the field of biblical literature, structural criticism and its ally, delimitation criticism,<sup>84</sup> together illuminate linguistic processes and structures, both oral and written, as indicators and carriers of meaning. Among the most illuminating studies of literary structure as vital key to interpretation is that of Bruce W. Longenecker.<sup>85</sup> Dealing with chain-lock interlink as a recognised feature of biblical writing, he chooses four sample texts from Romans (7:25; 10:16-17; 12:15-16; 13:13-14) and shows how they function structurally in the Letter as a whole. The monumental literary and theological study by Romans by Charles H. Talbert<sup>86</sup> continues to generate scholarly interest, while

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<sup>82</sup> Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations. Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> David R. Wallace, *The Gospel of God. Romans as Paul's Aeneid* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2008).

<sup>84</sup> M.C. Korpel and Josef M. Oesch, *Delimitation Criticism. A New Tool in Biblical Studies* (NL: Van Gorcum, 2000).

<sup>85</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of New Testament Chain-link Transitions* (Baylor University Press: Waco TX, 2005).

<sup>86</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 2002).

recent commentaries by Robert Jewett,<sup>87</sup> Frank Matera<sup>88</sup> and Arland J. Hultgren<sup>89</sup> incorporate in their work the best of contemporary approaches.

### **Contemporary Emphasis on Literary Structure**

There are as many approaches to Romans as literature as there are scholars and interested readers. Biblical literary studies in recent decades have appropriated many of the insights provided by structural literary criticism in non-biblical fields, and have used these to advantage in providing avenues to the inner structure of biblical writings, because ‘the meaning is in the structure.’<sup>90</sup> The inner supporting structure in any literary work, when discovered, provides a key to the flow of thought in the literary body as a whole and, consequently, provides a reliable avenue to interpretation.

With the advent of structural literary criticism in the twentieth century, several avenues were tested and tried with regard to Romans, each with its own particular emphasis and methodology. For many, the first step was to determine the *genre* of Romans. Is it an extended letter, an ambassadorial tract, a dressed-up homily or something else?

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<sup>87</sup> Robert B. Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. Hermeneia. A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, 2000).

<sup>88</sup> Frank J. Matera, *Romans. A Commentary* (Paideia: Commentary on the New Testament, 2010).

<sup>89</sup> Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2011)

<sup>90</sup> Dean B. Deppe. *All Roads lead to the Text* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2011), 90.

## **An Analysis of Some Sample Structural Divisions**

J. A. Fitzmyer, for example, while agreeing with Martin L. Stirewalt<sup>91</sup> in treating Romans as a 'Letter-Essay', argues that the structure is composed of two main sections, doctrinal (1:16-11:36) and hortatory (12:1- 15:13), with an Introduction (1:1-15) and a tripartite Epilogue (15:14-33; 16:1-23 and 16:24-27).<sup>92</sup> Three subdivisions in the doctrinal section (1:16-4:25; 5:1-8:39; 9:1-11:36) and two in the hortatory section (12:1-13:14; 14:1- 15:13) make for a coherent framework within which to analyse constituent textual detail. Grammatical studies, etymology, linguistics, analysis of phrases, clausal analysis and the history of textual analysis - all play their part in Fitzmyer's exegesis of Romans as a two-part Letter-Essay. His monumental work on Romans reigns supreme among such classic studies.

## **Diatribal Cues: Traditional Divisions**

Other contemporary scholars working in the literary field who give their attention to *genre* include Robert Jewett, Ben Witherington III, and Thomas H. Tobin. Jewett views Romans as an example of Greco-Roman rhetoric, and exegetes accordingly.<sup>93</sup> For him, Romans is best understood as a sequence of Exordium (1:1-12); Narratio (1:13-15); Propositio (1:16-17) Probatio (1:18-15:13) and Peroratio (15:14-16:27).

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<sup>91</sup> Martin L. Stirewalt, *Paul the Letter-writer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK:Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>92</sup> J.A. Fitzmyer, S. J. *The Letter to the Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB No. 33. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

<sup>93</sup> Jewett, Robert. *Romans. A Commentary*. Hermeneia Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

His approach, like that of Thomas H. Tobin<sup>94</sup> and Ben Witherington III,<sup>95</sup> gives a credible reading of Romans as constructed around a Greco-Roman thesis and a set of proofs. These proofs, for Ben Witherington III and colleague, D. Hyatt, are distilled in twelve arguments, while Jewett reduces these to four. For an appreciation of such a rhetorical approach to Romans as literature one would have to be convinced that the *genre* of Romans as a whole falls into the category of Greco-Roman diatribe. Not all scholars are so convinced. Thomas H. Tobin takes a median position, naming only the first eleven chapters of Romans as diatribe and the remainder as Exhortation (12:1-15:7) and Conclusion (15:8 -16:27). In dealing with Romans 9-11 as part of the diatribe, he admits that he finds that unit ‘structurally isolated.’<sup>96</sup> In a word, the complexity of Romans is not respected in its totality by those who try to make it fit neatly into Greco-Roman diatribal patterns.

### **Romans as Literature: C.H. Talbert**

While all approaches are intended to lead the reader into the text, and each method offers something of value, there is quite a notable difference between the approaches taken by those who engage with Romans as diatribe from the perspective of rhetorical criticism (for example, Robert Jewett, Thomas H. Tobin and Ben Witherington III) and others, like Charles H. Talbert, Luke Timothy Johnson and

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<sup>94</sup> Tobin, Thomas H. *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans*. Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

<sup>95</sup> Witherington III, Ben, with D. Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Tobin, 254.

Brendan Byrne who engage with Romans as a unique example of a Pauline ‘Ambassadorial Letter’. For them, Romans contains some features characteristic of the Greco-Roman formal letter, but it also stands unique as literature. Brendan Byrne writes, “Romans is so complex that no one literary classification describes it.”<sup>97</sup>

Talbert’s monumental work addresses the question of structure from a modern literary perspective. He argues that ancient rhetorical categories, ‘woodenly applied’, are not adequate in dealing with the Pauline epistles.<sup>98</sup> Seeing Romans as one extended argument about the Righteousness of God, he makes structural divisions as follows:

1:1-7: Salutation

1:8-15: Prayer Form

1:16-17: Thesis

1:18 - 8:39: God justifies

9:1-11:36: God is Righteous

12:1-15:13: God’s Righteousness in Human Behaviour

15:14-16:27: Letter Closing

These are, for the most part, conventional divisions. What is distinctive about Talbert’s reading of Romans is that he sub-divides the first part of the argument (1:18-8:32) at 5:11, placing 5:12-21 with Chapters 6-8. This gives a puzzling double sub-structure, with identical titles on both divisions:

1:18-5:11: From the human condition to God’s remedy, to the role of the Law, to

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<sup>97</sup> Brendan Byrne. *Romans* (SP6; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 16.

<sup>98</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 14.



ultimate salvation

5:12-8:39: From the human condition to God's remedy, to the role of the Law, to ultimate salvation.<sup>99</sup>

Talbert follows Leenhardt in making this structural division<sup>100</sup> and argues for the logic of it from Paul's world view regarding covenant. He writes, "When Paul thought of ways of relating to God, he thought in terms of covenants in the Jewish Scriptures. The covenant with Abraham was a paradigm for him of a relation to God based on God's promises/grace. The Mosaic covenant was for him a paradigm of a relation to God based on human performance/works (= law, whose purpose was works/righteousness)."<sup>101</sup> In the first structural division (1:18-5:11), according to Talbert, Paul is arguing *against* a works/righteousness relationship with God (Mosaic covenant), while in the second structural division (5:12-8:39), using the same processes and progressions, he is arguing *for* a promises/grace relationship as exemplified in the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>102</sup>

While 'covenant thinking' is integral to Romans, the argument for a structural division based on covenants is not entirely convincing, for two reasons: firstly, because there is overlap of covenantal reference in both divisions (for example, reference to the Mosaic law in 3:21-26 and to Abrahamic Law in 9:6-13); and, secondly, because Paul, in Romans, never repudiates the Mosaic law, but affirms its

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<sup>99</sup> Talbert, 129-134.

<sup>100</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: World Publishing, 1961), 24-25.

<sup>101</sup> Talbert, 255-256.

<sup>102</sup> Talbert, 45, 130-131.

place in relation to Christ (Christ is the *τελος* of the Law, 10:4). For Paul, Christ is the terminus of Abrahamic law (Romans 4) and also of Sinaitic Law (Romans 10-11).<sup>103</sup>

However, there may be some valid reasons for Talbert's and Leenhardt's structural divisions, if understood as modelled on Greco-Roman rhetoric, which valued patterns of repetition as a necessary way of reinforcing or emphasising a particular viewpoint or message.<sup>104</sup> Saying the same thing twice simply meant that it was doubly important! Talbert claims that the vocabulary of Romans 5:1-11 has greater affinity with that of Chapters 1-4 than with Chapters 5-8. This he illustrates by reference to the frequency of verbs/nouns relating to 'boasting' (5:3, 11; also 2:17, 23; 3:27; 4:2) and to 'justifying' (5:1, 9; but also 2:13; 3:4; 4:2-5, 20, 25). From this position Talbert sub-titles the structural unit Rom 5:1-11 as 'The Ground of Future Hope',<sup>105</sup> but then labels the succeeding unit (5:12-21) as 'The Human Condition and its Antidote.'<sup>106</sup> This would seem to be a reversal of Paul's logic. Even though Talbert argues that Romans 5:1-11 belongs structurally with Chapters

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<sup>103</sup> Paul, according to Talbert, valued certain covenants and not others, making no mention of the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:8-17), Phinehas (Num 25:10-13), Joshua (Josh 24), Josiah (2 Kgs 23) and Ezra (Ezra 9-10). Just three covenants receive significant attention in the Pauline world view: the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Moses and the new covenant of Jeremiah 31.

<sup>104</sup> According to Athanasius, early Christian authors valued repetition. "Do not be surprised if we repeat the same words on the same subject...for it is better to submit to the blame of repetition, than to leave out anything that ought to be set down"(Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, No. 20).

<sup>105</sup> Talbert, 129.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

1-4, especially in terms of the ‘boasting’ vocabulary, it would seem that he places 5:1-11 with Chapter 8 in terms of thought content, as most commentators do.

### **Thematic Cues: Luke Timothy Johnson**

Luke Timothy Johnson charts a new path in focusing on key themes in Romans and on how these are structurally and stylistically interconnected. His commentary on Romans<sup>107</sup> includes some distinctive features, such as his reading of the ubiquitous phrase ‘righteousness by faith’ as ‘the faith of Jesus Christ’. This enables a reading of Romans and of the role of faith wider than that proposed in traditional Reformation theology. For Johnson the theology of Romans comes from an integrated reading of a number of recurring themes – the faith (and faithfulness) of Jesus Christ; salvation as inclusion in God’s chosen people and the role of the Holy Spirit as transformer of human consciousness.

Johnson respects conventional structural divisions, but he employs some arresting titles for those divisions, such as ‘God’s Fairness revealed in Jesus’ Faith’ (3:21-31) and ‘The Transformation of Moral Consciousness’ (12:1-13:14). To translate *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* as ‘God’s Fairness’, while appealing, is not totally accurate. It does not respect the complexity of the Greek term as Paul used it.<sup>108</sup>

Johnson’s structural divisions are as follows:

1. The good News of God’s Righteousness (1:17)

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<sup>107</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001).

<sup>108</sup> For a discussion of some of the problems faced in translating the Greek phrase into English, see Chapter 4.

2. Faithless Humanity and the Power of Sin (1:18-3:20)
3. God's Fairness revealed in Jesus' Faith (3:21-31)
4. How Faith works: The Example of Abraham (4:1-25)
5. God's Gift in Christ Jesus (5:1-21)
6. Answering Objections: Grace, Sin and Law (6:1-7:25)
7. Life in the Spirit (8:1-39)
8. God's Plan for the Salvation of Jew and Gentile (9:1-11:36)
9. The Transformation of Moral Consciousness (12:1-13:14)
10. Righteousness in the Christian Community (14:1-15:13)
11. Paul's Plan and Appeal (15:14-16:27)

Among the most interesting sections of Johnson's commentary on Romans are those dealing specifically with the nature of Christian faith as portrayed by Paul in Romans, especially in Chapters 3-5 and 12-13.<sup>109</sup> Analysing 'The Structure of Faith' (Rom 4:18-25), Johnson concludes that "the inner structure of faith is a response to the living God who challenges humanity with surprising revelations of presence and power."<sup>110</sup> Torah itself reveals how righteousness is established by faith, which explains why Paul can state that 'faith establishes Torah' (Rom 3:31). Romans 5 is read as an analysis of the nature of faith: God's Gift in Christ Jesus (Rom 5:1-21); the Gift that has been given and received (Rom 5:1-5); God's Reconciling Action (Rom 5:6-11); Faith and the Reign of Sin (Rom 5:12-14); Obedience and Disobedience (Rom 5:15-21). Describing lived faith as 'the transformation of moral consciousness' Johnson brings a fresh insight to reading Romans 12-13.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 83-99.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 81

## Chain-link Transitions: The Contribution of Bruce W. Longenecker

The contribution of Bruce W. Longenecker to understanding literary processes in New Testament texts, particularly Acts, Johannine writings and Paul, is considerable. The discovery made by him is that ancient rhetorical devices, such as chain-link transitions, provide clues to a valid reading of some texts, including Romans. In Chapter 6 of his latest work, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries*<sup>111</sup> he addresses the question of Chain-link Transitions and the Logic of Romans.

Choosing four examples from Romans (7:25; 10:16-17; 12:15-16; 13:13-14) Longenecker dismisses the claims made by Dodd, Käsemann, Bultmann and others that interpolations (glosses which found their way into the body of the handwritten text, through editorial negligence or error) can explain the seeming ‘tumbling’ rhetoric in these texts, where anticipatory and retrospective features of Paul’s arguments appear to be inverted. Longenecker argues that the ancient technique of chain-link transition, best exemplified in the work of Lucian of Samosata<sup>112</sup> in the second century CE and other writers in antiquity, is used by Paul to signify transitions in a particular manner suited to an oral/aural culture. The logic of Romans, he insists, is not disturbed by such chain-link transitions. Instead, it is strengthened, because Paul is showing himself to be an effective rhetor, master of the art of argument-building while, at the same time, respecting the reception modalities of his audience. Longenecker writes, “The Roman Christians to whom Paul was

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<sup>111</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, *Rhetoric at the Boundaries. The Art and Theology of New Testament Chain-link Transitions* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2005).

<sup>112</sup> *Luciani Samosatensis Opera*. Trans, C. Jacobita (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887).

writing ...would likely have readily recognized the rhetorical technique, and been assisted by it in their aural reception of the letter.”<sup>113</sup>

One concrete example of chain-link transition at work *structurally* in Romans is provided by the text of 7:24-25. The discourse of despair with which Chapter 7 ends, is interrupted by the untimely “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord” and then continues with a reference to two-fold slavery – to the Law and to sin. The last two verses of Romans 7 read as follows:

“Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So then, with my mind I am a slave to the Law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.” (7:24-25).

To the casual reader of that text, 7:24b (“Thanks be to God...Lord”) seems curiously out of place. A victorious note does not fit between two notes of despair.

Longenecker argues (against C.H. Dodd, Käsemann, Stuhlmacher, Bultmann and others) that Paul has not overtaken his own argument in enthusiastic outburst, but that he is deliberately using an ancient literary, anticipatory device to alert his audience to what is to come in 8:1 and following verses. That literary device is chain-link transitioning. It is not a linear mode of arguing but a back-and-forth (chain-link) manner of keeping an oral/aural audience involved. Longenecker illustrates the movement of 7:25 as follows<sup>114</sup> :

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<sup>113</sup> Bruce. W. Longenecker, Op.cit. 102.

<sup>114</sup> Bruce W. Longenecker, Op Cit., 91

|                  |                                   |                                    |                  |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| TEXT-UNIT<br>“A” | INTERLOCKED<br>“b” (anticipatory) | INTERLOCKED<br>“a” (retrospective) | TEXT-UNIT<br>“B” |
| Rom 7:7-25       | Rom 7:25a                         | Rom 7:25b                          | Rom 8:1-39       |

The anticipatory phrase, though seemingly out of place, is in reality a signal to the audience that a change of some sort is to be expected. In this case it comes in force with chapter 8.

Longenecker’s discovery, interesting as it is, does not have a direct bearing on the present study, which addresses the broad, overall structure of Romans rather than structural details within the text. It does not contradict any of the proposed structural divisions proposed here, and may indeed add strength to some. For example, the cited chain-link transition at 7:24-25 emphasises the validity of dealing with Chapter 8 as a dyad within the overall structure of Romans. It introduces a surprising note of newness, which is heralded in the chain-link structure of 7:24-25.

However, the relevance of Longenecker’s contribution within the broad field of literary criticism must be acknowledged. His discovery that Paul makes use of the ancient literary device of chain-linking could well prove crucial in the interpretation of ‘troublesome’ texts. If it does no more than to challenge some flimsy interpolation theories with a viable alternative, it will have made a significant contribution to biblical studies, not least to studies of Romans.

## **Aim of the present study**

In any analysis of a literary work, structure emerges as a privileged key to meaning. Paul's Letter to the Romans is a complex and multi-faceted work of literary art. Of necessity, the meaning of the Letter as a literary work is linked to literary structure or structures. Any unravelling of obstinate 'knots' or controversial texts in the interests of discovering the message or messages of Romans as a whole must be dependent on identifying key structures and literary cues.<sup>115</sup> The present study hopes to analyse, in some detail, one literary structure in Romans that promises to open a door to the Letter's meaning. That structure is vitally linked to Paul's way of communicating<sup>116</sup> and to established paradigms in biblical literature. The following Chapters will address these issues in further detail.

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<sup>115</sup> "There are literary cues in Romans that would have guided his Roman Christian audience in understanding the structure of Paul's arguments." (Tobin, p. 84). Many possible literary cues are indicated in recurring semantic patterns, shown colour-coded in the Greek Supplement which accompanies this work. Other literary cues, such as chiasmic patterns, chain-linking, metaphors, metonymy and repetition are treated within the detailed analyses in Chapters 4-7.

<sup>116</sup> See, for example, Paul's 'narrative reasoning' as treated by Ian W. Scott, *Paul's Way of Knowing* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 159-165.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Literary Structure as an Important Clue in Biblical Interpretation

#### The Greco-Roman Letter-form – The Diatribe – Structural divisions – Literary structure as a key to meaning – Examples from Old Testament and New Testament – Demarcation of literary units – Challenges involved.

One of the pivotal clues in understanding any literary work, whether in prose or poetry, is the identification of one or more basic underlying structures in the work.<sup>117</sup>

A short poem, for instance, may have only one obvious structure, while a complex and lengthy letter-essay like Romans<sup>118</sup> may feature several important structures,

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<sup>117</sup> Structure, as it applies to biblical literature, has been understood in various ways. The three main approaches employed by scholars in analysing structure are (i) structural exegesis (ii) discourse analysis and (iii) rhetorical criticism. “For structural exegesis, ‘structure’ is basically understood as ‘the underlying deep structure’ underneath the textual phenomena; for discourse analysis, ‘structure’ is understood either as the ‘inter-connection’ between constituents in the textuality or as the ‘interaction’ between participants in language use; while for rhetorical criticism, ‘structure’ can be understood as the ‘rhetorical strategy’ adopted in the text, or in oration.” See K.W. Peng, “Literary Structure” in Marjo C.A. Korpel & Josef M. Oesch, eds., *Studies in Scriptural Unit Division*, Volume III (Assen NL: Van Gorcum, 2002), 7-9. For the purposes of this study, all three approaches will be employed.

<sup>118</sup> In this I am following J.A. Fitzmyer, Raymond E. Brown and M.L. Stirewalt in categorizing Romans as a “letter-essay”. David E. Aune and Richard N. Longenecker opt for ‘protreptic message’ (λόγος προτρεπτικός) within a letter-framework. See Aune, David E. “Romans as a λόγος προτρεπτικός” in Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (1991), 278-296; Longenecker, Richard N.

each in some way vital to the architecture of the whole. This study proposes to follow the admonition of Thomas H. Tobin,<sup>119</sup> that literary cues are surer guides than theologically-oriented pointers, by examining in some depth one literary structure in Romans which appears to be foundational, namely that of bipartite/tripartite literary units (labelled dyads or triads here) which function dialogically/trialogically, yet complementarily, throughout the Letter.<sup>120</sup>

### **The Greco-Roman Letter Form**

It must be stated at the outset that several types of literary structure are identifiable in Romans, the most obvious being that of the Greco-Roman letter-structure which Paul respects in its essentials. The Letter opens with typical *Prescript* (1:1-7) and *Proemium* (1:8-15) and it closes with an Epilogue (15:14 – 16:27). The body of the Letter follows in broad outline the established Greco-Roman pattern, but the ‘body’ in Romans becomes a lengthy doctrinal section (1:16 -11:36) followed by a shorter

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*Introducing Romans. Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (2011), 386.

See J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*. AB 33 (New York/London: Doubleday, 1992), 90.

Also M.L. Stirewalt, *Paul, the Letter-writer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 10.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul’s Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 3. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor OP, *Paul, the Letter-writer. His World. His Options. His Skills* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1995). Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (New York/London: T & T. Clark Intl., 2004).

<sup>120</sup> See Table 4. Of the ten structural blocs identified, nine are bipartite and one, representing the high point of Paul’s argument (Rom 9-11) is tripartite.

hortatory section (12:1–15:13). The length and complexity of the doctrinal section in Romans mark it as notably distinct from other letters in the Pauline corpus. Much has been written on Paul as letter-writer and on the Greco-Roman letter-model as structural underpinning of Pauline correspondence.<sup>121</sup>

### **Diatribes and Structural divisions**

Likewise, there are numerous studies available on the scholastic diatribe as a defining feature of Romans, particularly of Rom 1-11. Stanley Kent Stowers, Thomas H. Tobin, Ben Witherington III and Robert Jewett among others<sup>122</sup> have demonstrated that Romans can best be understood as a diatribe, or as a document incorporating elements of both Jewish and Greco-Roman models, with corresponding structural divisions of *Prescript* (1:1-7); *Exordium* and *Narratio* (1:8-15); *Propositio* (1:16-17); *Expositio*, or series of arguments with refutations (1:18-15:14); and *Peroratio* with concluding greetings (15:15-16:27). There are as many

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<sup>121</sup> Thomas H. Tobin SJ, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004). Also Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>122</sup> Stanley Kent Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*. SBL Dissertation Series. No. 57 (Scholars Press, 1979). Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004; Ben Witherington with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004); Robert Jewett, *Romans. A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

See Appendix (i) for some twenty examples of structural divisions of Romans, as proposed by commentators.

proposals as there are commentaries on structural divisions within the Letter that clarify, in various ways, Paul's line of argument.<sup>123</sup>

### **Literary Structure as a key to Interpretation**

What is proposed in this study is quite different. It will deal with the text of Romans as literature, seeking to identify literary cues that point towards literary structures.

These, in turn, offer unique keys to a satisfactory interpretation of Romans which, it is hoped, is also an accurate one. Udo Schnelle argues convincingly for the importance of form and structure as pointer to the meaning of Romans. He writes:

“Ein erster hinweis auf den denkerischen Anspruch des Römerbriefes ist seine Form”.<sup>124</sup> The scope of this thesis is limited to identifying within the Letter one structure which seems to be foundational throughout, and to examining in some

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<sup>123</sup> The terms ‘form’ and ‘structure’, as applied to literature, are not identical, though the terms are often used interchangeably. The form of Romans may be loosely described as the wrapping in which it appears, namely that of an extended letter, while the structure is the complex system of linguistic patterns by which the letter is organised. In practice, form and structure overlap, since what one says or writes cannot be separated from how one says or writes it. The message or messages contained in any literary work, therefore, come in a particular form, just as a book may be published in a particular form (size and design of page, paperback or hardback, illustrated or plain) but it is the internal structure, often indicated by titles, sub-titles or chapter divisions, which will provide keys to what the author is really trying to communicate.

For some samples of classical structural divisions in Romans, see Appendix I.

<sup>124</sup> Udo Schnelle, “Der Römerbrief und die Aporien des Paulinischen Denkens”, in Udo Schnelle, ed., *The Letter to the Romans* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 8.

detail the functioning and significance of that structure as a privileged key to a valid reading of Romans.

## **Paradigmatic Examples of the functioning and significance of biblical literary**

### **‘Panels’**

#### **1. New Testament**

There are precedents in studies of both New Testament and Old Testament for identifying literary ‘panels’ and bipartite/tripartite structures as significant pointers to meaning. Of the New Testament studies, that by Raymond E. Brown on the Infancy Narratives in Luke is paradigmatic.<sup>125</sup> Brown points out in tabulated form that the early chapters in Luke present clearly two annunciations - one diptych of conceptions in two panels (Lk 1:5-25 and 1:26- 56) and a birth diptych, also comprising two panels (Lk 1:57-80 and 2:1-40). This has implications for how the author intended both John the Baptist and Jesus to be portrayed and understood. Using the literary device of type-scene, as found in Greek epic portrayals of hero-figures, it conveys significant parallels and dissimilarities in the two episodes as well as complementarities and contrasts. In this way it illustrates almost pictorially the existing relationship between the two *dramatis personae*, thus providing a powerful pointer towards interpretation of the entire Infancy Narrative.

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<sup>125</sup> Raymond E. Brown SS, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York/London: Doubleday, 1997), 225-237, especially Table 3.

## 2. Old Testament

Lawrence Boadt has shown the importance of ‘panels’ in the structure of Psalms 73-78.<sup>126</sup> He has pointed out that the psalmists worked, not with isolated lines of poetry or even with strophes, but with ‘panels’ which served to advance the dynamic movement of the poetic work. From a study of the Asaph collection, Boadt established that ‘panels’ are not to be confused with strophes or stanzas in Hebrew poetry and that ‘panels’ usually work in pairs, functioning contrastively.<sup>127</sup> Double ‘panels’ can also work side by side with triple ‘panels’ within the same psalm. Boadt pays tribute to the pioneering work of Marc Girard, Pierre Auffret and Harry Nasuti in addressing the issue of structure in Hebrew poetic literature.<sup>128</sup>

The seminal work of Thomas L. Brodie in demonstrating that a unified artistic strategy, based on a series of diptychs, can be identified in Genesis goes a long way towards removing some of the hermeneutical conundrums associated with

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<sup>126</sup> Lawrence Boadt, “The Use of ‘Panels’ in the Structure of Psalms 73-78”, *CBQ*, Vol 66, October 2004, 533-550.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 549.

<sup>128</sup> Marc Girard, *Les Psaumes redécouverts: De la Structure au Sens*, Vol 1, 1-50; Vol 2, 51-100; Vol 3: 101-150 (Quebec: Editions Bellarmin), 1<sup>st</sup> Ed 1984; rev. ed. 1996; Pierre Auffret, “Que seulement de tes yeux tu regardes... étude structurelle de treize psaumes.” (BZAW 330; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2003).

Harry Nasuti, *Tradition, History and the Psalms of Asaph* (SBLDS 88; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

that book.<sup>129</sup> He points out that the entire underlying structure of Genesis is dialogical and that the book can best be read and interpreted as twenty-six artistically organised diptychs which bear the weight of the narrative from beginning to end. Furthermore he identifies a literary pattern within the sequence where the high point of the author's theology corresponds with the central diptych (Gen 24:1-25:18) and the place of Rebekah as revelation of God's *hesed*, or merciful graciousness. In this case literary structure serves as a pivotal clue to a plausible reading of Genesis that is respectful of the artistic unity of the work as a whole.

Robert Alter deals with the crucial role of parallelism in the presentation of the stories of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38).<sup>130</sup> He argues that dialogical positioning functions structurally in this section of Genesis. Furthermore, Alter asserts that "one of the chief difficulties we encounter as modern readers in perceiving the artistry of biblical narrative is precisely that we have lost most of the keys to the conventions out of which it was shaped".<sup>131</sup> He contends that all biblical narrative is in some sense dialogical and that "the biblical writers had certain notions of unity rather different from our own".<sup>132</sup> His analysis of the Balaam oracle in Numbers 24 demonstrates the compositional skill of the biblical author in linking, through "a

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<sup>129</sup> Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue. A Literary, Historical and Theological Commentary* (Oxford/New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

<sup>130</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

montage of viewpoints arranged in a sequence”, the notions of blindness, vision and prophecy.<sup>133</sup>

Alter’s insights into the functioning of leitmotif and metonymy in the biblical narrative are groundbreaking, with huge implications for hermeneutics and for literary criticism at every level. Applied to Romans, they are illuminative. It is Alter’s considered view that (in the Bible) “the primacy of dialogue is so pronounced that many pieces of third-person narration prove on inspection to be dialogue-bound, verbally mirroring elements of dialogue which precede them or which they introduce.”<sup>134</sup> If this is true, as I believe it is, it presents an enormous challenge to all who wish to read and interpret a biblical text profitably. Regarding Romans it is particularly pertinent.

Claus Westermann, in dealing with Genesis 1-11, asks “whether these large blocks of material which are heaped together without any apparent connection are more closely united than appears at first glance”.<sup>135</sup> He proceeds to show how the material in Genesis 1-11 has been carefully constructed around themes of creation, sin and punishment. Two creation narratives (1:1 -2:4a and 2:4b-25), two narratives of sin (3:1-24 and 4:1-16) and two punishment narratives (6:5-24 and 11:1-9) serve to present in dialogical format the kernel of the author’s theological message. The

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.,154.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>135</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis. An Introduction*. Trans. J.J. Scullion SJ (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 19.



functioning of this pattern is discernible elsewhere in Genesis, as indeed elsewhere in the Bible and in Mesopotamian and other Near-Eastern literature<sup>136</sup>.

Examples could be multiplied of this key phenomenon (bipartite and tripartite structures) in biblical literature, which has been shown to provide important clues to meaning. Paul's Letter to the Romans offers an ideal field in which to explore the working and significance of such structures.

### **Demarcation of Literary Units**

The first task in this interpretive process involves the identification and demarcation of individual literary units. This is not as easy as it seems for those of us who have been reliant on the verse notation, paragraph and chapter divisions attributed to Stephen Langton (c.1150 -1228). Because most ancient writing, including New Testament writing, was destined for oral delivery and for aural reception, its compositional structure was reflective of human capacity to appropriate meaningful units. If, as is claimed in the Epilogue (Rom 16:22), the entire Letter as dictated material was written by Tertius and delivered by Phoebe, it is logical to claim linkage between aural conceptual blocs and what appears as written text, though proving such links is work for another day. We do know something of the piecemeal manner in which Plinius dictated his letters, and this may be instructive when trying to understand the claims made about dictation/writing in Greco-Roman times.<sup>137</sup> In

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<sup>136</sup> For example, Genesis 28/35; Exodus 14/15; Numbers 1:20-47/4:34-49; Judges 4/5; Atrahasis 9/12.

<sup>137</sup> Writing about his system of producing letters, Plinius writes: "I think over the work in hand, think it over word for word as if I were to write it down, then improve on it more or less depending on how I see it written and received. Then I call my secretary, let in the daylight, and dictate to him what I

honouring the scribal conventions of the time, an amanuensis would have transferred the material on to a scroll, using blank spaces, high, median or low dots and glosses of differing kinds in the margins to indicate the endings of sentences, paragraphs and what we now call chapters.<sup>138</sup>

Since form and content are closely allied in speech as in the written word, it is vital to establish, as far as possible, the delimiters of text units before attempting to analyse inter-unit relationships.<sup>139</sup> In Romans at times it is relatively easy to ascertain unit limits, as for example, in the Prologue, where two complementary ‘panels’ are clearly discernible. At other times, where several plausible delimitations are feasible, it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to establish literary units with which all scholars will agree. This is another way of saying what has been known for centuries - that interpreting Romans is extremely challenging. The best that one can hope for in a literary study such as this is a reasonably accurate identification of dyadic/triadic literary units, and an analysis of the functioning of these units leading

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have developed. He goes away (to write), will be recalled later and then sent away once more” (Plinius, *Epistulae IX*, 3. My translation of Footnote 18 as given in Udo Schnelle, *Röm und die Aporien des Paulinischen Denkens* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 8.

<sup>138</sup> W. M. De Bruin, “Interpreting Delimiters: The Complexity of Text Delimitation” in Marjo C.A. Korpel & Josef M. Oesch, eds., *Studies in Scriptural Unit Division*, Volume III (Assen NL: Van Gorcum, 2002), 66-77, 85-89.

<sup>139</sup> Johann Cook writes: “Form and content are two sides of the same coin. The understanding of ancient texts therefore commences with the delimitation of text units”. See his article, “Unit Delimitation in the Book of Proverbs” in Korpel & Oesch, op. cit., 46.

to an interpretation which takes account of most, if not all of the data, while situating it within the broader literary landscape of biblical artistry.

Any satisfactory interpretation of Romans must take account of the complexity of Paul's thought, while respecting the integrity of the letter-essay as literary creation. This study will focus chiefly on one identifiable underlying structure as a pivotal key. It will not deny the existence or importance of other structures. This method of proceeding will, it is hoped, honour the complexity of the text without 'flattening' it, while setting Romans within a broader biblical literary perspective than has been attempted in the past.

### **Respecting Unity and Complexity**

Respecting both the unity and complexity of Romans as a literary work is not a straightforward task. Many attempts in the past have sacrificed one on the altar of the other. The literary unity of Romans has often been overlooked by focusing on one important topic, for example, 'justification by faith' as understood by Martin Luther or 'participation in Christ' as put forward by Albert Schweitzer, while implying that Romans as a whole is 'about' such topics or may be interpreted as revolving around them. This is as dangerous as claiming that a part equals the whole. For example, the topic of justification by faith, important though it is in the overall context of Romans, occupies chiefly just one section of the Letter - the section represented by Chapters 5-8. 'Participationist' theories, such as those proposed by Schweitzer and others, rely chiefly on chapters 7 and 8 for validation. While acknowledging the immense debt we owe to Luther and Schweitzer and others for casting light on important aspects of Romans, it must be stated that their readings do not take

account satisfactorily of all of the data in the Letter, which leaves one wondering why Paul bothered to write a Letter with inert passages here and there!

What is needed is a mechanism by which the whole of Romans, as a literary work, is respected. It is well-known that theories of interpolation, of which there are several, have done little to solve the problem of making sense of Romans.<sup>140</sup> Where a given text seems out of harmony with its wider context (as, for example in the case of Romans 13:1-7), excision has not always proved to be the best answer. A plethora of theories surrounding the ending of Romans has not really solved the Romans problem: Does the letter really end at 16:27 or at 15:13 or 15:6? Where were those ‘final’ doxologies situated originally? Or were they in Romans at all? And, if they do not belong in Romans, who is their author?

### **Towards an organic reading of Romans**

While not denying the importance of detailed scholarly engagement with the ‘troublesome’ texts in Romans, this study will focus on getting a clearer picture of the Letter as a whole. As scholarship continues to run aground on the rocks of textual disputes, it is important to keep, simultaneously, the bigger picture in view. The hope will be that, within a larger framework, ‘troublesome’ texts may appear in a different guise, thus facilitating further work on proverbial textual conundrums like the following: In what sense ‘first’ - ‘Jews first, then Greeks’, *Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρώτον καὶ*

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<sup>140</sup> A sample list of such interpolations is given by Richard Longenecker, *Introducing Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2011), 16-17. The following and others have been suggested as glosses/interpolations in Romans: 1:19-21, 32; 2:1, 16, 17; 3:10-18, 24-26; 4:1, 17, 18-19; 5:1, 6-7, 17; 7:6, 25; 8:1; 9:5; 10:9, 17; 11:6; 12:11; 13:1-7; 14:6; 16:5, 24, 25-27.

Ἑλληνι (1:16)?; is the Righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεου ) revealed through ‘faith in Christ’ (subjective genitive) or through the ‘faithfulness’ of Christ (objective genitive), in 3:22 - (δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) ?; in what sense is Christ the ‘end’ or ‘goal’ of the Law (τέλος νόμου) 10:4)?; what is the meaning of ‘all Israel’ in 11:26 (καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται)?

Examples could be multiplied. While the issues involved may be crucially important to aspects of Paul’s message in the Letter, there is little hope of a scholarly consensus on those issues in the near future. On the contrary, there is the likelihood of enduring stalemate. Meanwhile, one is entitled to ask if there is there another way forward, a way of looking at Romans as a whole, respecting the contentious issues while refusing to allow them to become stumbling blocks on the road to a reasonable interpretation of the Letter as a whole. I believe that there is such a way. And it has not been tried to date.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Scriptural Unit Division: Methods and Criteria to be employed**

**Parameters of this study - Methodology explained - Criteria employed in the delimitation of literary units – Sample preliminary exercise in scriptural unit division – Preliminary observations regarding the structure of Romans.**

Since the focus of this study is on Romans as a literary entity, the emphasis will be on establishing and analysing literary cues with a view to discovering how these can act as pointers to a satisfactory interpretation of the Letter as a whole. The methodology to be employed in this study will follow standard literary procedures in dealing with a literary work, whether in prose or poetry. It will involve some basic segmenting of the text,<sup>141</sup> detailed literary analysis of parts and of their relationships to one another and to the whole, leading to the identification of some literary cues which may serve as reliable indicators of meaning.

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<sup>141</sup> Stephen H. Levinsohn writes: “The segmentation of a text into paragraphs and sections (groupings of paragraphs) is determined by semantic or pragmatic factors rather than by the presence of particular cohesive features. Nevertheless, proposed boundaries should not be in conflict with such features.” Academic Paper entitled “A Holistic Approach to the Argument Structure of Romans 6” SBL International Meeting, Kings College, London, July 2011. I am indebted to Stephen H. Levinsohn also for the use of his online “Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis” at [www.sil.org/levinsohns](http://www.sil.org/levinsohns), 2011.

## Limitations and scope of this study

This study is limited in its scope. It will not pretend to establish *the definitive meaning* of Romans, because any literary work is capable of communicating several meanings, depending on how, when, where and by whom it is received and interpreted. However, this study will attempt to identify one crucial, underlying literary structure which is hermeneutically important, and to address in some detail the significance of that structure for a satisfactory reading of Romans. It is hoped that the procedures and outcomes outlined here will contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation, while complementing the many approaches already made and currently being made to the Romans debate.

The tools of narrative literary criticism will be employed.<sup>142</sup> This means dealing with the received text in its ‘final’ form,<sup>143</sup> identifying scriptural literary units together with significant patterns within and among such units. Elements of

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<sup>142</sup> See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). Also Steven L. McKenzie & Stephen R. Haynes, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999) especially Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>143</sup> Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Karlo M. Martini and Bruce M. Metzger, *The Greek New Testament* (Münster, Westphalia: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998), 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Also *SBL Greek New Testament* at [www.sblgnt.com](http://www.sblgnt.com) and *Romans* in various translations in English, French, Italian and German, as provided in *Bibleworks 7. 2* and in book form. Taking into account Richard N. Longenecker’s detailed analysis of the various theories regarding the integrity of the ‘full’ form of the Letter, I opt for his position regarding the doxology in 16:25-27. See Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans. Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2011, 15- 38.

structural literary criticism,<sup>144</sup> semiotics and <sup>145</sup> and especially delimitation criticism<sup>146</sup> will be invoked during the course of the work. In essence, three principles underlie the approach:

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<sup>144</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is regarded as the father of linguistic structural criticism. His famous *Écrits de Linguistique Générale*, Ed. Bouquet & Engler (Paris: Gallimard, 2002) is still regarded as a classic in the field.

<sup>145</sup> Roland Barthes (1915-1980) continued the work of F. de Saussure in developing the science of semiotics. Among his best-known contributions to linguistic studies is his *Éléments de Sémiologie*, 1964. Eng Trans. (London/NY: Hill & Wang/Macmillan, 1968). Vladimir Propp discovered common formal patterns in Russian folktales. See Vladimir Propp. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Trans. L. Scott .Austin/London: University of Texas Press (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 1968. The work of Propp was further developed by A.-J Greimas, *Structural Semantics*. (Trans. D. MacDowell et al.) Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. Further important discoveries were made later by Claude Lévi-Strauss through research in structural anthropology. See C. Lévi-Strauss. *Structural Anthropology*. (Trans. Jacobson and Grundfest). New York, NY: Basic Books, 1963. One of the most important outcomes of the work of Lévi-Strauss is that “mythical structures are composed of pairs of binary oppositions.” Cited in Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?*, 2-14.

<sup>146</sup> Delimitation criticism is best exemplified in the research and publications of The Pericope Project, initiated in the University of Utrecht in 1999 by Marjo C.A. Korpel and Josef M. Oesch. The goal of The Pericope Project is to provide a platform for scholarly debate on ancient methods of unit delimitation in biblical texts. Seven meetings have been held in Europe since 2000 (Utrecht 2000; Rome 2001; Berlin 2002; Cambridge 2003; Groningen 2004; Edinburgh 2006; Wien 2007). More than twenty scholars are committed to working on the project. A Series entitled, *Pericope: Scripture as Written and Read in Antiquity* (Assen: Van Gorcum) under Executive Editor, Marjo C.A. Korpel, contains proceedings and papers in seven volumes. I am particularly indebted to the scholars named in Pericope 3, Ed. Marjo Korpel & Josef Oesch, *Studies in Scriptural Unit Division* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2002).



- (i) Every system has a structure.
- (ii) Structures are the ‘real things’ that lie beneath the surface or appearance of meaning.
- (iii) A structure determines the position of each element of the whole.

Applying the above to the literary system which is Romans, it is to be observed

- (i) That the text of Romans has a structure (or structures) worth discovering
- (ii) That structure is related to meaning
- (iii) That the positioning and interrelatedness of certain components of the structure are important factors in the search for significance.

It follows from this that the identification of the boundaries of meaningful units is the first step in the process. The second step is the identification of certain patterns in the semantic fields involved,<sup>147</sup> as well as pointers to the relationship between the units. The third step will be the most crucial - that of establishing domains of significance issuing from these patterns which will prove illuminative in terms of the overall structure.

### **Terminology used in this study**

The ‘**dyad**’ is the basic literary unit. It consists of two literary ‘**panels**’ which function dialogically. A ‘**panel**’ is taken to be ‘a coherent unit of text to which one

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<sup>147</sup> Roman Heiligenthal refers to “the three ever-recurring fundamental elements of the semantic field”, namely related verbs, related terms and ‘personal object’ e.g., him/her/these/them, etc. See *Werke als Zeichen* (148-151) cited in Yinger, 20-21. The Greek Supplement accompanying this study, in dealing with semantic fields, respects Heiligenthal’s criteria.

or more adjacent units relate in parallel and/or contrasting ways.’<sup>148</sup> In a typical dyad, two panels work together in complementary or contrasting mode. Most ‘panels’ (all except one set in Romans) will be shown to function dialogically in relation to another panel. Therefore the predominant structural unit in Romans is the dyad, or two-fold structure. The term ‘**Mirror-panel**’ is used to denote a dialogical mini-panel within a panel. The ‘mirror panel’ serves to underline certain recurring patterns in the dyad in which it occurs.

**Triad** = three ‘panels’ in complementary or contrasting mode.

A **Segment** is the term used for an identifiable section, which comprises a dyad or triad. Segments are numbered 1 to 10 on Table 4.

The term ‘**Block**’ is used to identify the three basic divisions in Romans.

**Block 1** (Romans 1-4): God’s Righteousness revealed through Faith

**Block 2** (Romans 5-11): God’s Righteousness revealed in Christ

**Block 3** (Romans 12-16): God’s Righteousness revealed in everyday life

(See Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4).

In summary, it is proposed that the **literary structure** of Romans consists of

**3 Blocks, 10 segments** (arranged in a sequence of 3+4+3), comprising **9 dyads + 1 triad** (Table 4).

### **Methodology to be employed**

The methodology to be employed in this study will be as follows:

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<sup>148</sup> I am grateful to Peter Oakes of Manchester University for suggesting this definition of ‘panel’, on reviewing my criteria.

1. Identification of structural literary dyads/triads in Romans
2. Identification of some verbal/semantic linkage
3. Detailed analysis of the literary functioning of these dyads/triads
4. Identification of some pervasive and significant literary patterns through a study of the overall positioning and functioning of dyads/triads
5. Establishing some indicators of the significance of these dyads/triads and their patterns of functioning for a valid reading of the Letter
6. Drawing some conclusions in relation to a satisfactory interpretation of Romans.

### **Criteria employed in text delimitation**

Confronted with the entire text of Romans, how does one decide where a literary unit (be it panel, dyad or triad) begins or ends? On what basis is a literary 'unit' defined? And on what basis may one read significance into the arrangement and positioning of these units once they are identified? Finally, what are the implications, if any, for a valid reading of Romans as a whole? The answers to these and similar questions are important, relative to the present literary enterprise, and they will form the substance of succeeding chapters.

For the purposes of this study, taking a 'panel' to be 'a coherent unit of text to which one or more basic units relate in parallel and/or contrasting ways', it is obvious that 'panels' will vary in length. A 'panel' will usually be more than one sentence. It can be identified as 'revolving' around a given theme. Some 'panels' in

Romans may be as few as seven verses of traditional notation, while others extend to a bloc of thirty-six verses or more. The following criteria will be employed in the delimitation of literary units:<sup>149</sup>

- (i) A literary unit must make sense as a unit of meaning. It must have an identifiable primary focus.
- (ii) The literary unit described here as ‘panel’ will normally consist of several sentences, each ‘revolving’ around the same subject, or developing the same argument. With its twin-panel it will form a dyad or dialectical unit, which will be shown to be the basic underlying structure in Romans. In one exceptional case, three panels will function as a unit (described here as a triad).
- (iii) Identifying panels/dyads/triads depends on the identification of boundary-markers, most strongly in the case of unit endings. Although searching out such boundary-markers is a tedious, trial-and-error activity, it is generally rewarding. The textual clues towards panel endings in Romans are often couched in the form of a prayer, a blessing, a hymn or a reference to God or Torah (1:7; 3:20; 4:25; 5:11; 5:21; 6:23; 7:24-25; 8:17; 8:39; 10:21; 11:33-36; 12: 20-21; 13:12-14; 14:11-12; 15:13; 15:33; 16:25-27).

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<sup>149</sup> Korpel & Oesch, 40- 48.

At other times, location can offer a clue (e.g., Rome as destination in 1:7; 1:15). Sometimes a definitive answer to a question marks the ending of a panel, as in 3:31: ‘By no means. We establish the Law’ (μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ νόμον ἱστάνομεν).

- (iv) The beginnings of panels/dyads/triads are often indicated by a transitional phrase, a conjunction or a conjunctive clause (e.g., ‘So therefore’ (γὰρ) in 1:16; οὖν in 5:1; 8:1; 14:13) or by an interrogative like ‘What shall we say then?’ (Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν 6:1) or ‘Shall I say then...? Λέγω οὖν (11:1), or an oath, ‘What I want to say now in Christ is...’ λέγω ἐν Χριστῷ (9:1). In trying to establish boundaries between meaningful units it is best to disregard conventional chapter divisions, verse notations and subtitles because these are a relatively modern addition to the text.<sup>150</sup>
- (v) In some cases, as will be seen, panels may coincide with conventional chapter divisions or titled sub-divisions in translations, but this is relatively rare in Romans. According to my reading, Chapters 6, 7, 11 and 16 function as panels.
- (vi) Imagery can often provide a vital clue, because it is usually pervasive in a literary unit. However, in Romans it can also mislead, because it is often recurrent across two or more panels. Linguistic features like speech-in-character, personifications (e. g., of Death, Sin, Grace, Righteousness, the

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<sup>150</sup> However, chapter and verse notation will, however, be used to designate segmentation and points of reference.

Law - in Rom 6-7) and chain-linking usually provide reliable clues in conjunction with other pointers.

(vii) A study of semantic fields is crucial and usually yields results.

Vocabulary is seen to be a major factor in its own right. The Greek Supplement accompanying this study will draw attention to some important semantic features.

### **A Sample Preliminary Exercise in Delimitation (Rom 1:1-15 and 15:14-16:27)<sup>151</sup>**

One begins by a careful reading of Paul's introduction to Romans (1:1-15). At a glance one notices that one complex sentence in Greek equates with what is conventionally referenced as 1:1-7. This is an easily-defined literary unit or panel, because it could conceivably stand on its own as an intelligible prelude to a letter, ending with a prayer of blessing:

χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Reading further, it becomes clear that there is a second prelude (1:8-15), clearly related to the first, beginning with a prayer of thanksgiving, yet dealing with the introductory greeting differently, and without a prayer of blessing as final boundary marker. What follows (1:16 ff.) clearly belongs in another semantic field:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.

It follows that two boundaries may now be drawn, delimiting two complementary preludes to Romans. The first boundary marks the dividing line between the first and

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<sup>151</sup> Further samples, taken from each of the three 'blocks' in Romans (Rom 1-4 5-11; 12-16) will be given in Chapter 4, together with examples of the procedures followed in the exercise of delimitation.

second prelude. The second boundary marks an ending to this two-fold prelude, which functions as a dyad.

The second stage in dealing with these two panels is to analyse them as a binary bloc or dyad, where balance and contrast, keywords and leitmotifs as well as literary indicators such as image, symbol, word-picture and metonymy all play their part in illustrating the complementary nature of the functioning of the units concerned.<sup>152</sup> Some preliminary conclusions are drawn at this stage. If one turns to the Epilogue (15:14 -16:27) a similar patterns emerges.<sup>153</sup> A fairly obvious conclusion to the Letter is discernible after the prayer of blessing at 15:13.

ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσαι ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν, εἰς τὸ περισσεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐλπίδι ἐν δυνάμει πνεύματος ἁγίου.

This is a boundary line. But Paul is not finished yet. An Epilogue opens at 15:14 with a familial address, ἀδελφοί, followed by some personal greetings which echo the dual Prelude. Where does this Epilogue end? Quite clearly, it ends after the blessing in 15:33: ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, ἀμήν.

But this is only the end of Epilogue 1. The second begins at 16:1 with further greetings and commendations, ending with a doxology in 16:25-27:

μόνῳ σοφῷ θεῷ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.

For a detailed analysis of the complementary functioning of these two Epilogues, see Tables 1 and 24 and relevant commentary in Chapters 5-7.

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<sup>152</sup> See Table 1 and detailed analysis in Chapter 5.

<sup>153</sup> See Table 24 and detailed analysis in Chapter 6.

## **A Two-part Prologue and a Two-part Epilogue**

A preliminary exercise in delimitation such as this has established the fact that Romans is framed by a two-part Prelude and a two-part Epilogue, both of which function in some kind of complementary relationship. This two-part arrangement cannot be without significance. But what if the pattern of complementary panels occurs elsewhere in Romans? On investigation it is discovered that it does. Sample texts from Blocks 1, 2 and 3 will be analysed in detail in the next Chapter. In fact the phenomenon is widespread in Romans and clearly structural. Table 4 illustrates these findings. Colour-coding points up the one notable exception, where the panels are in a triadic relationship. The seventh segment (Romans 9-11) breaks the pattern in two significant ways:

- (i) In its departure from the normal pattern of three dyads per Block.
- (ii) Instead of the typical dyadic pattern, the seventh segment is triadic.

In any structure, exceptions prove the rule. They are therefore worth noting carefully. Furthermore, dyads or paired panels, together with the triadic exception mentioned, are found to be part of a larger pattern (Table 4). An underlying literary structure in Romans is now discernible, that of nine dyads plus one triad (seventh in the series of ten segments) arranged in a sequence of 3+4+3. What remains to be done, after providing further samples of the pattern at work in Romans – the task undertaken in the next Chapter - is to investigate the significance, if any, of this complex set of relationships, whether dyadic or triadic, between panels and among panels, and to draw from these some inferences for a possible reading of Romans. This will involve a close analysis of the text, with particular reference to



complementary or contrasting literary relationships. This task is undertaken in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Reading significance into the pairing and/or threefold arrangement of ‘panels’ in Romans, and into the larger structure of which they are a part, seems a worthwhile task, even if attempted in broad outline. It promises to open a door to a fresh way of reading Romans. Making connections with similar patterns in biblical literature, particularly with Genesis, Judges, Psalms and the Infancy Narratives in Luke, while tempting as a confirmatory exercise, will be resisted here. That is material for another thesis. What will be attempted in this study is a limited survey of the salient literary features which seem to provide the surest avenues to a valid reading of Romans.

### **An emerging pattern**

The dialectical nature of Romans has been noted by many and almost taken for granted as a salient feature of the Letter.<sup>154</sup> However, the thesis proposed here is that the *structure* of Romans is essentially dyadic and dialogical (with one notable exception, which is significant). The crucial movement from dyadic to triadic structure coincides with the highpoint of Paul’s argument in the Letter and establishes the significance of Chapters 9-11 in the overall context. Viewing Romans, therefore, as composed of three primary Blocks which, in breakdown, constitute ten segments in a pattern of 3+4+3, will be shown to significantly illumine Paul’s line of argument in Romans as well as the core message delivered in the Letter. Nine of those segments function as binary structures or dyads, while the

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<sup>154</sup> For example, Stirewalt, Tobin, Thurén.

pivotal seventh functions as a triad. In Genesis, also, the seventh unit is pivotal. The proposed structure illustrated in tabular form is shown in Table 4.

### **Some preliminary observations regarding the structure of Romans**

1. By demarcating ten identifiable literary units in Romans, nine of which function dialogically as dyads, while the seventh breaks the pattern in favour of a three-way approach, a solid foundation is laid for further investigation. The basic dialogical structure emerges as pervasive, and the divergent seventh segment provides a pointer to the climax in Paul's line of argument in Romans, as shall be explained.
2. The framing binary/dyadic structure, represented by Prologue and Epilogue respectively, reinforces both theme and statement of intent. As well as being important in itself, this doubly reinforced framing may provide evidence for the literary unity and integrity of the entire sixteen-chapter manuscript of Romans.
3. The 'picture' presented by the numerical pattern of 3+4+3 (indicated on the 10-segment Table 4 by colour coding) provides both visual structure and mnemonic device for 'reading' an important message presented consistently throughout the Letter as a whole. Three basic building Blocks carry the weight of Paul's argument: The first Block is represented by Rom 1-4, with Prescript announcing 'the Gospel of God' (1:1). In 1:16-17 the theme is announced: a saving message about God – about the revelation of the Righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) revealed through faith. This message is meant for all humankind. God's Righteousness is for all and needed by all, Jew and Gentile alike, because both are shown to be under the dominion of sin (1:18-32 and 2:1-

3:20). It is accessible to all through faith because God's Righteousness is revealed through faith outside the Law (3:21-31), as the story of Abraham's faith illustrates (4:1-25).

The second Block is represented by 5-11 - a phased explanation of the gospel announced in Block 1. It deals in ascending scale with God's answer to the human dilemma: Wherein lies salvation? Answer: salvation comes through faith in Christ. The Righteousness of God is revealed in Christ. This theme is introduced in 5:1-11, developed in chapters 6, 7 and 8 and celebrated appropriately in a hymn to God's love (8:31-39). The strategic positioning of this hymn is an indicator that some type of climax has been reached in terms of Paul's exposition of life in the Spirit. But it does not represent the ultimate high point of Paul's argument in Romans. That high point occurs in the following section (9-11) where the key question, already posed in 3:1 and 3:9, about God's righteousness/fidelity is addressed and answered. The question is a theodicy question and it is this: If God chose Israel from among all nations on earth as people of the Covenant, entrusting Moses and the Prophets with the Law and the Promises<sup>155</sup>, has all of this been in vain, now that salvation is available to all (Gentiles included) apart from the Law? In other words, has God proved

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<sup>155</sup> On the matter of Paul's invocation of the promises, Luke Timothy Johnson points out that the language of promise is virtually absent from the LXX. Paul, in Romans, makes explicit what is implicit in Torah. See Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 156-157.

unfaithful to God's chosen people? Has God forgotten Israel? Is God truly trustworthy? Is God really righteous?<sup>156</sup>

This section ends with the most extensive catena of references to OT scripture in the NT<sup>157</sup> – a pointer to its significance as a message from Paul to his fellow-Jews: Yes, God is faithful. No, God has not forgotten God's promises. This message may be said to underlie the references to Abraham and the Law (4:1-25) and to Adam as prototype of Christ (5:12-21) as well as to Paul's defence against misinterpretation (on the grace and sin issue) in 6:1-11. Arguments about the place of the Law, essentially good in itself when not taken captive by Sin (7:1-25) and of the Spirit as source of freedom and hope (8:1-39) prepare the way for the torrent of agonised analyses in 9-11 of the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation. The ultimate answer comes with Paul's reconfiguration of Deuteronomy 32 in Chapter 11: Israel's stumbling and disobedience, together with the prefigured role of jealousy,<sup>158</sup> have served in

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<sup>156</sup> The first hint that theodicy will be a key issue in Romans is given in the reference in 1:17 to Habakuk 2:4: "The righteous man finds life through faith." J.D. Kirk writes: "For his first overt scriptural citation, Paul chooses Hab 2:4, a verse which was embedded in the question of theodicy in its original Old Testament context." (J.D. Kirk, *Unlocking Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008), 47. Francis Watson argues that Paul intends this citation to be "a summary of all Scripture" (Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London/New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 43-47.

<sup>157</sup> There are 60 direct references to the OT in Romans, as well as many indirect references and allusions. By comparison with other letters in the Pauline corpus, allowing for varying length of letters, the number of appeals to OT in Romans is unmatched elsewhere.

<sup>158</sup> See Appendix II.

God's mysterious plan to reveal God's saving mercy to all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. This comes as a resounding confirmation of the message already enunciated in the Prologue: God's Good News is intended for all, reiterated in dramatic form in 5:21: The realm of grace is greater than the realm of sin (ἵνα ὡσπερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, οὕτως καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν).

The high point of Paul's message in Romans is undoubtedly here in 9-11, and the structural climactic triad visibly proclaims it. God's Mercy becomes the face of God's Righteousness. The shape of Paul's argument is proclaimed in the structure.

The final verses of Chapter 11 swell into a flood of praise – praise of the mysterious wisdom and loving-kindness of God - who is always faithful and just, whose call is irrevocable, whose plan has always been that 'all Israel' shall be saved (11:30-31):

ὡσπερ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ποτε ἠπειθήσατε τῷ θεῷ, νῦν δὲ ἠλεήθητε τῇ τοῦτων ἀπειθείᾳ, οὕτως καὶ οὗτοι νῦν ἠπείθησαν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ [νῦν] ἐλεηθῶσιν.

The triadic structuring of the literary bloc 9-11, as illustrated in Table 4, marks a distinct departure from the dyadic pattern characteristic of the remainder of Romans. This in itself makes a statement about the importance of 9-11 in the architecture of Paul's Letter. As a keystone in an arch is designed to carry the weight of surrounding material, and 'point up' the architecture, so the keystone (Segment 7 represented by Chapters 9-11) carries the burden of Paul's awesome message in Romans, while subsuming key themes and concerns from the

surrounds. It does so in a manner that is thoroughly consistent and organic, touching into the great themes of election, sin and grace, and the righteousness/loving-kindness/mercy of God, whose plan for the world is bigger, wider and infinitely greater than the human mind can grasp.

The third Block (Chapters 12-16), represented by three dyads, is marked by exhortation and attention to practical and everyday matters – the gospel applied to everyday Christian living and revealed by means of it. This is not unrelated to what has gone before. In reality it may be considered as a practical elaboration of 5:1-8:39, a guide to life in the Spirit. God’s Righteousness is revealed in the Christian life of the redeemed. To love as Christ loved is to follow a way markedly different from the way of the world. There are things to do and things to avoid. Respect for civic authority is required (13:1-14). The new law of love is not libertarian (Paul has been accused of this. See 3:8 and 3:31). It demands genuine respect for difference, the avoidance of ‘scandalising’ a weaker neighbour (being ‘a stumbling-block’, echo of 11:9 and Psalm 69), and a refusal to judge (reminiscent of 2:1-7). It reflects the mercy of God.

The two-part Epilogue acts as a reprise of the Prologue in many respects, but also as an enlargement of it: Paul’s travel plans have a wider focus than Christians in Rome: He plans to use Rome as a base for a mission to Spain (the Western limits of the known world) and to canvass support for his forthcoming visit to Jerusalem, where he expects a less than enthusiastic welcome for the collection taken up for Jerusalem’s poor. His horizons are larger than the city of Rome, yet his concerns are at the level of personal connections and commendations. Some twenty-seven persons, including Phoebe, presumably the

courier and designated interpreter of the Letter, are mentioned by name in the Epilogue, as well as one unnamed person, the mother of Rufus. Thus the *Opus Magnum* that is Romans ends as it began on a note of personal connection. The Letter, complex and profound as it surely is, nevertheless is devised as a genuine encounter with real people. The literary structure ‘speaks’ this aspect too. This, among other things, guarantees the perennial appeal of Romans in every culture and in every age.

4. Numerical significance: In ancient Hebrew, Greek and Roman cultures numbers usually carried more significance than their numerical indicators. The number 3 and its multiples (6, 9, 12 etc.) signified completeness. Three lines complete a plane figure; three tenses – past, present and future - represent the whole of history; three persons in grammar convey the totality of human communication. The number 4, associated with the four cardinal points, has carried the notion of universality, while the number 10 and its multiples (100, 1000, etc.) are taken to signify ordinal perfection and, by association, the perfection of divine order. Perhaps there is further work to be done around numerology and the structure of Romans, but such is not within the scope of the present study. However, some obvious connections between numbers and structure must not be overlooked.
5. While certain features of Scalometry (the measurement of scale-related patterns in texts) are noted as significant, for example, sentence length in the Proto-Prologue (Rom 1-7) as compared with the Deutero-Prologue (8-15), these are not pursued in depth. To do so with regard to Romans would be fascinating, but

it is work for another day. The ground-breaking work of George K. Barr in the field of Scalometry has been consulted, and acknowledged where used.<sup>159</sup>

### **Outline of proposed study**

My thesis can be stated rather briefly as this: That Romans is a structured, unified literary work, consisting of three major literary blocks, comprising ten segments, arranged in a sequence of 3+4+3. Each of the segments, except the seventh, consists of dyads - two literary 'panels' which function dialogically - complementing each other in various ways, while progressing Paul's argument or message systematically. The seventh segment, which corresponds with the kernel of Paul's teaching in Romans, consists of three 'panels' in conversation, or a triad. This is hugely significant, because the high point of Paul's message (Rom 9-11) corresponds with the structural climax of the Letter. In a word, the shape of Paul's argument becomes visible in the structure. Everything belongs in its proper place, exercising its distinct literary function in the overall context.

### **Thesis: The 'shape' of Paul's argument exists in the structure**

The structure of the Letter 'speaks' the message. The flow of Paul's line of argument from beginning to end is observable in the total structure (Table 4).

Three literary 'Blocks' can be identified, as the following diagram illustrates:

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<sup>159</sup> George K. Barr, "The Impact of Scalometry on New Testament Letters." *The Expository Times*.

Vol 114 (October 2002), 3-9. Also, "Scale and the Pauline Epistles." *Irish Biblical Studies* (1995), 22-41.



|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Block 1 (Rom 1-4)</b>   | <b>God's Righteousness revealed through faith – not works</b>  |
| <b>Block 2 (Rom 5-11)</b>  | <b>God's Righteousness revealed in Christ – realm of newness, freedom, realm of the Spirit, realm of Mercy</b> |
| <b>Block 3 (Rom 12-16)</b> | <b>God's Righteousness/Mercy revealed in Christian daily life</b>  |

Within this framework there is no need to excise 'troublesome' texts or to pursue interpolation theories. It is possible and gratifying to read and make sense of Romans as a magnificently conceived literary whole. The structure of the work clearly points to a logical and dialogical process which reaches a climax in the triadic segment represented by Chapters 9-11, descending again dialogically and logically across the following three segments to a dyadic denouement embracing 15:14 and 16:27. See Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 for a summary illustration.<sup>160</sup>

### **A Preview**

In broad outline, this chapter has described the methods to be employed and the governing criteria to be respected in establishing one foundational literary structure in Romans. That literary structure is shown to consist of ten segments, nine of which are binary and dyadic in their functioning, while the remaining unit, seventh in the series, representing the climax of Paul's argumentation, adopts a three-way mode of

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<sup>160</sup> See List of Tables on page viii.

functioning. The progression 3+4+3 in itself makes a statement about Romans as a carefully constructed literary work, as it does about the movement of Paul's argumentation. Five preliminary inferences drawn from the illustration in Table 4 indicate that this ten-part structure does take account of the complexity of Paul's message, giving pointers to one satisfactory interpretation of the Letter. Furthermore, it allows for an interpretation that is broader and more universally applicable than those focused primarily on a particular church viewpoint or on a single aspect of the message, however important either of these may be. The literary work which is Romans is writ large on the largest canvas imaginable. It is about God, God's Righteousness and God's Mercy, and the salvation of the world. Respecting that vast canvas and its universal scope, while analysing in detail the functioning and inter-relatedness of its constituent parts, will constitute the essential thrust of this dissertation. Further examples of the methods used in the identification of panels and dyads through delimitation exercises will be provided in the next Chapter, while detailed analysis of panels, dyads, and the outstanding triad, will be the subject of Chapters 5-7. An Excursus between Chapters 4 and 5 will draw attention to some of the problems attached to translating the phrase *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*.

**TABLE 1**

**BLOCK 1**

**GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED THROUGH FAITH**

**(Rom 1-4)**

**3 Dyads: (1:1-15; 1:16-3:20; 3:21-4:25)**

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>1.</b><br/><br/><b>1:1-7<br/>and<br/>1:8-15</b></p> | <p><b>1:1-7: 1st Prelude – Prologue.</b><br/><br/><b>Good News of God in Jesus - foretold by the prophets. For all nations.</b></p>  | <p><b>1:8-15: 2<sup>nd</sup> Prelude – <i>Proemium</i>.</b><br/><br/><b>Proclaimed in the whole world through faith.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>2.</b><br/><br/><b>1:16-3:20</b></p>                | <p><b>1:16-17: Theme announced:</b><br/><br/><b>God’s righteousness revealed through faith. God’s Good News for all - Jews &amp; Gentiles alike (1:17).</b><br/><br/><b>Gentiles under sin’s dominion (1:18-32).</b></p> | <p><b>Jews also under sin’s dominion (2:17-3:8).</b><br/><br/><b>Theme reiterated: God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works of the Law (3:9-20)</b></p> |
| <p><b>3.</b><br/><br/><b>3:21-4:25</b></p>                | <p><b>3:21-31: God’s righteousness is revealed outside the Law – in Christ.</b></p>  | <p><b>4:1-25: God’s righteousness is revealed outside the Law - through Abraham’s faith.</b></p>  |

**TABLE 2**

**BLOCK 2**

**GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED IN CHRIST**

**Realm of Newness, Freedom, Life in the Spirit, Mercy (Rom 5-11)**

**4 Segments: (5:1-21; 6:1-7:25; 8:1-39; 9:1-11:36). 3 dyads and a triad**

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>4.</b><br/><b>5:1-11</b><br/><b>and</b><br/><b>5:12-21</b></p>                                      | <p><b>5:1-11:</b><br/><b>The realm of Christ.</b><br/><b>Something new announced/Salvation through Christ.</b></p> |  | <p><b>5:12-21:</b><br/><b>Christ’s realm surpasses that of Adam. The Contrast: Sin &amp; death through Adam/Salvation through Christ.</b></p> |
| <p><b>5.</b><br/><b>6:1-23</b><br/><b>and</b><br/><b>7:1-25</b></p>                                       | <p><b>6:1-23: Freedom from slavery/Sin</b></p>   |  | <p><b>7:1-25: Freedom from slavery/ the Law.</b></p>  |
| <p><b>6.</b><br/><b>8:1-13</b><br/><b>and</b><br/><b>8:14-39</b></p>                                      | <p><b>8:1-13: The Spirit as source of life.</b></p>  |  | <p><b>8:14-39: The Spirit as hope of glory.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>7.</b><br/><b>9:1-29</b><br/><b>and</b><br/><b>9:30-10:21</b><br/><b>and</b><br/><b>11:1-36</b></p> | <p><b>9:1-29: Lament over Israel (9:1-5). God is sovereign (9:6-29).</b></p>                                       | <p><b>9:30-10:21: Israel’s unbelief. Acceptance of the Gentiles.</b></p> | <p><b>11:1-36: God’s Righteousness/Mercy for all.</b></p>   |

**TABLE 3**

**BLOCK 3**  
**GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED IN DAILY LIFE**  
**Rom 12-16**

3 Segments: (12:1-13:14; 14:1–15:13; 15:14 -16:27). 3 dyads

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>8.</b><br>12:1-21<br>and<br>13:1-14 | <b>12:1-21: Exhortation: Reflect God's mercy by love of neighbour. Be different.</b> | <b>13:1-14: Exhortation: Respect civic authority. Live in the light.</b>            |
| <b>9.</b><br>14:1-23<br>and 15:1-13    | <b>14:1-23: Exhortation: Do not judge. Faith accepts the weak.</b>                   | <b>15:1-13: Exhortation: Do not scandalise one another. Acceptance brings hope.</b> |
| <b>10.</b><br>15:14-33<br>and 16:1-27  | <b>15:14-33: Epilogue. Reprise of <i>Proemium</i>. Focus on Paul's future plans.</b> | <b>16:1-27: Focus on the churches. Commendations.</b>                               |

**TABLE 4**

**The Literary Structure of Romans**

**3 Blocks (1-4; 5-11; 12-16). 10 Segments (1-10). 9 dyads + 1 triad (7<sup>th</sup> segment)**

|     |  |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1.  | 1:1-7: Prologue.<br><br>Good News of God - promised through the prophets – for all nations.  | 1:8-15: <i>Proemium</i> .<br><br>Good News of God, preached by Paul, for Gentiles & others in Rome – proclaimed in the whole world.   |   |
| 2.  | 1:16-32: God’s righteousness revealed through faith – meant for all, Jews and Gentiles alike (1:16-17). Gentiles under sin’s dominion (1:18-32). | Jews also under sin’s dominion (2:1-3:20)<br><br>All – Jews and Gentiles alike –are under sin’s dominion; Justification for both Jew and Gentile through faith – not works of the Law (3:9-20). |   |
| 3.  | 3:21-31: God’s righteousness revealed through faith – outside the Law: The role of Jesus’ sacrifice.   | 4:1-25: God’s righteousness revealed outside the Law through Abraham’s faith.   |   |
| 4.  | 5:1-11: The realm of Christ. Something new announced: Salvation through Christ.  | 5:12-21: Christ’s realm surpasses that of Adam: Sin and death through Adam. Salvation through Christ.   |   |
| 5.  | 6:1-23: Freedom from the slavery of Sin.   | 7:1-25: Slavery and the Law.  |   |
| 6.  | 8:1-13: The Spirit gives life.   | 8:14-39: The Spirit-based life leads to glory.  |   |
| 7.  | 9:1-29: Lament over Israel (9:1-5). God is sovereign (9:6-29).   | 9:30-10:21: Israel has stumbled and failed to see the righteousness that comes from faith. Israel’s unbelief/Acceptance of the Gentiles.  | 11:1-36: God’s Righteousness/Mercy for all. |
| 8.  | 12:1-21: Exhortation: Reflect God’s mercy by love of neighbour. Be different.  | 13:1-14: Exhortation: Respect civic authority. Live in the light.   |   |
| 9.  | 14:1-23: Exhortation: Do not judge. Faith accepts the weak.  | 15:1-13: Exhortation: Do not scandalise. Acceptance brings hope.  |   |
| 10. | 15:14-33: Epilogue (i): Reprise of <i>Proemium</i> . Focus on Paul’s future plans.   | 16:1-27: Epilogue (ii): Focus on the churches. Commendations.   |   |

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Sample Preliminary Exercises in Text Delimitation

**Establishing the Pattern: Methodology used in identifying literary panels and dyads with particular reference to further sample texts: 1:16-3:20; 8:1-39; 12:1-13:14.**

### Introduction

Sample preliminary exercises demonstrating that the Prologue (1:1-15) and Epilogue (15:14-16:27) function as dyads have already been provided in the previous Chapter. These are found under the heading, ‘Criteria employed in Text Delimitation.’ A pertinent question was posed there: What if this pattern were found to be pervasive in Romans? This chapter will provide evidence for the affirmative answer proposed. By choosing examples from each of the three main Blocks in Romans (1-4, 5-11 and 12-16), it will be demonstrated that six panels emerge, two in each case, forming three identifiable dyads. The delimitation criteria and methodology used will demonstrate that a certain literary pattern functions pervasively in these examples, as has already been shown in the case of the Prologue (1:1-15) and Epilogue (5:14-16:27).

## **Establishing the Dyadic Structure of Romans 1:16-3:20**

### **BLOCK ONE: Sample text (1:16-3:20)**

#### **Methodology**

The approach to be taken in dealing with delimitation issues will be three-pronged:

1. The first task is to establish the particular unit of text as a literary unit.
2. The second is to study various possible structural divisions within that unit – divisions which make sense of the text - and to choose one which has advantages over the others, giving reasons.
3. The third is to set that choice of structural division within the wider context of Romans as a whole, noting how it may affect one's reading of Paul's Letter.

### **1. Establishing Romans 1:16-3:20 as a Unit of Text**

#### **A. Boundary Markers**

- i. If one takes the opening verses (1:16-17) to be a statement of theme, as is the general position among scholars (irrespective of whether they read these verses as part of the Prologue or as introduction to what follows), the literary unit ending at 3:20



may be read as a twofold argument related to that theme, with clear boundary markers at beginning and end. The line of argument is clear. According to Paul, the human race, including Jew and Gentile, is in dire need of justification by faith, since all humankind is under sin's dominion. This assertion is strengthened in the opening verses (1:16-17) by a reference to Habakuk 2:4: "The just one finds life through faith". The closing verses (3:9:20) reiterate that message, supported by reference to Scripture: It applies to all humankind, Jew and Gentile alike (v 9), without exception. An extra note is added (v 20), emphasizing that justification comes by faith and not by works of the Law. Here, as in the opening statement, scripture is invoked to support the assertion. Paul's citing of the Scriptures always occurs at critical junctures in his writings. A catena of quotations from the Psalter, the lengthiest in the New Testament, supports the statement that all humankind is under sin's dominion and, by implication, in need of justification by faith.

- ii. The opening statement of theme (1:16-17) stands in chiasmic arrangement with the end of the second phase of the argument (3:9-20). In between these opening and closing statements a two-phased argument is developed: (i) Gentiles are under sin's dominion (1:18-32) and (ii) Jews are also under sin's dominion (2:1-3:8).<sup>161</sup> The structure is clearly visible on Page 2 of the

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<sup>161</sup> The views of some scholars in relation to the sources of the content of 1:18-32, for example, that it consists of un-Pauline ideas quoted from Paul's opponents (pace Douglas Campbell), does not alter

Greek Supplement accompanying this study. In summary, the pattern is chiasmic and balanced, as the following diagram illustrates.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Introductory statement of theme, supported by Scripture (1:16-17) | Argument (phase 2): Jews are also under sin's dominion (2:1-3:8) |
| Argument (phase 1): Gentiles are under sin's dominion (1:18-32)   | Closing statement of theme (supported by Scripture (3:9-20))     |

- (iii) Paul respects the elements of Greco-Roman rhetoric by introducing the topic (*thesis*), then addressing it in detail by producing a complementary argument (*antithesis*) before finally making a summary statement that the case is proven. In this case 1:16-17 represents the *thesis* (with an appeal to Scripture, Habakuk 2:4); the section represented by 1:18-3:8 carries the complementary argument (*antithesis*) in two distinct phases (1:18-32 and 2:1-3:8) as we shall

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the thesis presented here which deals with the text of Romans as we have it. Likewise, the various theories regarding the identity of the interlocutors in 2:1-3:8, while interesting, do not impact directly on what is proposed in this study. The point made by Paul, in a two-fold manner, in 1:18-3:20 is that all human beings are incapable of justifying themselves. Therefore they are in need of God's Good News: Justification by faith.

see, while 3:9-20 acts as a closing summary, supported by a second, and more solemn appeal to Scripture.

- (iv) Page 2 of the Greek Supplement accompanying this study shows clearly that the structured, twofold portrayal of Gentile (1:18-32) and Jew (2:1-3:8) as under sin's dominion is fenced at both ends by a statement of theme: Justification by faith (1:16-17) and an elaboration of that, namely Justification by faith, not by works of the Law (3:9-20). The answer to the human dilemma (that of being under sin's dominion) is found in justification by faith (1:16-17 and 3:9-20). The literary unit opens with a statement of the Good News of God: Justification by faith is intended for all, Jews and Greeks (1:16-17) while the unit ends with a reminder of that theme (3:9-20), backed up by a sevenfold invocation of the Psalter. The textual unit (1:16-3:20) is framed by a strong *inclusio* (the message of 1:16-17 confirmed in 3:9-20).
- (v) Another confirming feature is found in the semantic field of the delimiters – in the repetition of Ἰουδαίῳ... καὶ Ἑλληνί at beginning and end, even though the much discussed πρῶτον in v 16 is not repeated in 3:9, and the qualifying phrase 'not by works of the Law' is added to 'justification by faith' in 3:20. Similarly, the repetition of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and cognates at both ends (1:16,17 and 3:10, 20) serves to confirm the demarcation of 1:16-3:20 as a unit of text with a clearly-defined opening and closing.

## **B. Internal Delimitation: Why delimit at 1:16 rather than 1:18?**

Some scholars have chosen to include 1:16-17 as part of the Prologue or introduction (so Byrne, Dunn, Grieb, Johnson, Käsemann, Matera), regarding 1:18 as opening delimiter of the section which ends at 3:20. For example, James D.G. Dunn opts for treating 1:18-3:20 as a structural unit under the heading, *The Wrath of God on Man's Unrighteousness*. He situates 1:16-17 as part of the Prologue.<sup>162</sup> Among those who engage Romans at a literary level, for example, Luke Timothy Johnson<sup>163</sup>, A.K. Grieb<sup>164</sup> and Charles H. Talbert<sup>165</sup>, most take 1:16-17 to be a statement of theme in a virtual stand-alone capacity, referring to the overall theme of Romans, while accepting 1:18-3:20 as a structural division.

While some reasons may exist for regarding 1:16-17 as part of the Prologue, there are stronger reasons for aligning it with what follows, on the grounds that the notion of revelation/disclosure (ἀποκαλύπτεται and cognates) represents a key concept, integral to the line of thought in the verses 1:17-19. In other words, the concept of revelation is what ties the statement of theme semantically and thematically with what follows. 1:17 deals with the revelation of God's righteousness (δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται...) and 1:18 deals with the complementary revelation of God's wrath (Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ) but 1:19 goes further by mentioning

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<sup>162</sup>Dunn, James D. G. *Romans*. WBC. Number 38. 2 Volumes. Dallas TX: Word Books, 1982.

<sup>163</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 30-36

<sup>164</sup> A. Katherine Grieb, *The Story of Romans* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 19-43.

<sup>165</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), 55-78.

the revelation of God's eternal power and divinity (διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν). The Greco-Roman rhetorical process of thesis, antithesis and conclusion, characteristic of the entire structural unit (1:16-3:20) is anticipated in miniature here. It will be replicated in detail in what follows. To ignore the line of argument around revelation/the act of revealing/what has been revealed (ἀποκαλύπτεται and cognates) is to miss an essential element in the total argument which is concentrated in 1:16-17, continued in 1:18-19 through to 3:20.

An inverse argument for choosing 1:16-17 as opening marker of the section under consideration is that other options (such as demarcating at 1:18) leave 1:16-17 in a rather ambiguous relationship to the surrounds. Does the statement of theme refer to what went before (1:1-15), to what follows immediately (1:18-3:20) or to the whole of Romans? It is difficult to see how it could belong structurally with the preceding two-fold Prologue, which clearly ends at 1:15. My analysis of the two-fold Prologue in the previous chapter and also in Chapter 5 shows clearly that 1:15 marks a decisive ending of the two-fold introduction to Romans. From this perspective it follows that 1:16-17 fits better with the next section, whether one reads it as a general statement of theme, applying to Romans as a whole, or as a particular statement of theme applying to Romans 1:18-8:39, or to a subsection, for example, Romans 1:18-3:20. While the latter is favoured here, the text of 1:16-17 may well serve as titular text to all three. Paul is no stranger to ambiguity!

### **Why delimit at 3:20?**

There is scarcely any need to justify delimiting at 3:20 because of general agreement that it corresponds with a closure of some kind. Arguments for delimiting at 3:26, or even at 3:31 (though I am not aware of any scholar who does either) are weakened by the strong scripture-based conclusion, ending with 3:20, as has been mentioned, but also by an obvious change of focus to be noted after 3:20. Faith and redemption through Christ become central from 3:21 onwards (3:21-26). Christ is presented as the Mercy-Seat or place of expiation (ἱλαστήριον, 3:25) – a topic which will be developed later in Chapter 11. At 3:21 the argument moves from the sinfulness of humanity to another sphere – that of upholding the true value of the Law as well as the role of faith. It clearly relates more to what follows than to what precedes it, and finds no place in the previous line of argument which ends at 3:20.

### **Evidence from Tradition**

Literary studies of Romans are a relatively modern phenomenon. Martin Luther commented on Romans *en chapître*, as did J.-M. Lagrange later. An interesting exception is found in Patrick Boylan's work.<sup>166</sup> He designates 1:16-3:20 as a unit under the title, *Universal Need for Salvation*. C.K. Barrett, in his commentary on Romans,<sup>167</sup> also demarcates 1:16-3:20 as a unit, sub-divided as follows:

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<sup>166</sup> Patrick Boylan, *St Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Translation and Commentary* (Dublin, Irl.: Gill & Son, 1934), 17-33.

<sup>167</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black, 1975), 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

The Gospel (1:16-17)  
Judgment and the Gentile (1:18-32)

Judgment and the Critic (2:1-11)  
Conscience (2:12-16)  
Judgment and the Jew (2:17-29)  
The Advantage of the Jew (3:1-8)

All have sinned (3:9-20).

Karl Barth opts for placing 1:18-3:20 under the title *The Gospel as God's Condemnation of Man*, linking 1:16-17 with the introductory section entitled *The Apostolic Office and the Gospel*.<sup>168</sup> Taking εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ (“Gospel of God”) as key, he links the statement of theme (1:16-17) with the Prologue (1:1-15) as announcement of the Gospel. Ernst Käsemann, in his Commentary on Romans<sup>169</sup> notes the importance of the concept of revelation, by using the subtle heading, *Need for the Revelation of the Righteousness of God* (1:18-3:20), while naming 1:16-17 as theme statement, as the present study proposes.

Arguments could be made in support of Barth's approach, depending on whether or not one views Romans as simply being *about* εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ or about something else. I see Paul's approach in the Letter as more nuanced than that, and I support Ernst Käsemann, as he identifies revelation/the act of

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<sup>168</sup> Karl Barth, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (Virginia: John Knox Press 1960).

<sup>169</sup> Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (from 4<sup>th</sup> German Edition of *An Die Römer*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980.

revealing (ἀποκαλύπτεται and cognates) as a vital piece of the jigsaw. What is important and desirable in any delimitation exercise, such as that under review, is to respect the line of argument without losing or diminishing any part of it. To this author, the concept of revelation is an important element in Paul's argument which begins at 1:16 and ends at 3:20. This gives solid reason for delimiting at 1:16 rather than at the alternative 1:18.

### **Interpolation theories**

Interpolation theories regarding Romans abounded in the nineteenth century, though they do not hold much currency today. Relevant to the unit under consideration is C.H. Dodd's dismissal of 3:1-8 as a foreign body in the text. He writes, "The whole argument of 3:1-8 is obscure and feeble...The argument of the epistle would go much better if this whole section were omitted."<sup>170</sup> The present study will argue that 3:1-8, as an example of Socratic Censure, is vital to Paul's train of thought in 1:16-3:20.

## **2. Considering Internal Structural Divisions**

### **Some standard sample divisions**

Sub-titles provide some basic pointers to structural division in a text, as can be seen from a glance at three standard translations of the bible in English,

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<sup>170</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932 ), 46.



namely NJB (New Jerusalem Bible), NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) and CEB (Common English Bible) These offer varying structural divisions of Romans 1:16-3:20, which are interesting and worth noting.

The NJB uses the following structural division system under the title *Salvation by Faith* (1:16-3:20), with the following sub-divisions:

1. The theme stated (1:16-17)
2. **God's anger against the pagans (1:18-32)**
3. The Jews are not exempt from God's anger (2:1-11)
4. The Law will not save them (2:12-24)
5. Circumcision will not save them (2:25-29)
6. God's promises will not save them (3:1-20)

The NRSV has the following:

1. The power of the Gospel (1:16-17)
2. **The Guilt of Humankind (1:18-32)**
3. The Righteous Judgment of God (2:1-16)
4. The Jews and the Law (2:17-3:8)
5. None is Righteous (3:9-20)

The CEB divides as follows:

1. God's Righteousness revealed (1:15-17)
2. **Gentiles are without excuse (1:18-32)**
3. Jews are without excuse (2:1-16)
4. Jews will be judged as well (2:17-29)
5. God's faithfulness and justice (3:1-20)

Bold type (mine), in all examples given above, emphasises the choice of 1:18-32 as a unit of text in each case.

### **Considering 1:32 as delimiter**

- (a) In all three examples given above 1:32 is designated as delimiter. It would be quite impossible to argue for another delimiter, without doing violence to the totality of Paul's contention that the Gentile world is under sin's dominion. At 2:1 the focus clearly changes to the Jews – those who assume superiority because of their privileged position as God's chosen ones.
- (b) C.E.B. Cranfield demarcates twice in the larger unit, *The Revelation of the Righteousness which is from God by faith alone* (1:18-4:25), namely at 1:32 and at 3:20.<sup>171</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer treats 1:16-32 as a literary unit within the larger doctrinal section, *Through the Gospel the Uprightness of God is revealed as justifying people of faith* (1:16 - 4:25). He situates 1:18-32 under the umbrella of *God's Wrath against the Gentiles*.<sup>172</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, in dealing with the larger question of *Faithless Humanity and the Power of Sin* (1:18-3:20), isolates the literary unit 1:18-32 as *Attack on Idolatry*.<sup>173</sup> Nicholas King, writing about the first large segment of Paul's argument, *The*

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<sup>171</sup> Cranfield, C.E.B. *Romans*. ICC. 2 Volumes. International Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004), 43-57.

<sup>172</sup> Fitzmyer, Joseph A. SJ. *The Letter to the Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB No. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 67-74.

<sup>173</sup> Luke T. Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 32-36.

*Human Plight and God's Response* (1:18-4:25),<sup>174</sup> subdivides at 1:32, taking the sub-unit 1:18-32 to deal with the human plight in general (as applying to all humankind) and what follows (2:1-3:20) as *A Terrible Shock* for Jews (they have no reason to be complacent). Likewise, Frank Matera, in his commentary on Romans,<sup>175</sup> delineates 1:18-32 as a subdivision dealing with *Gentile Failure to Acknowledge God*. Leon Morris,<sup>176</sup> devotes twenty-seven pages to an analysis of 1:18-32, as *The Condemnation of the Gentile World*, sub-section of the larger portrait of *Universal Sinfulness* (1:18-3:20). It is interesting to note that Ben Witherington III, in a socio-rhetorical study of Romans, finds that Argument One of the diatribe corresponds with 1:18-32.<sup>177</sup> He chooses *The Unbearable Likeness* as title for the first argument ending at 1:32. Thomas H. Tobin,<sup>178</sup> treating Romans 1:18-11:36 as an example of Greco-Roman diatribe, also demarcates at 1:32, listing the stages

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<sup>174</sup> Nicholas King, *Romans to Corinthians*. Study Guide Series. New Testament.

Buxhall, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew, 2006, 12-13.

<sup>175</sup> Frank Matera, *Romans*. Paideia Commentaries on New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010) 43-56.

<sup>176</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988), 73-100.

<sup>177</sup> Ben Witherington III, with D. Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004.

<sup>178</sup> Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans*. Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

in the Expository section as follows: 1:18-32; 2:1-3:20; 3:21-26; 5:1-21; 8:1-30.

### **1:32 as Internal Delimiter**

From the examples given, irrespective of where individual scholars place the statement of theme (1:16-17) it is obvious that there is widespread agreement that 1:32 marks the end of a definable section in Paul's train of thought, dealing with the sinfulness of the Gentile world as revelation of the Wrath of God. At 2:1 the focus changes from a concern with the Gentile world to that of the position of Jews, who may rightly see themselves as beyond Sin's dominion, because favoured by God. But they are also, according to Rom 2:1-3:8, under Sin's dominion. They do not escape God's wrath simply because they are inheritors of God's Law, or because they have been gifted with the Law or because they claim the identifying badge of circumcision. This topic is developed at some length in the next literary sub-unit, which begins at 2:1.

Therefore, it seems to the present author that designating 1:32 as an internal delimiter, ending a section of Paul's argument, is the only logical choice.

### **Evidence from the Semantic Field**

Further confirmation of 1:32 as delimiter may be found in a brief analysis of some features of the semantic field involved in the double argument (1:18-3:8). Worth noting is the fact that ὀργὴ θεοῦ with which the polemic against idolatry begins (1:18) and which dominates the argument up to and including 1:32, is paralleled by the phrase τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ (2:2) which dominates the next stage of the argument

(up to and including 3:8). The phrase ὀργή θεου occurs 13 times in Romans – a greater frequency than in any other New Testament book - and it occurs 5 times in the passage under consideration (1:18, 2:5 (twice), 2:8, 3:5). See Greek colour-coded text accompanying this dissertation. The phrase τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ, with which the second phase of the argument opens, occurs 6 times in Romans – a greater frequency than elsewhere in the New Testament – and it occurs 3 times here, but only in the second phase of the argument (2:1,2:2, 3:8). The fact that the wrath of God (ὀργή Θεου) is applied to both Gentile and Jewish worlds (1:18-3:8), while the more nuanced κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ is applied to the Jewish world only (2:1-3:8) at beginning and end of the argument (2:1-2 and 3:8) provides another strong linguistic argument for delimiting at 1:32.

By noting the positioning and frequency of the phrase ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ and cognates, which occurs only 8 times in Romans - the highest frequency in the New Testament apart from Johannine writings – further confirmatory evidence is provided for the delimitation proposed here. The phrase ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ occurs here six times (1:18, 1:25, 2:8, 2:19; 3:7 twice) and notably at the beginning of the first phase of the argument (1:18) and at the end of the second phase (3:7), acting as a semantic marker for beginning and end of this phase of the discussion.

Both the universality of human sinfulness and the consequent need for the saving power of God are stressed at the beginning and end of the dyad 1:16-3:20. Here again we note strong semantic delineators. The saving power of God is intended for all who have faith – whether Jews or Greeks:

δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε  
πρώτον καὶ Ἑλληνι

This is the opening thematic statement in 1:16. It is repeated with two-fold emphasis in 2:9-10, as one phase of the argument ends: God does not have favourites. God does not distinguish between Jew and Gentile when bestowing gifts:

θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνος· δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι.

This message is reinforced at the end (3:1-20) by the lengthiest catena of scriptural references in the New Testament. The entire human world is the addressee in 1:16-3:20. Paul's Good News of salvation is intended for all- Jews and Gentiles alike. The refrain, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνοῦ operates semantically as a mnemonic – a reminder of the scale of Paul's portrayal of God's impartiality!

### **Considering the literary unit 2:1-3:8**

This unit stands over against 1:18-32 as the second stage of Paul's argument that humankind is under the dominion of sin. The structure is clearly visible on Page 2 of the Greek Supplement accompanying this dissertation, and also in the Greek Supplement at the end of this section (Pages 107-108), where similar colours are used to point up examples of similar vocabulary across balancing panels. The list of examples is not meant to be exhaustive.

There are several valid ways of identifying sub-units within the nuanced portrayal of Jews in 2:1-3:8. One of the most obvious ways of reading the phases in this complex argument is to identify four dramatic dialogues, represented by 2:1-11; 2:12-24; 2:25-29 and 3:1-8. In choosing these sub-divisions I am following C.K. Barrett and the majority of scholars. The first (2:1-11) is a dialogue between Paul and an imaginary interlocutor, illustrative of the fact that God has no favourites (v 11). The second dramatic dialogue (2:12-24) is about the value of the Law. It is set

within a forensic arena, where witnesses are called for defense and prosecution. Jews are condemned for defending the Law in principle, while ignoring its requirements in practice (v 24). The third dramatic dialogue focuses on circumcision. It ends by contrasting external, physical circumcision, which avails little, with circumcision of the heart (περιτομή καρδιάς), which alone meets with divine approval (v 29). The fourth dramatic dialogue (3:1-8) returns to the topic of God's impartiality, already broached in 2:11. By a clever use of the Socratic Censure<sup>179</sup> (a rhetorical device for uncovering the opponent's ignorance and demolishing the opposing argument), Paul establishes the second phase of his argument that all are under sin's dominion. Jews - in spite of their privileged position - are as much under the power of sin as their Gentile counterparts. All are in the same position before God, and God will deal impartially with all, because God does not have favourites. As just judge (v 7), God will deal fairly with Jew and Greek.

### **Considering the closing statement of theme (3:9-20)**

The rhetorical question posed in v 9a (Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθά - 'Are we (Jews) better off?') acts as a connector between the previous section (2:1-3:8), dealing with the position of Jews before God, and the repeat summary of theme in 9b

γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναί

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<sup>179</sup> The Socratic Censure was a technique by which the ignorance of the respondent was uncovered by simulated interrogation. Here in 3:1-8 Paul uses the Socratic Censure to effect. See Stanley Kent Stowers, "Paul's Dialogue with a Fellow-Jew in Romans 3:1-9", *CBQ* No. 46 (1984), 707-722.

Both Jews and Greeks are under sin's dominion'. It is an obvious delimiter, because the list of supporting Scripture references which follow (3:10-18) clearly belongs with the repeat statement of theme in 3:19. Verses 19-20 address the place of the Law, and Paul brings this part of the argument to a definitive end with a reference to Psalm 143:2: 'This is because no one can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the Law':

διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,  
διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας

The closing statement of theme (3:9-20) is linked semantically, as well as through content, with the opening statement of theme (1:16-17), forming an obvious *inclusio*. Both deal with the core issue of justification. Both assert that humankind - including Gentile and Jew - is unable to extricate itself from the power of sin. By implication, the human race is in need of the revelation of the Righteousness of God. Together, the opening and closing statements (1:16-17 and 3:9-20) form suitable bookends for the two-fold argument in between: Gentiles are trapped in sinfulness. Jews are likewise trapped. As the accompanying Greek Supplement shows, the semantic field of 1:16-17 has corresponding links with that of 3: 9-20, thus establishing a decisive connection between opening and closing delimiters.

### **Why demarcate at 3:20?**

- (a) Because the focus changes quite dramatically at 3:21, where Paul begins to address the question of faith. More specifically, for the first time since the Prologue, he mentions the role of Jesus Christ (vv 22, 24), and the importance of the death of Christ in effecting reconciliation between God



and humankind. From 3:21-4:25 the agenda is faith, the nature of faith and the need for faith. This is new.

- (b) Current scholarship supports such a division. As has been noted, three English translations of the Bible (NJB, NRSV and CEB) demarcate at 3:20. The vast majority of scholars do likewise, among them C.K. Barrett, Karl Barth, F.F. Bruce, James D.G. Dunn, J. A. Fitzmyer, Luke T. Johnson, Ernst Käsemann, Nicholas King, John Murray, Thomas H. Tobin, Ben Witherington III.
- (See Appendix 1 attached to this dissertation).

### **3. A subdivision at 1:32 makes sense in the overall scheme of Romans**

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, the thesis proposed here is that the meaning of Romans 1:16-3:20, as a whole, becomes clearer when it is read as a two-part argument, framed by introductory and closing statements of theme (1:16-17 and 3:9-20). The two-part argument occupies all of the space between 1:18 and 3:20, with divider at 1:32. Simply stated, it portrays the human race as powerless to escape from the mastery of sin: Gentiles are under sin's dominion (1:18-32) and Jews are equally so, despite their assumed superior status as recipients of the Law, of God's promises and of the badge of circumcision (2:1-3:8). Following immediately after the two-part Prologue, this two-part argument is clearly dialogical, with a break at 1:32. Paul's way of demonstrating that humankind is in need of the Gospel is by asserting that Gentile and Jew are both enslaved to sin. This he does by

deploying a typical Jewish invective against Gentile idolatry (1:18-32), followed by a more nuanced portrayal of Jews as equally under the power of sin (2:1-3:8). God's answer to the human dilemma is Justification by Faith. This is stated in the opening verses (1:16-17) supported by reference to Habakuk 2:4, and again, with the addendum, 'not by works of the Law,' in the closing verses, supported by a defining list of references to the Psalter (3:9-20).

Repeated reference to Gentiles and Jews (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρώτον καὶ Ἑλληνι) occur in both introductory and closing statements. Semantic parallels confirm the thematic links between the opening verses (1:16-17) and the closing verses (3:9-20) in a strong *inclusion*-type frame. The chiastic pattern emphasizes the crucial place of Justification by Faith in the argument. It encases the two-fold portrayal of Gentile and Jew as under the power of sin. Justification by faith – not by works of the Law- is God's answer to the human dilemma.

The themes introduced in 1:16-3:20 will occur again and again in Romans. Justification by Faith, the revealing of God's Righteousness, the need for redemption from the powers of Sin and the Law – these will feature again in Chapters 5-7. The salvific role of Christ's death and resurrection (3:21-31) will be Paul's logical answer to the human plight described in 1:16-3:20. It will receive special attention in Chapters 5-8. The vexed questions introduced here of Gentile salvation – apart from the Law and 'works of the Law' – and of Jewish blindness as recipients of the Law will be the substance of Paul's concern in Chapters 9-11. The ethical questions posed by the state

of degenerate humanity in 1:18-3:20 will surface again in the hortatory section of Romans (Chapters 12-15), where the power of the Good News makes moral transformation possible.

In a word, taking 1:16-3:20 as a two-part literary structure, composed of two interactive panels (1:16-32 and 2:1-3:20) as is proposed here, is convincing because it leads to one clear and satisfactory reading of the text. Of course it makes no claim to be the only valid reading. But because it exemplifies a pattern that is discernible elsewhere in Romans, as will be shown, it also points to a coherent and organic reading of Paul's Letter as a whole. The attached Greek Supplement highlights some of the outstanding dyadic features – structural and semantic – in the two Panels under discussion.

## PANEL 1

### Theme announced: Justification by faith (1:16-17)

<sup>16</sup> ὁ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, **Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.** <sup>17</sup> δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ **ἀποκαλύπτεται** ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

### Gentiles under Sin's dominion (1:18-32)

<sup>18</sup> **Ἀποκαλύπτεται** γὰρ **ὀργὴ θεοῦ** ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν **ἀλήθειαν** ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, <sup>19</sup> διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφάνέρωσεν. <sup>20</sup> τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθοράται, ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολόγητους, <sup>21</sup> διότι γινόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠὲ χάρισθησαν, ἀλλ' ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά. <sup>22</sup> φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν <sup>23</sup> καὶ ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ἐν ὁμοιώματι εἰκόνης φθαρτοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἐρπετῶν. <sup>24</sup> Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς. <sup>25</sup> οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν. <sup>26</sup> Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας, αἵ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν, <sup>27</sup> ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσενι τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες. <sup>28</sup> Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, <sup>29</sup> πεπληρωμένους πάσης ἀδικίας ποιηρίας πλεονεξία κακία, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόνου ἔριδος ὁλοῦ κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστῶν <sup>30</sup> καταλάλους θεοστυγείων ὑβριστῶν ὑπερηφάνων ἀλαζόνων, ἐφευρετῶν κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, <sup>31</sup> ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας. <sup>32</sup> οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγιόντες ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

## PANEL 2

### Jews also under Sin's dominion (2:1-3:20)

**2:1** Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ **κρίνων**· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων. <sup>2</sup> οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ **κρίμα** τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας. <sup>3</sup> λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὦ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτὰ, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφέυξ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ; <sup>4</sup> ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει; <sup>5</sup> κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ **ὀργὴν** ἐν ἡμέρᾳ **ὀργῆς** καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ <sup>6</sup> ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. <sup>7</sup> τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομοιρὴν ἔργου ἀγαθῶν δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον, <sup>8</sup> τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ **ἀληθείᾳ** πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ **ὀργὴν** καὶ θυμὸς. <sup>9</sup> θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, **Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνος** <sup>10</sup> δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, **Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.** <sup>11</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ. <sup>12</sup> Ὅσοι

γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται, καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται.<sup>13</sup> οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται.<sup>14</sup> ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος.<sup>15</sup> οἷτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,<sup>16</sup> ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.<sup>17</sup> Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπινομάζῃ καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ<sup>18</sup> καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου,<sup>19</sup> πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,<sup>20</sup> παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον ἡπείων, ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ.<sup>21</sup> ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις; ὁ κηρῦσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;<sup>22</sup> ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;<sup>23</sup> ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις.<sup>24</sup> τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.<sup>25</sup> Περιτομὴ μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἂν νόμον πράσσης· ἂν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ᾖ, ἡ περιτομὴ σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.<sup>26</sup> ἂν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσῃ, οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθήσεται;<sup>27</sup> καὶ κρίνει ἢ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελούσα σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.<sup>28</sup> οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἢ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή,<sup>29</sup> ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι, οὐ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.

**3:1** Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;<sup>2</sup> πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν [γὰρ] ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>3</sup> τί γὰρ; εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσῃ;<sup>4</sup> μὴ γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὅπως ἂν δικαιοθήσῃ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσῃς ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.<sup>5</sup> εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν **ὀργήν**; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω.<sup>6</sup> μὴ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;<sup>7</sup> εἰ δὲ ἡ **ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ** ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσεισεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι;<sup>8</sup> καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ; ὧν τὸ **κρίμα** ἔνδικόν ἐστιν.

### Theme repeated: Justification by faith – not by works of the Law (3:9-20)

<sup>9</sup>Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως· προητιασάμεθα γὰρ **Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἕλληνας** πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,<sup>10</sup> καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,<sup>11</sup> οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.<sup>12</sup> πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, [οὐκ ἔστιν] ἕως ἐνός.<sup>13</sup> τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν, ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν, ἰὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν.<sup>14</sup> ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,<sup>15</sup> ὄξεις οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐκχέαι αἷμα,<sup>16</sup> σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν,<sup>17</sup> καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν.<sup>18</sup> οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.<sup>19</sup> οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῇ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.<sup>20</sup> διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

## Establishing the Dyadic Structure of Romans 8:1-39

### BLOCK TWO: Sample text (8:1-39)

#### Introduction

The approach to be taken in this study will be similar to that employed in dealing with samples from Block One (1:16-3:20).

### 1. Establishing Romans 8 as a Unit of Text

#### A. Boundary markers

- (i) Chapter 8 begins with the conjunctive phrase, Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Most commentators take the connector-word ἄρα (equivalently ‘therefore’) to refer to the entire argument in the previous seven chapters, and not simply to the argument about the Law in Chapter 7.<sup>180</sup> God’s great plan of salvation has been presented from the outset in Romans, and specifically in Romans 7, as a Law-free plan. The next phase of the argument begins with ‘therefore’, together with the explanation, “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1). This ἄρα functions as a decisive boundary marker, linking with what has gone before, while introducing a new phase in the argument. Condemnation (κατάκριμα) is a forensic term, which here includes the sentence and the execution of the sentence. For those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation at all. The final verse (8:39) is semantically

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<sup>180</sup> So Fitzmyer, Matera, Talbert, Morris.

linked with the first (8:1) by the repetition of the crucial phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ while 8:34 takes up the ‘no condemnation’ theme Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα introduced in 8:1.

The position of Οὐδὲν at the head of the sentence, separated from its antecedent noun, adds emphasis to the opening message: ‘not a single one’ of those who are in Christ will be condemned. Interestingly, Chapter 8 ends with a reinforcing of that message. There will be ‘no separation’, and nothing can separate the believer from ‘the love of Christ’ (8:39). The weight of the message carried in Romans 8 is neatly fenced at both ends. The delimiters are at 8:1 and 8:39 respectively.

- (ii) Chiasms and chiasmic structures often serve as clues to delimitation. The ending of Romans 8 is linked with the beginning of the argument in 5:1. Frank Matera has pointed out that a striking chiasmic arrangement characterizes 5:1-11 and 8:14-39, where the Spirit is presented in both as God’s agency in human and cosmic salvation.<sup>181</sup> Douglas Moo has noted a confirmatory feature in the ring composition in Chapters 5-8, where the second part of Chapter 8 (vv 18-39) echoes the first part of Chapter 5 (vv 1-11) while the first part of Chapter 8 recalls the second part of Chapter 5.<sup>182</sup> The point to be made here is that 8:39 marks a decisive ending to a marked phase in Paul’s argument, which begins at 5:1 and enters a new phase at 8:1. The ‘no condemnation’ stressed in 8:1-4 is balanced by the rhetorical question ‘Who condemns?’ in the concluding 8:31-39, while

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<sup>181</sup> Frank Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic) 2010, 186.

<sup>182</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* NIC (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans), 1996, 469.

the chiasmic arrangement of the Spirit's role as source of life/grace (8:5-13) is neatly balanced by the Spirit's role as guarantor of inheritance/glory (8:14-30).

- (iii) A glance at the Greek Supplement page accompanying this study will confirm that the opening *Οὐδὲν* in 8:1 is echoed in the ten-fold repetition of *οὕτε* in the final verses (8:38-39). Semantically, this adds weight to the markers already noted, and to the identification of 8:1-8:39 as a carefully constructed unit of text, with introduction (8:1-4) balancing conclusion (8:31-39) and internal sub-units (8:5-13 and 8:14-30) in chiasmic arrangement, dealing with the dual role of the Spirit in the present time and in the future.

### **B. Evidence from Tradition**

Ever since chapter divisions were assigned to New Testament texts by Stephen Langton (1150-1228), Chapter 8 of Romans has been identified as a literary unit of text, meriting the title of 'chapter'. The work of Cardinal Hugh of St-Cher (c.1200-1263), while making a contribution to textual divisions in the New Testament (using letters of the alphabet to indicate a move to new material), relied on the chapter divisions provided by Stephen Langton, and did not depart from them. Centuries before Langton's chapter divisions were established, Augustine (354-430 CE) in commenting on the text of Romans 7:1-25, recognizes Romans 8 as a unit in its own right and uses it to exegete Romans 7.<sup>183</sup> Medieval



commentators after Langton respected his delineation of Chapter 8 of Romans. There is not a shred of evidence that any scholar after Langton disregarded the boundaries set by him on Chapter 8, even if some (for example, A.K. Grieb<sup>184</sup>, C.H. Talbert<sup>185</sup>) cross the 8:1 boundary at times when treating 7:7- 8:17 as a phase in the rhetoric of Paul's general argument in Romans. The important point is that 8:1 is recognized and noted, even in these circumstances, as a new beginning with a changed focus.

## 2. Considering Internal Structural Divisions

### Some standard sample divisions

Sub-titles provide some basic pointers to structural division in a text, as can be seen from a glance at two standard translations of the bible in English, namely NJB (New Jerusalem Bible) and NRSV (New Revised Standard Version). These offer varying structural divisions of Romans 8, which are worth noting.

The New Jerusalem Bible makes 5 divisions, as follows:

The life of the Spirit (8:1-13)

Children of God (8:14-17)

Glory as our Destiny (8:18-27)

God has called us to share his glory (8:28-30)

Hymn to God's Love (8:31-39)

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<sup>184</sup> A.K. Grieb, *The Story of Romans* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 71-77.

<sup>185</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helywys, 2001), 208.

By contrast, the NRSV chooses 3 divisions:

Life in the Spirit (8:1-17)

Future Glory (8:18-30)

God's Love in Christ Jesus (8:31-39)

What these two translations have in common is a demarcation at 8:17 and another at 8:30. The latter delineates the beginning of a hymnic pericope dealing with the incomprehensible and all-embracing nature of God's love, and therefore fits within the broader scope of the glory theme which occupies the latter portion of Romans 8 (beginning, according to some, at 8:14 and, according to others, at 8:15 or 8:18). Because, in the context, it belongs within the glory framework, it will not be considered separately here, but as part of the second division of Romans 8.

### **Other sample internal structural divisions**

- (i) Luke Timothy Johnson, in a literary study,<sup>186</sup> opts for 5 structural divisions:

What the Spirit accomplished (8:1-4)

Life in the Spirit (8:5-11)

The Gift of Adoption (8:12-17)

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<sup>186</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys) 2001.

The Spirit in Suffering and Hope (18-27)

God's Loving Purpose (8:28-39)

(ii) Charles H. Talbert<sup>187</sup> opts for two divisions:

Sources of Spiritual Power (8:1-17)

The Future Hope (8:18-39)

(iii) Leon Morris<sup>188</sup> opts for 6 divisions:

The opposition of flesh and spirit (8:1-11)

The Family of God (8:12-17)

The Glorious Future (8:18-25)

The Spirit's Intercession (8:26-27)

The Purpose of God (8:28-30)

The Christian's Triumph Song (8:31-39)

(iv) J. A. Fitzmyer<sup>189</sup> opts for 3 structural divisions:

Christian Life empowered by the Spirit (8:1-13)

Through the Spirit the Christian becomes a child of God,  
destined for Glory (8:14-30)

The love of God made manifest in Christ Jesus (8:31-39)

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<sup>187</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans*, (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys) 2001.

<sup>188</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1988.

<sup>189</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* in NJBC (New Jersey: Prentice Hall) 1990, 854-855.

(v) Frank J. Matera<sup>190</sup> considers Romans 8 as composed of three parts:

The Spirit as Source and Dynamism of the believer's New Life (8:1-17)

The Spirit grounds the believer's hope (8:18-30)

The Irrevocable Character of God's Love (8:31-39)

### **Analysis**

The above examples, though not providing an exhaustive selection, show that there are several valid ways of making structural divisions in Chapter 8. In a literary study such as the present one the focus must rest on determining the literary structure of the text under consideration.

A division into two makes initial sense, based on the subject matter – the twofold role of the Spirit- in the here and now and in the eschaton. At a first reading, Chapter 8 deals with the Spirit's dual role – as enabler in the realm of grace at present, and as transfiguring agent in the realm of glory in the future. But one could possibly delimit at 8:11, 8:13, or 8:17 without doing violence to Paul's general train of thought.

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<sup>190</sup> Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic), 2010, 188-189.

### Considering 8:17 as delimiter

Charles H. Talbert, following literary cues, identifies 8:1-17 as the end of a literary sub-section, arguing that this is warranted by the shape of the argument. He writes:

“One way of viewing the organization of 8:1-17 is to see vv 1-2 as Paul’s thesis; vv 3-4 as the basis for the thesis; vv 5-11 as the explanation of 4b, and vv 12-17 as a statement of the implication of vv 5-11.”<sup>191</sup>

A.K. Grieb also demarcates at 8:17, while reading 8:1-17 as an answer to the implied question provoked by Chapter 7: “What was God doing, giving a Law that could be used by Sin in order to deceive humanity...?”<sup>192</sup>

This author accepts that there are some valid reasons for delimiting at 8:17, following C.H. Talbert and A. K. Grieb, and it would be feasible to read 8:18-39 as a unit of text in conversation with 8:1-17. However, such a division would lead to the bifurcation of some important data relating to the glory theme. Paul’s focus, after v 13, changes to adoption and inheritance issues. A new avenue is opened up at 8:13 where ‘children of God’ can claim entitlement to call God ‘Abba’. Already at 8:14 one is in the future realm of inheritance. Glory and the hope of glory are presented as the eschatological inheritance of the children of God (8:14-18). Simply stated, from a literary point of view, to split at 8:17 would be to ‘export’ part of the Spirit’s role as glory-guarantor to the earthly realm of the Spirit as source of grace/enabler.

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<sup>191</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 2002), 202-203.

<sup>192</sup> A. K. Grieb, *The Story of Romans* (London/Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 75.

### **Considering 8:11 as delimiter**

Pursuing the de-limitation issue further, 8:11 is also a contender. It is noteworthy that in all examples studied of structural divisions in Chapter 8, irrespective of stated purpose or methodology (except for those studies which view Romans as a whole as Greco-Roman diatribe, for example Thomas H. Tobin and Ben Witherington III, who demarcate at 8:30 and 8:17 respectively), a boundary line is drawn at 8:11. This indicates that there may be some valid reasons for seriously considering 8:11 as a boundary marker. However, reasons for delimiting at 8:11 have been considered and rejected because the conclusion reached by Paul in 8:12-13 is a crucial element of the argument. It is, in fact, its dénouement, as is indicated by the introductory phrase, Ἀρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί. To delimit at 8:11 is to bisect the argument which is central to Chapter 8: Living according to the flesh leads to death (viz. no resurrection in the eschaton), while living according to the Spirit leads to future glory (8:12-13).

Romans 8 deals with the role of the Spirit – what the Spirit does and what the Spirit gives. These two functions of the Spirit are vitally linked. It would do violence to the line of argument to delimit at v.11. What God has done in Christ, and particularly through the death of Christ, is to make possible, through the Law of the Spirit, what was not possible through an ‘unspiritual’ Law (1-8). God has inaugurated a new dispensation, where sin and death give way to life (8:9-13). Suitably, 8:13 ends with a conditional phrase which sums up Paul’s message: ‘If you live according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) you

will die, but if you live according to the Spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα) by putting to death the deeds of the flesh (idolatrous actions understood) you will live’:

εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε, μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν· εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε, ζήσεσθε.

### **Considering 8:13 as delimiter**

There are at least seven solid reasons for choosing 8:13 as delimiter, rather than 8:11 or 8:17. There may be others.

- (i) One strong reason for delimiting at 8:13 rather than 8:17 resides in the context: What the Spirit gives (8:9-11) is structurally linked to what the Spirit does (8:11-13). In this I am in the company of J. A. Fitzmyer, who summarizes Romans 8 as Christian life (i) empowered by the Spirit (8:1-13) and (ii) destined for glory (8:14-39), even though he opts for treating vv 36-39 as a separate textual unit. From a literary perspective, therefore, a break at 8:13 seems the best way of honouring the integrity of the Spirit’s role as it affects the life of a Christian in the here and now, because the gift of the Spirit (vv 1-8) cannot logically be separated from the action of the Spirit (vv 9-13).
- (ii) Secondly, the summing up of the life-death imagery, in which Paul’s message from the beginning of Chapter 8 has been clothed, is boldly presented in 8:13 as a closing phase of the first part of the argument, beginning with the definitive “Therefore, brothers...” To live in a non-spiritual way leads to death; to live by the Spirit leads to life. Structurally therefore, and from a literary standpoint, 8:13 stands out as a suitable

defining marker. The life-death imagery, traceable especially in 8:5-13, ends with the climactic ζήσθε in 8:13.

- (iii) Thirdly, a further reason for choosing 8:13, as opposed to other options, resides in the chiasmic structure of Chapter 8 itself. This chiasmic (as distinct from dyadic) structure, confirmed semantically, indicates a delimiting at 8:13. A glance at the Greek Supplement will reveal the role of Christ's death (8:1-13) standing in chiasmic relationship with the role of Christ's resurrection (8:28-39). The death and resurrection of Christ are both intimately linked with life in the Spirit, and with the Spirit's role in the present and future life of the Christian.
- (iv) Fourthly, if one follows logically Paul's train of thought in Romans 7, one expects a return to the topic introduced in 7:1-6 on 'the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.' This happens with an answer in biblical terms at 8:1-13, with a Pauline adaptation of the tradition of the Two Ways – the Way of Life and the Way of Death. These, according to Paul's reinterpretation of the Wisdom tradition, correspond with 'life according to the Spirit' and 'life according to the flesh'. As always for Paul, an appeal to Scripture clinches the argument. On this score, too, 8:13 emerges as the best possible choice of internal delimiter in Romans 8. It demarcates at the crossing point – the point of choice.
- (v) Fifthly, by delimiting at 8:13 one respects the apocalyptic base of both present and future realms according to Paul. Choices made in the present, for life or death, have repercussions in the eschaton. Future bodily resurrection is the outcome of choices made according to the Spirit (κατὰ πνεῦμα 8:10-13). Future cosmic transformation is the liberation of all



created being from the tyranny of corruption and death (8:20-25). An apocalyptic vision underlies the whole of Romans 8. Life in the Spirit in the present time (8:1-13) is vitally linked to future resurrection and to the future glory of the children of God (8:14-39).

- (vi) Sixthly, while, at first glance, opting for a structural division at 8:13 may appear as a lopsided solution, because 8:1-13 may look like an unequal partner in the conversation with 8:14-39, there are overriding considerations which argue for delimiting at 8:13. Noting that the unit 8:1-13 is significantly shorter, in terms of word-count (213 in Gk), than the unit 8:14-39, which is almost double its size (exactly 400 in Gk), it seems that Paul is not overly concerned with word-volume or scalometry as he moves the focus from the present to the future at 8:13. Further examples of structural divisions of unequal length (such as 1:18-32 versus 2:1-3:20) are to be found in Romans. Paul's choice deserves respect, and a division at 8:13 seems the best way of respecting his *modus operandi*. Considerations, such as respecting the main tenets of his argument about the present and future roles of the Spirit, as well as the underlying apocalyptic vision, outweigh a choice based on a neat median point, based on word-count or measured amount of text.
- (vii) Lastly, there are some strong semantic clues that identify 8:14-39 as a distinct unit of text. For example, the presence of δόξα nouns/verbs (four examples in vv 17, 18, 21, 30), the highest frequency of δόξα words in Romans, occurs here, with none in 8:1-13. The two δόξα verbs, at v 17 and 30 respectively, occur at paragraph endings and have semi-culminating roles, thus marking v 14 as linked to v 30. By delimiting at

8:13, one honours the complexity and the magnificence of Paul's treatment of glory in 8:14-39, as the 'how much more' escalation so typical of the Pauline way of arguing (Rom 5:11; 1 Cor 8:22; Philemon v 16).

### **3. A Division at 8:13 makes sense in the overall Scheme of Romans**

On the basis of the foregoing analyses of text and context, the thesis proposed here is that the meaning of Romans 8, as a whole, becomes clearer when it is read as a two-part presentation on the role of the Spirit – the Spirit as life-giver in the here and now (8:1-13) and hope of glory in the age to come (8:14-39). It provides a two-part answer to the key questions raised in Chapters 1-7 about the hopelessness of human striving apart from the vision and energy which the Spirit provides (κατὰ σάρκα' v 13). God's answer to the human dilemma is God's gift of the Spirit, which empowers a Spirit-led life (κατὰ πνεῦμα v 4) in the present aeon and guarantees future glory in the eschaton, when all creation will be transfigured.

Furthermore, Chapter 8, as two-part presentation of the Spirit's role, provides solid, soteriological grounding for the restoration of Israel (Chapters 9-11) and for the ethical life to which all Christians are called (Chapters 12-15). In a word, the two-part structure which is Romans 8 looks backward to the questions posed in Romans 1-7, providing God's answer in the gift of the

Spirit. It looks forward to Chapters 9-11 and 12-15, anticipating the real-life questions around Gentile-Jew relations and Christian unity, where the role of the Spirit is central.

Even though Chapter 8 cannot be understood apart from what has gone before, it does introduce a new dimension and a further stage in the development of the general argument. The focus in Chapter 8 shifts from concerns with Sin, Death and the Law in Chapter 7 to the liberating, two-fold role of the Spirit in the life of the Christian. This topic has already been introduced briefly in 5:3-6, where the graced existence of those 'in Christ' is linked to future glory: "We can look forward to future glory..." (5:3). Already Paul has introduced one important aspect of the Spirit's role: "The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the holy Spirit, which has been given to us..." (5:4-6). In one sense, Romans 8 may be read as an exposition of the theme introduced briefly in 5:3-6. The content of Romans 8, with its two-stranded elucidation of the Spirit's role, becomes integral to an understanding of the theme introduced in 5:3-6, and to the Good News message that Paul brings to Christians in Rome.

In summary, reading Romans 8 as a two-fold presentation of the Spirit's activity, with delimiter at 8:13, may be considered as consonant with a reading of Romans which is organic and integrated, as will be shown in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation.

## Panel 1

### Romans 8:1-13: The Spirit gives life

#### No condemnation

**8:1** Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν **κατάκριμα** τοῖς **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ**.<sup>2</sup> ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ **πνεύματος** τῆς **ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.<sup>3</sup> Τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου ἐν ᾧ ἠσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί,<sup>4</sup> ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ **κατὰ πνεῦμα**.

#### The Spirit gives life

<sup>5</sup> οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ **κατὰ πνεῦμα** τὰ τοῦ **πνεύματος**.<sup>6</sup> τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ **πνεύματος** ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη·<sup>7</sup> διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν, τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται·<sup>8</sup> οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται.<sup>9</sup> ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν **πνεύματι**, εἴπερ **πνεῦμα θεοῦ** οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰδέ τις **πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ** οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.<sup>10</sup> εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν τὸ δὲ **πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην**.<sup>11</sup> εἰ δὲ τὸ **πνεῦμα** τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσῃ καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ **πνεύματος** ἐν ὑμῖν.<sup>12</sup> Ἄρα οὖν, **ἀδελφοί**, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν, <sup>13</sup> εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε, μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν· εἰ δὲ **πνεύματι** τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε, **ζήσεσθε**.

## Panel 2

### Rom 8:14-39: The Spirit-based life leads to Glory

#### Spirit>child of God>inheritance>glory

<sup>14</sup> ὅσοι γὰρ **πνεύματι** θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν.<sup>15</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε **πνεῦμα** δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε **πνεῦμα** υἰοθεσίας ἐν ᾧ κρᾶζομεν· ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ.<sup>16</sup> αὐτὸ τὸ **πνεῦμα** συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ **πνεύματι** ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμέν τέκνα θεοῦ.<sup>17</sup> εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ **συνδοξασθῶμεν**.<sup>18</sup> Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν **δόξαν** ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς.<sup>19</sup> ἢ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται.<sup>20</sup> τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάγη, οὐχ ἐκοῦσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐφ' ἐλπίδι<sup>21</sup> ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν **τῆς δόξης** τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>22</sup> οἴδαμεν

γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν.<sup>23</sup> οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες, ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.<sup>24</sup> τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν· ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς· ὃ γὰρ βλέπει τίς ἐλπίζει; <sup>25</sup> εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ βλέπομεν ἐλπίζομεν, δι' ὑπομονῆς ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.<sup>26</sup> Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὼς οὐκ οἴδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις.<sup>27</sup> ὃ δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.<sup>28</sup> Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.<sup>29</sup> ὅτι οὐς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.<sup>30</sup> οὐς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν· καὶ οὐς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὐς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν.

### Who condemns? (None)

<sup>31</sup> **Τί οὖν** ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν; <sup>32</sup> ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίζεται; <sup>33</sup> τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαίων· <sup>34</sup> τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν; Χριστὸς [Ἰησοῦς] ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθείς, ὃς καὶ ἔστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.<sup>35</sup> τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ; θλίψις ἢ στενοχωρία ἢ διωγμὸς ἢ λιμὸς ἢ γυμνότης ἢ κίνδυνος ἢ μάχαιρα; <sup>36</sup> καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι ἔνεκεν σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς.<sup>37</sup> ἀλλ' ἐν τούτοις πᾶσιν ὑπερνικῶμεν διὰ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς.<sup>38</sup> πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι οὔτε θάνατος οὔτε ζωὴ οὔτε ἄγγελοι οὔτε ἀρχαὶ οὔτε ἐνεστῶτα οὔτε μέλλοντα οὔτε δυνάμεις <sup>39</sup> οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τίς κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

### Key to colour-coding

Similar colours are used to point up indicative semantic linkage between panels 1 and 2.

## **Establishing the Dyadic Structure of Romans 12:1-13:14**

### **BLOCK THREE: Sample text (12:1-13:14)**

#### **Introduction**

The approach to be taken in this study will be three-pronged, similar to that employed in samples from Block One (1:16-3:20) and Block Two(8:1-39).

### **1. Establishing Romans 12:1-13:14 as a Literary Unit**

#### **Boundary Markers**

Delimiting at 12:1 and 13:14 is not novel. In fact it is the traditional demarcation of the unit which deals with one topic: Love of neighbor. The caption which Luke Timothy Johnson places on Romans 12:1-13:14 is *The Transformation of Moral Consciousness*. He clearly assumes that section of Romans to be taken as a literary unit, while recognizing the many interpretive challenges presented by the unit.<sup>193</sup> As a whole, Romans 12-13 deals with one topic – the transformation of moral consciousness. Marking the transition from 11:36, the connecting phrase Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, leads into

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<sup>193</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 187. He writes, “Making sense out of 12:1-13:14 is a challenge to any interpretive perspective on Romans” – a reference to the many theories on the occasion of the Letter, and the reliance of many of those theories on ‘evidence’ from Romans 12-13.

the hortatory section of the letter, and very particularly to the section under review. A.K. Grieb argues that the connector οὖν ('therefore') is the most important 'therefore' in Romans.<sup>194</sup> While it introduces a new phase in the Letter, it acts as a bridge with what has gone before. It provides a connector with the key-concept of mercy and with the song which celebrates mercy (Rom 11:33-36) and also with the notion of moral living as the new type of sacrifice required of Christians. Paul has already broached this in Rom 6:12-13, 'Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies...' So Chapter 12 begins on a liturgical note, where mercy and sacrifice provide the motives for living in a new way: 'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice' ...because of God's mercies...' (Rom12:1-2).

12:1 is an obvious opening delimiter of the section which follows. In 12:1-13:14 Paul is dealing with the issue of moral transformation, both in general and in specific terms. At 14:1 he moves into new territory - to specific issues in the Roman community, such as the conflict between the weak and the strong, the issue of giving scandal, and Jew-Gentile relations. Here in 12:1-13:14 he lays down the basic principles underlying Christian moral behavior. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the thirty-five verses represented by 12:1-13:14, constitute an intelligible literary unit. It also serves as a necessary link between Chapters 1-11 and Chapters 14-15, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

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<sup>194</sup> A.K. Grieb, *The Story of Romans* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 117.

She writes, "He (Paul) mentions God's mercies as the basis for his exhortation. For this reason the adverb 'therefore' in 12:1 represents the most important 'therefore' in the Letter..."

### **Why de-limit at 13:14?**

There is no valid reason for a final delimiting of this section earlier than 13:14 because Chapter 13 reads as an organized sequence: submission to civil authority (13:1-7) is part of fulfilling the Christian debt of love (13:8-10), which in turn means living in a state of Christian wakefulness, outside the realm of darkness (13:11-14). At 14:1 there is a decisive change of emphasis and a move to addressing localized questions around food laws, relations between the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’ and the possibility of giving scandal, even if unintentional.

### **Evidence from tradition**

The NRSV version places Romans 12-13 under the umbrella title of *New Life in Christ*. The NJB opts for the general title *Exhortation*, subtitling as follows: Spiritual worship (12:1-2); Humility and Charity (12:3-13); Charity to Everyone, including Enemies (12:13-21); Submission to Civil Authority (13:1-7); Love and the Law (13:8-10); Children of the Light (13:11-14). The Common English Bible respects the unity of Romans 12-13 by the title *Living Sacrifice and Transformed Lives*.



J. A. Fitzmyer identifies 12:1-13:14 as a unit under the heading, *Christian Life Must Be Worship in the Spirit Paid to God*.<sup>195</sup> Nicholas King, making a similar division, chooses the title, *General Exhortation*.<sup>196</sup> Frank Matera identifies 12:1-13:14 as a distinctive unit in the rhetorical flow of Romans, and entitles it *Love and Obedience in the New Age*.<sup>197</sup> Leon Morris deals with 12-15 as a unit under the title *Christian Living*, but then isolates 12-13 as a sub-unit dealing with *Love of the Brothers: Some practical Advice*.<sup>198</sup> Charles Talbert writes, “Romans 12:1 -15:13 consists of two distinct sections, 12:1-13:14 and 14:1-15:13. The first deals with more general issues of Christian living; the latter is concerned with a particular issue that is agitating the Roman church”.<sup>199</sup> He proceeds to deal with these two sections separately, as Part One and Part Two of *How Slaves of Righteousness Behave*. Lastly, for an older, confirmatory perspective on demarcating 12:1-13:14 as a literary unit, we look to the 1934 Commentary on Romans by Patrick Boylan. He identifies that section as a unit under the label *General Duties of Christians*.<sup>200</sup> From the examples given, which provide only a representative sample, it is clear that the unit represented by 12:1-13:14 has

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<sup>195</sup> J.A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, NJBC (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall), 862.

<sup>196</sup> Nicholas King, *The Letter to the Romans*. NT Study Series (Buxhall, Suffolk: Mayhew, 2006), 39.

<sup>197</sup> Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic), 285.

<sup>198</sup> Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 432-474.

<sup>199</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helys, 2002), 280.

<sup>200</sup> Patrick Boylan, *St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Dublin, Irl.: Gill & MacMillan, 1934), 193.

been traditionally treated as a literary unit in its own right, worthy of being treated as such.

### ***Inclusio*-type markers**

The introductory verses (12:1-2), with their call to Christians to distinguish themselves from the world around them by their behavior, finds an echo in the concluding verses of the unit (13:11-14). Here the appeal is presented in terms of a new day, waking up, casting off the clothes of night and dressing for the day ahead. At the beginning and end of this unit (12:1-13:14) Paul is talking in eschatological terms. The opening verses (12:1-2) are solemnly liturgical. The new behavior is worship of God suited to the new aeon. The closing verses carry strong military overtones. Those who seriously engage in the eschatological battle between good and evil must put on ‘the armor of light’.

Talbert writes, “That 12:1-13:14 is framed by an introduction and conclusion, both of which emphasise the genuinely eschatological existence of those exhorted, has long been recognized.”<sup>201</sup> His identification of a definite literary pattern in the entire bloc (12:1-13:14) is in itself a strong argument for the delimiting proposed here.

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<sup>201</sup> C.H. Talbert, *Ibid.*, 281.

Talbert's arrangement looks like this:

A – (12:1-2) Ethical implications of eschatological existence (Behave, think)

B – (12:3-13) Genuine love

C – (12:14-21) Christian life and God's wrath (cf 12:19)

C' – (13:1-7) Christian Life and God's wrath (cf 13:4)

B' – (13:8-10) Love one another

A' - (13:11-14) Ethical Implications of Eschatological Existence (Think, behave)

## **2. Considering Internal Structural Divisions**

### **Some standard internal divisions**

The first and most obvious comment to be made here is that all commentators demarcate at 12:21, irrespective of how they make internal divisions within Chapters 12 and 13. To do otherwise would be to defy the laws of logic, because there is a marked change of style and content at this juncture. 13:1 marks a quite notable departure from what has gone before. It introduces new material - the moral imperative of obeying civil authority. So strong is the contrast between the directives on Christian living in 12:1-21 and those presented on obedience to

civic authority in 13:1-7, that many commentators, including C.H. Dodd,<sup>202</sup> came to terms with the ‘problem’ by claiming that 13:1-7 was a later interpolation in Romans, a ‘foreign body’ in the Letter. Today, scarcely anyone holds that view.

### **Why demarcate at 12:21?**

12:21 marks the end of one phase of Paul’s appeal for a Christian response to the Gospel he has presented in Romans 1-11. The focus is on reflecting God’s mercy in the community by a way of life different from the surrounding world.

Christians are to offer God worship by offering their bodies in an act of ‘living sacrifice’. Theirs is to be a way different from that of the world (12:1-8). They are to be humble and lowly-minded, generous and loving, filled with hope (12:9-

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<sup>202</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder & Stoughton) 1932, 178. See also, Otto Michel, “Der Brief an die Römer, übersetzt und erklärt” (KEK, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), p.312. Of Rom 13:1-7 he writes, “it is an independent insertion”. For Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (p. 352) Romans 13:1-7 is “an independent block...unique to Paul” and “it can be pointedly called an alien body in Paul’s exhortation”. James Kallas, NTS 11 (1965), in “Romans 13:1-7 An Interpolation” writes, “There is unmistakable evidence that the second part of Romans has been subjected to some kind of alteration” and that Romans 13:1-7 is “alien to the thought of Paul” (pp.365-370). Brendan Byrne, speaks of the passage as “the strangest and most controversial passage in the entire Letter” in *Romans* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) pp. 207-209. J. C. O’Neill, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 201, writes “These seven verses have caused more unhappiness and misery in the Christian East and West than any other verses in the New Testament”. Albert Schweitzer is unconvinced that Rom 13:1-7 ‘fits’ in Romans (*The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Holt, 1931), p. 252. J.I.H. McDonald argues that Rom 13:1-7 is “A Test-Case for NT Interpretation” in NTS 35 (1989), 546-547. The fact that Rom 13:1-7 is missing in the Marcionite canon has been regarded as a further argument for the interpolation theory.

13). They are to love their enemies, and never curse them (12:14). Christians are not meant to seek revenge, nor to repay one wrong with another (12:15-21).

At 13:1 the focus changes dramatically to the topic of the Christian's relationship to civic authority. This is one reason why one must de-limit at 12:21. From 13:1 onwards, Paul is operating in different territory - that of the Roman state (13:1-7). His command is that all authority is to be respected because all authority comes from God. Christians are to be law-abiding and, as observant citizens, they must pay their taxes and just debts (13:8-10). This is what love demands. It means living in daylight, in a state of alertness, clothed in the armor of light (13:11-14).

In a word, when trying to make sense of 12/13 as a unit, not to demarcate at 12:21 would be absurd. Furthermore, because there is continuity as well as discontinuity between the two main divisions (with delimiter at 12:21) it is reasonable to read these in concert as a dyad, as this study proposes.

### **Considering some possible internal de-limiters within Chapter 12**

Following the NRSV authors, one could divide chapter 12 in two, making a break at 12:8, reading verses 1-8 as general instruction on *New Life in Christ* and the remainder (verses 9-21) as a description of *Marks of the True Christian*. I find such a two-part division unhelpful for two reasons: firstly, it disregards the governing role of the highly-charged motivating opener (vv 1-2) with its appeal to God's mercies and to the liturgical context; secondly, it is not possible (and Paul did not attempt it!) to separate the marks of the true Christian from the acts of the true Christian. In the text, the marks of love are found as much in humility, honesty, harmony, diligence,

respect and hospitality (12:1-8) as in love of enemies, friendship, peaceful relationships and high ideals (12:9-21). Making a break at 12:8 within a threefold division of Chapter 12 is, however, illuminative of the structure, as will be argued.

A more acceptable method of making internal divisions in Chapter 12 is that chosen by most literary critics. Fitzmyer, Matera, Talbert, Luke T. Johnson and others, including the authors of NJB, all agree on three sub-divisions: spiritual worship (12:1-2); humility and charity (12:3-13); love of enemies (12:14-21). The sub-titles assigned to these subdivisions vary slightly, but are in essence similar. A change in linguistic style marks the announcement of the maxim at 12:14. An imperatival infinitive rather than the usual participial infinitive opens the subsection: 'Bless those who persecute you. Bless, and do not curse them'. The sub-titles chosen by Frank Matera (even though he demarcates at 12:2 and 12:8) emphasize the triple thrust of Paul's thinking:

1. Fundamental Moral Exhortation
2. Living as one Body in Christ
3. Expressing Genuine Love

One further possibility in delimiting Chapter 12 internally is that chosen in the present study.<sup>203</sup> It differs slightly from the majority position, and it is obviously in conversation with its opposite numbers (also three sub-divisions) in Chapter 13, although such a fortuitous correspondence comes as a surprise bonus rather than as a foreseen outcome of the textual analysis. Under the overall title of *God's Mercy: Reflect it to the Community*, three sub-divisions are indicated as follows:

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<sup>203</sup> See accompanying Greek Supplement, Page 8.

- (i) Order within the Christian Community – your bodies within Christ’s body (12:1-8)
- (ii) The quality of love (12:9-13)
- (iii) Love under pressure (12:14-21).

Within this framework a pattern is to be noted. The Christian is called to be different from those who are not Christian, to live an ordered life within the body of Christ (vv 1-8). This involves both positive and negative responses – doing acts of love (vv 9-13) and avoiding acts contrary to love (vv14-21).

The advantages of this sub-division, apart from the visual readability it affords, lie in its underpinning of the positive-negative flow of Paul’s rhetoric - a characteristic of his general way of proceeding, in line with Greco-Roman practice - as well as in its structural correspondence with the three sub-divisions in Chapter 13. It also assumes that the opening verses (12:1-2), making an appeal ‘in view of the mercies of God’, exercise a governing role over the entire unit, ending with a confirming *inclusio*-type appeal for Christian action in accord with children of light (13:11-14).

### **Considering some possible internal de-limiters within Chapter 13**

Chapter 13 falls so naturally into three sub-divisions that arguing for alternative internal divisions seems unreasonable. The first sub-section (13:1-7) is linked with 12:14-21 by the notions of God’s wrath/judgment (12:19; 13:2-3). If Christians are not to avenge themselves (12:19-20), it is because vengeance belongs to God. In the present evil age it is the state which administers God’s judgment (13:1-3). If Rome

has authority it is because God has allowed it. Obedience to civic authority is part of a Christian's duty of love. This includes paying one's debts to the state.

The second sub-section (13:8-10) reads like a short digression on the link between love and the law. Again, as in 12:9-21 there are negative and positive demands: 'Owe no one anything' and 'love one another'. The reference to 'no one' would seem to indicate that Paul is still thinking in terms of love directed towards a wider circle than that of the Christian community.

The third sub-section (13:11-14) is clearly eschatological in tone, yet is not unrelated to the previous sub-section. It opens with a reminder 'you already know...'

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου  
ἐγερεθῆναι.

The end is near. A new day is dawning. Two images underlie Paul's appeal for a way of life in tune with the new era – the images of waking up and of changing clothes. The image of awakening – of moving from the darkness of night into the dawn of a new day – suggests transformed Christian consciousness. Changing the apparel of night for that of the day suggests transformed behavior. Christians must cast off the works of darkness (evil deeds) and dress for battle ('let us arm ourselves', v 13).

It would be difficult to suggest sub-divisions of Chapter 13 other than those presented here. They are self-evident and accepted by commentators generally. However, if one were to allow imagination run wild and envisage a Chapter 13 without the first sub-section (vv 1-7), the remaining two sub-sections (13:8-10 and 11-14) would still constitute a coherent literary unit, even if somewhat 'out of orbit'. The context and the grounding provided by 13:1-7 give these sub-units their *raison d'être*, which is another way of saying that the so-called interpolation theory does



not solve the ‘problem’ generated by 13:1-7. For those who regard the teaching in 13:1-7 as a parenthesis for a particular time and place there is every reason to read it as integral to chapter 13. While it is true that the language seems more secular than that typically used by Paul in Romans (but see 1:18-32!), and the command to be subservient to civil authority (even evil authority) seems questionable to contemporary ears, it is nevertheless in tune with civic thinking in the Greco-Roman era.<sup>204</sup> Paul did not live in a balloon! For those who wish to transpose that teaching into other contexts not envisaged by Paul, there may be some solace in the possibility that 13:1-7 is an interpolation. However, this study follows the majority position that 13:1-7 is integral to the section under review and integral to Romans as a whole.

#### **Noting some confirmatory semantic signals in the dyad (12:1-13:14)**

The notion of metamorphosis (μεταμορφοῦσθε, v 2) is a key-concept linking 12:1-21 with 13:1:14. The behavior of the Christian is to be changed, re-made and ‘re-formed’ behavior, ‘modeled on your new mind’ (12:2). The word ‘model’ or ‘schema’ (νοός v 2) suggests a new template for living. This is the way of love (ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρὸν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ) and service (εἶτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ (v 7). The double repetition of ἀγάπη and of διακονία is striking. Not less striking is the recurrence of the νοός cognate προνοούμενοι v 17) and the *inclusio*-type re-appearance of the love verb ἀγαθῷ in the final verse (12:21). One could validly ‘read’ Romans 12 as a tapestry woven around the notions of transformation, love and service, as the semantic field indicates.

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<sup>204</sup> See Talbert, 296-297.

The stark contrast between flesh and spirit and the works associated with each has already been highlighted in Romans 8. It features here again in 12/13. Chapter 12 opens with a plea, ‘present your bodies (τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν. as a living sacrifice...’ The image of body, reminiscent of 1 Cor, pervades what follows. The Christian community is like a body with many parts, where all work in harmony and interdependence (12:2-13). The positive-negative parenesis continues in 12:14-21. Expressing love in difficult situations makes positive and negative demands: ‘Bless those who persecute you. Never curse them...’ (12:14). The Pauline hapax legomenon (μὴ καταρᾶσθε) has given commentators reason to link this section with the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 4:44) and the Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:28), although it does not reproduce the explicit teaching of Jesus, ‘love your enemies’.<sup>205</sup> The deeds of the flesh (τῆς σαρκὸς 13:14) are contrary to the deeds of love required of members of the body, and hence are evil (κακοῦ 12:21). The body-flesh battle is emphasized in the structure of 12/13, with opening plea for love (φιλαδελφία 12:9 and ἀγάπη, 12:2; 13:3) and closing plea for victory over evil (κακοῦ 12:21 and τῆς σαρκὸς 13:14).

A third confirming semantic feature is worth noting. It is that of the light-darkness imagery, with which the unit closes (13:11-14). It is eschatological in character, as is the opening section of the unit (12:1-2) Battle lines are drawn for the final conflict between the forces of evil and the forces of good. ‘The time’ (τὸν καιρὸν) has come (13:11). There are choices to be made. The body is involved: Offer your bodies... (12:1). Clothing for the body is involved: Cast off the clothing of darkness. Put on the clothing (battle armor) of light (13:11-14). There is more

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<sup>205</sup> See Matera, 292.

*inclusio*-type balancing at work here. The body is called to wakefulness. This is associated with daylight and with the reflected light of flashing armor, with preparedness for living according to the new schema. It means dressing in the armor of Jesus Christ, and putting aside the works of the flesh (ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιείσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν). The repetition of πρόνοιαν here takes one back to 12:2 and 12:17. The Christian is the one who lives according to the new template, with a new mind and a new power to love.

Much has been written about 12:19-21 and Paul's invoking of Proverbs 25:21-22 (LXX). Within the context of leaving revenge to God, or 'leaving room for the (eschatological) wrath of God', these verses link quite convincingly with 1:18-32. The wrath of God (ὀργὴ θεοῦ) contrasts strongly with δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, but the mercy of God (οἰκτιρῶν θεοῦ) encapsulates both. Perhaps this is why Paul quotes Deut 32:35 in a form close to the MT. Paul's appeal in 12:1 mentions the mercy of God. While the image of heaping live coals on the head of the enemy may suggest something unmerciful or even revengeful, there are other possible meanings which have been lost in space and time.<sup>206</sup> Whatever about the interpretation of this puzzling text, the image of fire here at the demarcation line at the end of Romans 12 (vv 19-21) is not far removed from that of light and battle armory ('the bearing of the

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<sup>206</sup> Fitzmyer quotes the teaching of Ambrosiaster, Jerome and Augustine that 'burning coals were a symbol of the pangs of shame'. For others, including Morenz, the Proverbs text relied on an ancient Egyptian legend which associated burning coals with repentance: 'A penitent carries on his head a dish of burning charcoal to express his repentance when he had wronged someone'. Fitzmyer adds: 'Paul's use of Deut 32 with Proverbs 25 would suggest a qualified way of adding to the measure of an enemy's sins' (J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, NJBC (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 863-864).

sword' 13:4) and the call to arms at the end of Romans 13 (vv 11-14). It is not fanciful to presume some kind of subliminal link with the new kind of sacrifice suggested in Dan 3:38-40<sup>207</sup> and with 'offering your bodies as a living sacrifice' at the beginning of the unit (Rom12:1-2), The ancient sacrifices/holocausts, which satisfied liturgical demands in a former era, are to be replaced in the new era by the offering of one's body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – a sacrifice 'worthy of thinking beings' (12:2). Images work by association, and the imagery of light, fire, sword, military apparel and battle plays a significant role - together with the semantic signals mentioned - in delineating Romans 12-13 as a literary unit distinct from all others.

### **3. Considering the Two-fold Literary Unit 12:121/13:1-14 within the overall scheme of Romans**

It has been noted that the 'therefore' with which the unit opens may well be the most important in Romans. This means that Romans 1-11 forms the basis for what follows in 12:1ff. The revealing of the Gospel - the Good News of Jesus Christ - as God's merciful design for the salvation of humankind has been the main concern of Paul in Romans 1-4. He then proceeds to show how faith guarantees deliverance from sin, death and the Law (Romans 5-7) before dealing with characteristics of life in the

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<sup>207</sup> Dan 3:38-40: "We have at this time...no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense, no place where we can offer you the first-fruits and win your favour. But may the contrite spirit, the humbled soul be as acceptable to you as holocausts of rams and bulls, as thousands of fattened lambs."

Spirit and the claims of the cosmic Christ in Chapter 8. The vexed question of the destiny of those Jews who refuse to recognize the Messiah is treated in detail in Romans 9-11. That section ends with a magnificent hymn to God's mercy (11:32-36).

The section under consideration opens with a plea: 'Therefore... Consider God's mercy...' It is in continuity with what has gone before, although there is discontinuity too. Eleven chapters have been devoted to announcing 'the Gospel of God' and what that means. At 12:1 the focus turns to the practical implications of accepting that Gospel. In a word, the person who accepts the Gospel will stand out as different because he/she will love the neighbor, whether that neighbor is inside or outside of the Christian circle. Chapter 12 spells out some of the challenges presented by living in an ordered, loving way within the Christian community. It does so in three clearly-defined stages (12:1-8; 9-13; 14-21). Chapter 13 deals with the challenges presented to Christians as they relate in an ordered, loving way to those outside the Christian circle. These challenges are also presented in three clearly-defined stages (13:1-7; 8-10; 11-14).

In a word, the literary unit 12:1-13:14 deals with the practical demands of loving the neighbor, whether that neighbor resides inside or outside the Christian community. The demands of Righteousness are not confined. The Righteousness of which Paul has been speaking in Romans 1-11 is not about being right but about being in right relationship. Here, as throughout Paul's Letter, *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* has not gone off the radar!

## Panel 1: 12:1-21

### Be different from the world: Love

12 Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν.<sup>2</sup> καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.<sup>3</sup> Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως.<sup>4</sup> καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πράξιν,<sup>5</sup> οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σώμα ἔσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἰς ἀλλήλων μέλη.<sup>6</sup> ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητεῖαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,<sup>7</sup> εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ,

### Love

<sup>8</sup> εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει· ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.<sup>9</sup> Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστυγούντες τὸ πονηρὸν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ,<sup>10</sup> τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,<sup>11</sup> τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες,<sup>12</sup> τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες,<sup>13</sup> ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

### Do not repay evil with evil

<sup>14</sup> εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας [ὑμᾶς], εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε.<sup>15</sup> χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων.<sup>16</sup> τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονούντες, μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονούντες ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι. μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς.<sup>17</sup> μηδὲν κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων.<sup>18</sup> εἰ δυνατόν τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες.<sup>19</sup> μὴ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδικοῦντες, ἀγαπητοί, ἀλλὰ δότε τόπον τῇ ὀργῇ, γέγραπται γάρ· ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει κύριος.<sup>20</sup> ἀλλὰ ἐὰν πεινᾷ ὁ ἐχθρὸς σου, ψώμιζε αὐτόν· ἐὰν διψᾷ, πότιζε αὐτόν· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν ἄνθρακας πυρὸς σωρεύσεις ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.<sup>21</sup> μὴ νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νικά ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

## Panel 2: 13:1-14

### Be different from the world: Respect civil authority

13 Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὐσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσίν. <sup>2</sup> ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθέστηκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται. <sup>3</sup> οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργω ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ. θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβείσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν· τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποίει, καὶ ἕξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς· <sup>4</sup> θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκῆ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν ἔκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι. <sup>5</sup> διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. <sup>6</sup> διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε· λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσὶν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες. <sup>7</sup> ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν.

### Love

<sup>8</sup> Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε εἰ μὴ τὸ ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν· ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν. <sup>9</sup> τὸ γὰρ οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις, οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις, καὶ εἴ τις ἑτέρα ἐντολή, ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται [ἐν τῷ]· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.

<sup>10</sup> ἢ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἢ ἀγάπη.

### Live in the light

<sup>11</sup> Καὶ τοῦτο εἰδότες τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι ὥρα ἤδη ὑμᾶς ἐξ ὕπνου ἐγερθῆναι, νῦν γὰρ ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. <sup>12</sup> ἢ νῦξ προέκοψεν, ἢ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτοῦς, ἐνδυσώμεθα [δὲ] τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός. <sup>13</sup> ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ, <sup>14</sup> ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιείσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν.

# EXCURSUS

## Clarifying a Central Concept

### A Note on the Translation of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in Romans

The phrase occurs eight times and within four contexts in Romans (1:16-17; 3:1-8, 21-26; 9:14-18; 10:1-4)<sup>208</sup> where all but one of its occurrences in the Pauline corpus are found,<sup>209</sup> yet it may well be “the key theological concept in the whole letter”.<sup>210</sup>

The Greek word *δικαιοσύνη* occurs thirty-four times in Romans alone, and a total of fifty-eight times in the Pauline corpus. It is absent from Colossians, 1 and 2

Thessalonians and Philemon. Its meaning is much debated. There are six Greek words belonging to the ‘righteousness’ group, if one includes nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. These occur fifty times in Romans, and more than a hundred times in the Pauline corpus. Paul introduces the concept in Romans without defining it, presumably because he reckons that his auditors will understand what he means.

S.K. Williams is of the opinion that Paul ‘virtually defines’ the meaning of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in Rom 3:1-7. It is “God’s faithfulness to his promises to Abraham,

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<sup>208</sup> Romans dominates the Pauline instances of the phrase which occurs also in 1Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21 and probably twice in Philippians 3:9; possibly also in Gal 2:21; 3:21; 5:5. See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 677 and footnote 3, p.1113.

<sup>209</sup> The exception is found in 2 Cor 5:21.

<sup>210</sup> Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul. His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 317.



promises which focus upon the eschatological gathering of all the nations into the people of God.”<sup>211</sup> While R. Bultmann<sup>212</sup> and H. Conzelmann<sup>213</sup> understand δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as a favour bestowed by God, that is, as righteousness imputed to human beings, E. Käsemann<sup>214</sup> and P. Stuhlmacher<sup>215</sup> interpret the phrase as a *terminus technicus* already present in Jewish apocalyptic discourse, from which Paul drew his theology.<sup>216</sup> Because of the recurrence of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and its cognates in key contexts in Romans, and because it is personified and given a voice in Rom 5:17 and 10:5-8 (in the latter case personified as ‘Righteousness by Faith’), how one understands the phrase will determine how one ‘reads’ what Paul is saying in the

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<sup>211</sup> S. K. Williams, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Romans.” *JBL* 99.2 (1980), 241-290, cited in J. M. Bassler, *Navigating Paul* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 59.

<sup>212</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. K. Grobel. Vol. 1 New York: Scribner 1951), 285.

<sup>213</sup> H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*. Trans. J. Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 220. Here he writes, “Philippians 3:9 offers the key for the definition of the concept”.

<sup>214</sup> See footnote 141.

<sup>215</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 73.

<sup>216</sup> Bultmann’s understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as God’s gift of righteousness, appropriated by individuals, was corrected by Käsemann, who insisted that the term refers also to God’s own righteousness.

Letter.<sup>217</sup> Is the genitive θεοῦ to be understood in the subjective/possessive sense, referring to an attribute or quality of God, for example God’s uprightness or righteousness or impartiality? Or should it be understood in an objective genitive sense, referring to a quality or gift of God bestowed on human beings? While it seems that Paul uses the phrase in both senses (for example, subjective genitive in 1:17; 3:5, and objective genitive in 2 Cor 5:21) the predominant use in Romans is generally taken by scholars in the post-Käsemann era to be subjective genitive.<sup>218</sup>

The problem does not end there. The phrase itself, the equivalent of *sedeq* ‘Elohim in Hebrew, does not exist in the LXX. There are approximations in Deut 33:21 (*sidqat YHWH*) and in Judg 5:11 (*sidqot YHWH*), which are translated in English as ‘the just decrees of the Lord’ (NRSV) and ‘the triumphs of the Lord’ (RSV) respectively. Neither fits easily with Paul’s use of the term. Earlier Hebrew usage of the term *tsedeq* or *tsedaqah* reflected an understanding of God as upright, righteous or just in dealing with human beings. *Tsedeq* or *tsedaqah* was also predicated of human beings in their relations to one another. At root, *tsedeq* and its cognates expressed right relationships between God and humankind as well as right

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<sup>217</sup> For a detailed discussion of Righteousness personified in Romans, see Dodson, Joseph R. “The Voices of Scripture. Citations and Personifications in Paul.” *IBR* Vol. 20. No.3 (2010), 419-432.

<sup>218</sup> Käsemann challenged the prevailing Protestant view of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* as that gift by which humans are acquitted or ‘counted as’ righteous before God. See Ernst Käsemann, “The ‘Righteousness of God’ in Paul” in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM Press, 1969, 172. Also Fitzmyer, *Romans* (New York: Doubleday, AB, 1992), 105, and N.T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 10-11.

relationships among members of God's people.<sup>219</sup> It denoted both an ethical and a judicial relationship. The judicial relationship was often understood in forensic terms, as for example, acquitting in a court of law (Jer 12:1; Isa 3:13; Ps 9:9). This is the chief meaning ascribed to it by Barnett. He writes: "'Righteousness of God' for Paul meant being acquitted by God of wrongdoing (negatively) but being declared to be 'in the right' with God (positively). This 'righteousness' is God's gift to the unworthy, made possible by Christ's death, and 'revealed' in the message of the gospel (1:16-17)."<sup>220</sup> Sometimes the Hebrew *tsedeq* was used to designate aspects of God's covenantal relationship with Israel, for example, God's expectations of Israel and the responsibility of the Hebrew people as partners in the covenant (Exod 9:27; Deut 3:24; Job 34:17; Isa 1:21; Psalm 36:10; Psalm 84: 10-11). It was also associated with kingly right behaviour, and with the ratification by the people of a covenant which included structured relationships between a king and his subjects.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Robert Jewett writes, quoting the work of Hermann Cremer: "The biblical concept of righteousness was primarily relational, associated with covenantal loyalty, an insight that subsequent scholars have largely accepted". See R. Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 141.

<sup>220</sup> Paul Barnett. *Paul, Missionary of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 192-193. In Footnote 13 he offers a helpful comment: "Several of Paul's incidental uses of the 'righteousness' vocabulary help us to understand its meaning in the more intensely argued passages: Romans 2:13, 'For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God (δικαιος του θεου), but the doers of the Law who will be justified (δικαιόθέςονται) where the parallelism shows that to be 'justified' is to be 'righteous before God'."

<sup>221</sup> See Deuteronomy 1-11, and commentary on this by Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009), 700.

The exact Hebrew equivalent of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* occurs in DSS, IQM 4:6 (*sedeq 'El*) and in IQS 10:25; 11:12 (*sidqat 'El*). This represents a significant clue to its use in Romans because the meaning of the Hebrew *sadqat*, referring to God's uprightness or righteousness, had taken on a nuanced meaning in post-exilic times, particularly among particular groups like the community at Qumran. It assumed an extra semantic dimension, "the quality whereby God acquits his people, manifesting towards them a gracious, salvific power in a just judgement".<sup>222</sup> Paul adopts this nuanced meaning of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in 3:5, and probably in 1:17; 3:21-22, 25-26; 10:3. Stuhlmacher refers to this divine attribute as "Gottes heilsetzende Macht" in exercising a just judgement.<sup>223</sup> The notion of 'making whole' as well as 'saving' is respected in this German phrase, though not in the more common *Gerechtigkeit* used in most German translations. Käsemann offers a comprehensive definition: "God's power working itself out forensically in the sphere of the Covenant".<sup>224</sup> Douglas A. Campbell, while admitting that the debate about the Pauline concept of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* is so widespread and complex that it defies exhaustive analysis, offers what he calls a 'definitive insight': "If Christ is the definitive disclosure of the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, then if we know what Christ is, we can infer immediately the content of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. In more formal terms, if A is revealed definitively by B, then to

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<sup>222</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 106. But see Psalms 36:10 (35:11), Psalm 84:10-11, and Psalm 101:1 (LXX) where the Psalmist merges the divine attributes of justice (righteousness) and mercy. I believe that Paul, in Romans, is working from this 'merged' matrix.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>224</sup> Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980), 29.

know B is also to know A.”<sup>225</sup> While this may sound like a logical solution to the problem, it does not bring clarity, because what Paul says in 1:16-17 is that the gospel (not Christ) is the revelation or disclosure of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. We are still left with the double problem of trying to establish Paul’s understanding of both the gospel (most often termed by him ‘the gospel of God’ (εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ as in Rom1:1) and that which the gospel reveals, namely δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. All we can say with certainty is that the Hebrew understanding of the disputed phrase changed over centuries, and that it is likely that Paul was aware of its developed and more nuanced connotations, as well as of those more traditional and ancient.

### **LXX translation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ**

From the third century BCE onwards the concept of God’s covenant fidelity and graciousness began to merge with notions of uprightness and just judgement, conveying a portrait of God as both just and merciful. Thus in Isaiah 56:1(LXX) “My salvation is near and coming; my righteousness (*sedeq*) is about to be revealed”. Here *sedeq* is translated as *ἐλεος* revealing a changed understanding of God’s righteousness, while at the same time conflating the notions of salvation, mercy and righteousness in the word *ἐλεος*. God is just. God is upright and impartial. God delivers just judgement. But God is also merciful and compassionate. This is the LXX understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, even though the phrase does not appear in print in OT canonical books. God’s *hesed* in Genesis 19:19; 20:13 is translated in LXX as *ἐλεος* (mercy) while *sedaqah* in Ezekiel 18:19-21 is translated similarly. In

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<sup>225</sup> Campbell, *Ibid.*, 683-684.

summary, to cite Fitzmyer once again, “The Pauline idea of ‘God’s uprightness’ verges indeed on his ‘mercy’ but it is not the same.”<sup>226</sup>

Paul is resorting to a rich theological vein when he employs the term δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans. Whether or not he was aware of the Qumran document 1QS 11:9-15, he employs in Romans a complex and comprehensive theology of God’s righteousness which is close to that source,<sup>227</sup> and to late BCE understandings of *sedeq*.<sup>228</sup> Because of the richness and multi-faceted nature of the notion δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as employed by Paul in Romans, translation of the term into English and other languages has proved problematic. “No little part of the problem in explaining the Pauline use of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ has been its English translation.”<sup>229</sup> So we find the passive voice usually translated as ‘we being justified’ (Rom 5:1) because ‘we being righteous’ does not correspond with current English usage,

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<sup>226</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 107. Also Morna Hooker, *Paul. A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld) 2004, 74-75.

<sup>227</sup> “If I stagger, God’s grace is my salvation forever. If I stumble, because of a sin of the flesh, my judgement will be in accordance with the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) which stands forever. In his mercy has he drawn me close, and with his favours will he render judgement of me. In his righteous fidelity (δικαιοσύνη) he has judged me; in his bounteous goodness he has expiated all my iniquities, and in his righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) he cleanses me of human defilement and of human sinfulness, that I may praise God for his righteousness (δικαιοσύνη)...” (J.A Fitzmyer, “Justification by Faith in Pauline Thought” in David E. Aune, ed., *Rereading Paul Together* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), 80.

<sup>228</sup> For another example of a nuanced usage of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ see DSS, 1 QS X:11-12, “I will say to God, “My Righteousness” and “Author of my well-being”. Cited in Hooker, *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>229</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 258.

despite Stuhlmacher's brave attempts at breaking the mould,<sup>230</sup> and Morna Hooker's resorting to 'God's rightwising'.<sup>231</sup>

The Vulgate rendering is *justitia Dei*, which was translated into English as 'the justice of God', into French as 'la justice de Dieu', into Spanish as 'la justicia de Dios' and into Italian as 'la giustizia di Dio'. Because the notion of justice in our Western tradition is most often understood as retributive justice it does not respect the constituent elements in Paul's use of *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. While the Hebrew tradition did not place the divine attributes of justice and mercy in opposition (see for example Psalm 84:10: 'Mercy and Justice have met...'), Western cultures tended, as they still do, to understand justice and mercy as contrasting, and sometimes as opposing attributes. For this reason alone, to translate *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* as 'the justice of God' is unsatisfactory. Brendan Byrne notes the inadequacy of the term 'justice', frequently found in older Catholic bibles. He writes, 'The best shorthand synonym for "righteousness" is "faithfulness" – with the connotation of faithfulness within the requirements of a relationship.'<sup>232</sup> Recent scholarship attempts to identify Paul's *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* with Jesus' references to the 'kingdom of God'.<sup>233</sup> While there is

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<sup>230</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

<sup>231</sup> Morna Hooker, *Paul. An Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 73-78. Also Morna Hooker's unpublished Paper, "Paul the Pastor", delivered in Dublin at Annual Meeting of the Irish Biblical Association, April 2007.

<sup>232</sup> Brendan Byrne, *Galatians and Romans* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 184

<sup>233</sup> Paul Barnett, *Paul. Missionary of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 192-196. He concludes: "that Paul's employment of his key concept, 'righteousness of God', was consistent with

some validity in this approach, since both notions presuppose the gracious mercy of God, it does not solve the problem for the translator of Paul's ubiquitous phrase.

With Jouette Bassler I therefore ask the question: Is it possible to give a summary statement of Paul's understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ?<sup>234</sup> I concur with her summary answer:

“Paul is convinced that God's righteousness is revealed in God's constancy, consistency, dependability, trustworthiness and faithfulness. Sometimes he emphasizes God's consistent righteous justice; sometimes he emphasizes God's trustworthiness in fulfilling the promises made to Abraham, and sometimes he emphasizes God's faithfulness to Israel. Paul's argument (*sic* in Romans) is inexorably moving toward the conclusion that God's righteousness is now active in Christ, to include Gentiles in salvation, but along the way it ‘means’ a number of things.”<sup>235</sup>

So what are the options when it comes to finding the most suitable English translation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as Paul employs it in Romans? Firstly, as we have seen, an exact equivalent is not available, because of the limitations of the English language. ‘The justice of God’ is too narrow a translation. ‘The uprightness of God’,

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and in genuine extension of Jesus' key concept of ‘kingdom of God’ and that both were grace-based and ritual-free.”

<sup>234</sup> Jouette M. Bassler, *Navigating Paul. An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 65.

<sup>235</sup> Bassler, *Ibid.*, 65.



used by Luke Timothy Johnson in his commentary on Romans,<sup>236</sup> is slightly better, because it does not limit the meaning to retributive or forensic domains. It also has the merit of encompassing a vibrant or life-dispensing element which lies behind the midrashic exegesis of the text of Habakuk 2:4, cited by Paul in the crucial announcement of theme in Rom 1:17: “The upright man shall live by his faithfulness”. The chiasmic play on words in the original Greek is significant:

δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν,  
καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.

The upright (humble) person is drinking from the source, while the unfaithful (proud) person is like a drooping plant, in need of life-giving water. Uprightness and fidelity are linked in the context of life-sustaining hydration. ‘Uprightness’ as applied to God carries something of the concept of wholeness or integrity as well as *hesed* or steadfast love. A glance at Psalm 110:7 confirms the Hebrew association of uprightiness with drinking from a stream: “He shall drink from the stream by the wayside and therefore he shall stand upright”. Furthermore, as Richard Hays suggests,<sup>237</sup> Paul may well have had the text of Psalm 98:2-3 in mind as he penned Rom 1:16-17. It reads: “God has revealed his uprightiness (‘*vindication*’ in some translations) to the nations, mindful of his steadfast love and faithfulness for the

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<sup>236</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001). But also “The argument of Romans is, at root, simple. God is one and God is fair” (Ibid., p. 17).

<sup>237</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989) 36-37.

House of Israel”.<sup>238</sup> But ‘uprightness’ as an English word does not encompass the notion of *hesed* - ‘faithfulness’ or ‘steadfast love’- even though it seems a better choice than ‘justice’ or ‘justness’, because of established forensic associations with these latter words. English words like ‘integrity’, ‘fairness’, ‘wholesomeness’ or ‘salvation’ will not do justice to Paul’s understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Romans.

N.T. Wright has settled for ‘God’s righteousness’ as the most satisfactory translation, but he qualifies his choice with a lengthy explanation.<sup>239</sup> In his view, God’s righteousness is essentially God’s covenant fidelity, by which God promised to save not only Israel but the whole world. Paul’s invocation of Isaiah 40-55 in Romans is an indication of the bigger question underlying the total argument: How is God to be faithful to Israel (now that the Gentiles are included in God’s salvific plan) and to the promises made to Abraham and to the renewal of all creation? Wright continues: “The covenant with Israel was always designed to be God’s means of saving and blessing the entire cosmos... This is precisely what Romans 9-11 is about, not as an appendix to the letter but as its proper climax”.<sup>240</sup> Wright’s reading of God’s covenant-righteousness, which is also that of James D.G. Dunn, Helmut Koester and others, corresponds with the understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ which

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<sup>238</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>239</sup> N.T. Wright, “New Perspectives on Paul”, Proceedings of 10<sup>th</sup> Edinburgh Dogmatic Conference, August 2003.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

underlies the thesis proposed here.<sup>241</sup> Both Dunn and Wright propose that “the Righteousness of God” refers in the main to God’s covenantal fidelity to God’s people. Yet, as Brian Pounds suggests, there are good reasons for allowing for a coalescence of connotations, both forensic and moral, in several of Paul’s statements in the first three chapters of Romans.<sup>242</sup>

But the translator is still left with a dilemma: whether to choose a somewhat archaic word, ‘righteousness’, which, though not a perfect choice, seems to be the least confining in its semantic domains, or to resort to other options like ‘justice’, ‘uprightness’, ‘faithfulness’, ‘impartiality’, ‘fidelity’, ‘covenant fidelity’, ‘rightwising’ or the more colloquial ‘fairness’.<sup>243</sup> Working within translator’s limitations, I opt for ‘the Righteousness of God’ as the best English translation of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. It is not perfect. But it seems the best available. Because it is rarely, if ever, used in everyday parlance, the word ‘righteousness’ may well convey more of the complexity of meaning intended by Paul than the other options

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<sup>241</sup> Helmut Koester. “*Paul’s Proclamation of God’s Justice for the Nations.*” The Bellarmine Lecture at St Louis University, St Louis, MO, October 4, 2004. Printed in full in *Theology Digest*. 51 (4). Winter 2004. St Louis, MO: Theology Digest, 2004.

<sup>242</sup> S. Brian Pounds, “Romans 4:1-8 as a Test Case for the New Perspective on Paul” in *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, Vol. 41, Number 4 (November 2011), 213-217. He cites Rom 2:1,2, 3, 5, 12, 16, 27; 3:6 as examples where a forensic reading seems more in keeping with the context, and concludes “The terms “justify” and “righteousness” are best understood as having both a forensic and a moral connotation.”(p. 221).

<sup>243</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 346ff. Here Johnson translates δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as ‘God’s Righteousness’, though elsewhere ‘fairness’.

mentioned. It commands a broader semantic field than more familiar words like ‘justice’, ‘fidelity’, ‘impartiality’, ‘uprightness’, ‘integrity’ and the like. Each of these has its merits, and all have the advantage of being intelligible as contemporary English, but none is sufficiently comprehensive.

Translation from one language to another always involves making choices at interpretive as well as linguistic levels, with consequent gain and loss. In this case I am opting for the more inclusive semantic richness of the term δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as used by Paul in Romans, while settling for ‘the Righteousness of God’ as a less than perfect English translation. This rather archaic English phrase is redolent of another ancient era, evocative of domains ecclesial just as plainchant may be of ancient liturgy, and it is ambivalent enough to allow for some of the semantic richness which Paul invoked when using the original ambivalent Greek phrase in Romans.<sup>244</sup>

In following this path I remain in the company of the majority of scholars who opt for ‘the Righteousness of God’ as the best available English translation of

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<sup>244</sup> Jewett rightly draws attention to the correlative issue of the resonance that the term would have had for a Roman audience. He writes: “Both in the missional program for the early church, and in Roman imperial propaganda, salvation implies the restoration of wholeness on a corporate as well as on an individual level...Its primary scope in biblical theology and in Roman civil religion is the group, that is, the nation and the world, rather than the individual. The stunning feature of Paul’s thesis, therefore, is its contention that preaching the gospel to establish faith-communities, rather than force of arms or apocalyptic military miracles is the means by which such righteousness is restored.” Robert Jewett, *Romans. A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 143. The whole-world (even cosmic) dimension of righteousness has a direct bearing on the reading of Romans proposed in this study.

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.<sup>245</sup> Employing a capital R for ‘Righteousness’ is my considered way of respecting Paul’s idea that Righteousness cannot be attained by human endeavour or by exact observance of the Law. Righteousness belongs to God. It is revealed though faith. It is exemplified in Christ. It is dispensed gratuitously to all who are ‘in Christ.’

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<sup>245</sup> Fitzmyer uses ‘uprightness’ in his Commentary on Romans, but ‘righteousness’ elsewhere. Among those choosing ‘righteousness of God’ are James D.G. Dunn, N.T. Wright, Robert Jewett, Frank Matera, Brendan Byrne, Douglas Moo, Peter Stuhlmacher, Ben Witherington, A.K. Grieb, Richard N. Longenecker, Ronald Witherup and Morna Hooker.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED THROUGH FAITH**

#### **Romans 1-4**

##### **Three dyads: 1:1-15; 1:16-3:20; 3:21-4:25**

**Thesis proposed and illustrated – Structure illuminating Content - An Analysis of the Functioning of Structural Dyadic Panels in Rom 1-4 – General Observations.**

#### **Introduction**

The following detailed analysis of the functioning of one of the key literary structures in Romans, namely dyadic literary blocs or dyads, sometimes called diptychs,<sup>246</sup> will demonstrate how structure illumines content in the first phase of Paul’s argument/message in the Letter (Romans 1-4).

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<sup>246</sup> I will refrain from using the term ‘diptych’, although it has been employed by Brown, Brodie and others in similar contexts. My reason for this is based on the word’s strong association with the world of visual art. While language in the form of text may, at times, be regarded as visual art, there is more to language than the visual component. In terms of ancient letter-writing, incorporating Greco-Roman rhetorical features so characteristic of Paul, the oral/aural component may well have been more important than the visual. Hence, ‘two-part structure’ or ‘dyad’ or ‘segment’ will be used to denote the basic literary unit in 9 of the 10 structural divisions in Romans. In the case of the key seventh structural division, which differs from all of the others, the term ‘triad’ will be used.

**TABLE 5**

**BLOCK 1 (Rom 1-4)**

**God’s Righteousness revealed through faith –not works**

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| First Dyad: Good News of God for all nations  | Good News of God in Jesus (1:1-7)  | Proclaimed in the whole world through faith (1:8-15)  |
| Second Dyad: God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works                                       | Theme; justification by faith (1:16-17)<br>Gentiles under sin’s dominion (1:18-32) | Jews also under sin’s dominion (2:1-3:8). Justification for all through faith-not works of the Law (3:9-20) |
| Third Dyad: God’s Righteousness, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, revealed outside the Law – in Christ/in Abraham’s faith | The role of Jesus’ sacrifice (3:21-31)   | The role of Abraham’s faith (4:1-25)  |

- 1. Two-part Prologue (1:1-7 and 1:8-15)**
- 2. Two-part Apologia: God’s Good News is needed by all - Jews and Greeks – both under sin’s dominion (1:16-32 and 2:1–3:8). God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works (3:9-20)**
- 3. Two-part Apologia: God’s Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ) revealed through faith outside the Law (through Christ’s sacrifice)(3:21-31); δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ revealed through Abraham’s faith outside the Law (4:1-25)**

## **The First Dyad (1:1-15)**

### **Theme: Good News of God for all nations**

#### **Introduction**

From any perspective the unit Rom 1:1-15 reads as an introduction to Paul's Letter. It is distinctly separated in tone and in content from what follows. In many ways it corresponds with Paul's conventional manner of greeting those to whom he writes, though it also departs notably from patterns in other Pauline letters. The standard features of introductions are in evidence: Paul gives thanks to God for those whom he addresses, commends them for their faith 'spoken of all over the world', states his intention in writing to them, and introduces himself as apostle of the Gospel of God (vv. 8-15). Quite remarkable, however, is the dense and formal opening sentence (vv.1-7), which distinguishes the opening of Romans as solemn and cosmic on a grand scale.

#### **The First Dyad (1:1-15): Two-fold Prologue**

There are definite indications that Rom 1:1-15, while mirroring many of the features of a *propositio* for a large discourse, consists of two main literary blocs or 'panels', namely 1:1-7 and 1:8-15. The statement represented by vv.1-7 is originally one dense and comprehensive sentence in Greek. As an introduction, it is public in register, world-embracing in its scope and non-specific in tone. By contrast, the following sub-unit, vv. 8-15, reads like a revisionist introduction, personal in tone, studded with 'I-statements', self-revelatory of Paul in a way that contrasts strongly



with the formal introduction in vv.1-7. Some noteworthy aspects of the dyadic and dialogical relationship between Rom 1:1-7 and 1:8-15 will be considered later.

**TABLE 6**

**First Panel (1:1-7)**

| <b>Proto-prologue: 1:1-7</b> | <b>One dense statement in Gk</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Formal Register              | Essentials about the sender, Paul, apostle, about the core-message, and the addressees - Παῦλος δούλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ ... πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ                            |
| Generic                      | No personal details given. Paul is ‘a servant of Christ Jesus’ - δούλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. The message is for ‘all in Rome’. It requires an all-embracing response –the obedience of faith, ὑπακοὴν πίστεως                        |
| Macro-Perspective            | The message has been foretold long ago in the Scriptures. It is for all nations -ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν... Blessing respects both Greek and Hebrew traditions - χάρις και εἰρήνη. It addresses the known world. |

Paul's self-identification is as 'slave (δοῦλος) of Christ Jesus', called to be an apostle, set apart or specially chosen to announce the message. His message (εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ) is the 'gospel of God', already foretold in the sacred scriptures by the prophets. This message is about God and God's magnificent plan of salvation. It touches into Israel's past. It engages the entire sweep of history. It is about the Son of God, humanly and historically descended from the seed of David, divinely marked out as Son of God by the power of his Resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This message is for all nations. It has a world-dimension, calling for an all-embracing response - 'the obedience of faith' - as Paul addresses 'all those in Rome' (πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ῥώμῃ). Paul's greeting here, unlike those in other Letters, takes the form of a blessing which embraces the known world. As the longest greeting in all of Paul's Letters, the proto-prologue ends with a blessing which is world-embracing as it respects both the Hebrew and Greek traditions, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη - 'Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' (1:7).

**TABLE 7****Second Panel (1:8-15)**

| <b>Deutero-prologue: 1:8-15</b> | <b>Five ‘I-statements’</b>  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Informal Register               | Personal details about the sender: He is grateful, worshipful; he prays for his addressees; he longs to see them, to share a gift with them, to be encouraged by them, to preach the Gospel to them. He seeks an excuse for his delay in visiting them. |
| Personal                        | Paul seeks to establish contact with believers in Rome whom he does not know. He mentions a previous plan to visit them, and his long-standing debt to them.  |
| Micro-perspective               | No mention of the world-dimension. This visit will be to Greeks and barbarians (non-Greeks) {Ελλησι,ν τε και. βαρβα,ροϊj( to a local church. Specific. Addressees are ‘brothers’ (αδελφοι,).  |

As if in revisionist mode, Paul changes to informal register and ‘I-statements’ beginning with ‘I thank my God...’ The tone is personal and intimate. Paul is addressing his audience from a different space. Panel 2 complements the opening panel by offering specifics – Paul establishes a personal link with the faith of his hearers. Their faith has been spoken of throughout the world (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ), 1:8.

As their apostle, Paul worships God spiritually by preaching the Good News of his Son. The register used is that of conversation and informal contact. He assures his hearers that he prays for them constantly and that he longs to visit them. Using the language of reciprocity, Paul speaks of sharing a spiritual gift, of finding

encouragement through the sharing of common faith. He calls his hearers ‘brothers’. He lets them know of his plans in the past to visit them – plans that have been foiled. He owes a debt to all – Greeks and pagans, educated and uneducated. This gives more than a hint of Paul’s intentions with regard to Rome. He has a duty to proclaim the Good News.

### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the First Dyad (1:1-15)**

Structurally, the constituent panels, Rom 1:1-7 and 1:8-15 form a coherent and focused prologue to Paul’s longest and most influential Letter. Taken together they form a dyad, where the second panel (vv. 8-15) serves in many ways as an elaboration of the first (vv. 1-7), or even as an alternative version. The unifying planks in this two-panel structure are the author, the message and the target audience/readership. These appear in different guises in both panels. Panel 1 consists of one comprehensive sentence where Paul introduces himself, states his purpose in writing to the Romans and identifies his target/readership as ‘God’s beloved in Rome’. Panel 2 (vv. 8-15) may be described as an elaboration, in five sentences, of Panel 1. It presents essential ancillary material which clarifies, reinforces or re-states the primary message. Of its very nature, this ancillary material is constitutive of the unit, as it is of Paul’s dialogical manner of communicating, of advancing an argument or of simply establishing common ground with his audience.

The dyad as a whole serves as a two-fold prologue to Paul’s Letter to the Romans. The two constituent panels (1:1-7 and 1:8-15) work in different ways and exemplify different registers and tonalities. But they are complementary and mutually illuminative one of another at many levels. Panel 1 (vv 1-7) paints the larger picture, embracing the whole of history and the entire cosmos. The ‘Gospel of

God' is for all. The call for the 'obedience of faith' (ὕπακοήν πίστεως) is to 'all nations'. While Panel 2 (vv 8-15) could conceivably work as a stand-alone prologue in the customary Pauline format, it works more convincingly as a complement to Panel 1, explanatory of it, focusing it and colouring it with Paul's personal witness and a conversational approach. In terms of progression, it advances Paul's imaged orientation towards Rome. At least four times he mentions his desire to visit Rome. This has the effect of establishing common ground with people he has never met, and strikes a note of balance between the formal and rather ostentatious grand opening of Panel 1 and a more informal, person-oriented approach to his projected Roman readership in this second panel. Paul is, after all, addressing an unfamiliar and mixed society (Greeks and Jewish converts, educated and uneducated, v 15). It is noteworthy that Rome as destination features climactically at the end of both panels.

## Summary

As a dyadic literary unit consisting of two panels (Romans 1:1-7 and 1:8-15), the double introduction to Romans functions dialogically. Each of the two panels 1:1-7 and 1:8-15 could conceivably function as a prologue. As a duo, they are mutually reinforcing. The unifying planks of author/message/recipient are central to both, and destination Rome functions climactically in both, yet the second panel serves almost in commentary fashion as an elaboration and clarification of the first. The semantic fields (Paul, Gospel, God, Christ Jesus, Jews and Greeks, Rome) correspond,<sup>247</sup> while the formal register and magisterial tone in Panel 1 contrasts with the informal and conversational tone in Panel 2. Holding both juxtaposed panels of the

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<sup>247</sup> See Greek Supplement, p.1.

Prologue in view, one catches a glimpse of Paul's *modus operandi* in introducing the Letter. As we shall see later, there is a discernible pattern here which is replicated many times in Romans. It provides strong evidence of a leading structure in the document and a key to its meaning. Table 8 presents a summary of key dialogical features observable in this opening dyad (1:1-1:15).

**TABLE 8**

**The First Dyad (1:1-15)**  
**Summary of dialogical/dyadic features**

| <b>Rom 1: 1-7</b>  | <b>Rom 1: 8-15</b>   |
|--|--|
| Proto-Prologue.  | Deutero-Prologue.  |
| Leitmotif: Paul and the Good News of God.  | Leitmotif: Paul and the Good News of God ('my' Good News).   |
| Mention of Author/Message/Recipient.   | Mention of Author/Message/Recipient.   |
| Formal register. Macro-Perspective.  | Informal register. Micro-perspective.  |
| Generic in its terms of reference.<br><br>One complex sentence (Gk).<br><br>Semantic field – Paul, God, Christ Jesus, Gospel, faith, Greeks, grace, peace.<br><br>Weighty and magisterial in tone. | Specific in its terms of reference.<br><br>5 'I-statements'. 4 expressions of personal wish to visit Rome.<br><br>Semantic field – Paul ("I" here). 'My' God, Christ Jesus, faith, Gospel, Greeks, spiritual gift.<br><br>Conversational and intimate in tone. |
| Resumé of Paul's travel plans generalised.   | Resumé of Paul's travel plans personalised.  |
| Destination – Rome.  | Destination – Rome.  |

## **The Second Dyad (1:16-3:20)**

### **Theme: God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works**

The dyad 1:16-3:20 is best considered as two panels, dialogical and complementary in their functioning. It is framed by sub-units 1:16-17 and 3:9-20 which function structurally as introduction and closure respectively. In summary the picture looks like this:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1:16-17: Opening Statement of Theme – God’s Good News for all, Jew and Gentile – God’s answer to the human dilemma. God’s Righteousness revealed through faith. | 3:9-20: Closing Statement of Theme – God’s Good News for all- Jew and Gentile - God’s answer to the human dilemma. God’s Righteousness revealed through faith – not works of the Law. |
| 1:18-32: Gentiles under sin’s dominion  | 2:1-3:8: Jews also under sin’s dominion   |

### **First Panel (1:16-32)**

#### **Opening Statement of Theme: God’s Righteousness revealed through faith (1:16-17)**

Beginning with this brief threshold unit - a distinct boundary-marker - Paul’s discourse moves to an arena quite distinct from that of the two-part Prologue. In many respects it contrasts sharply with it. Interplay between panels is in itself an important feature of Paul’s manner of communicating with his addressees in Rome. Intra-panel relationships will be dealt with in Chapter 8.



Most commentators take 1:16-17 to be a statement of theme and a framework for Paul's argument in Chapters 1-11. But it also serves as a threshold text and boundary marker between the Prologue and the two-part bloc which follows (1:18-3:20). The statement of theme in 1:16-17 opens up the vast gospel horizon of *δύναμις θεοῦ* and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*, which will be explored by Paul in differing ways in the panels under discussion, as well as elsewhere in the course of the Letter. While it may seem at first sight that the text of 1:16-17 is connected only tenuously with the two panels which follow in 1:18-3:20, the linkage of them is vital in terms of the progress of Paul's argument in Romans. That linkage is established by the conjunction *γὰρ* with which verse 16 opens, by the repetition of the verb *ἀποκαλύπτει* (vv 17-18) and by the introduction of *ὀργή θεοῦ* in v 18 which contrasts sharply with *δύναμις θεοῦ* (v 16) and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* (v 17). Here revelation is linked to counter-revelation – that of the righteousness of God revealed through faith (1:16-17) and the wrath of God revealed through the contrasting world of depravity which keeps truth a prisoner (1:18-19).

### **Gentiles are under Sin's dominion (1:18-32)**

Whether or not one views the material in this panel as part of a 'trap' set to burst a balloon of complacency in the Jewish teacher/imaginary opponent being addressed here, 1:18-32 functions as a literary unit. In one of his classic examples of polemic against idolatry, Paul sets the scene for the message which is to follow in 2:1–3:20. He takes flight into a world without God, where evil is rampant and humankind is abandoned to unnatural practices and all sorts of depravity. In resorting to the Jewish literary device of polemic against idolatry, Paul is back in the field of generality. He is not directing an attack towards the inhabitants of Rome or towards any specific

population. He is simply arguing from a philosophical standpoint that the archetypical Gentile is under the dominion of sin and therefore in need of the Gospel. Here he is close to the common sense wisdom of *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 13:5. This is an appeal to reason.

In the next panel, when addressing the archetypical Jewish position, he will appeal formally to Scripture. The literary construct of 1:18-32 is a dark and godless universe, invoking *The Letter of Aristeas* 132 and Philo *On Rewards and Punishments* 43, perhaps also Wisdom 13:5, and 2 Bar 54:17-22. It provides Paul with a platform from which he can make a reasoned, if inverted case for the Gospel. He appeals first to reason and common sense. He argues from natural law that God may be known from the works of creation. Those who do not recognise this and honour God are ‘without excuse’. Furthermore, such people are guilty of defying logic by engaging in incomprehensible exchanges: that of exchanging the glory of God for idols (v 23), divine truth for a lie (v 25) and the worship of the creator for the worship of creatures (v 25). Because they refused to accept the rationality of acknowledging God, they have been left by God to their own devices, abandoned or ‘handed over’ (παρέδωκεν) to irrational ideas and monstrous behaviour. The verb παρέδωκεν is repeated three times, in vv. 24, 26 and 28. In emphasising the link between false thinking and inhuman behaviour, Paul reiterates the teaching of v 23 that such behaviour is ‘without excuse’. Indeed it is worthy of death. And he ends on a note which is more questioning than condemnatory: The blindness of such people is obviously deserving of God’s judgement, yet they persist in wickedness and encourage others to do the same.

Drawing extensively on Jewish critiques of the pagan world, Paul is in reality making remote preparations for announcing the Gospel and its transforming power. The ante-texts may possibly be the wisdom words of Wisdom 12-13 as well as Philo and Aristeas. The Jewish notion of sin as ‘missing the mark’, making people less than human, is to be presumed as background. Wrong thought patterns lead to wrong behaviours. At the climactic halfway mark (v 25) Paul departs, uncharacteristically, from his script to sound a note of praise. This is praise of God the creator, who is ‘blessed for ever’. A Jewish blessing prayer interrupting a diatribe is quite unique in Paul’s writings. Here it shines like a pinhead of light in the darkness.

At one level, the panel represented by vv 18-32 reads like an unsavoury sequel to the two-part prologue and to the introductory theme-setting verses 16-17. Paul the evangelist, so keen to proclaim ‘the Gospel of God’ (v 2) and ‘the power of God saving all who have faith’ (v 16), engages in polemic which lists almost every imaginable sin and announces the wrath of God on those who are guilty. This literary construct - a universe of depravity – is the springboard from which Paul will announce the urgency of the Gospel message. While v 16 announces the gospel of Jesus Christ as the Righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεού) revealed in the world through faith, the following verses 18-32 announce a kind of counter-revelation – that of wickedness veiling or imprisoning the truth. God’s wrath, instead of God’s Righteousness, is revealed in this corrupt universe. This contrast is stark and compelling. Paul portrays the underside of a world where the Gospel has not been heard, though it is sorely needed. In this way it functions as an inverse argument for the Gospel. Stark contrasts and extraordinary exchanges mark the internal literary dynamic of this unit. The universe is dark, empty and nonsensical (v 21). Illogicality and stupidity characterise it (v 23). Inhabitants of this dark world engage in silly

barter: The glory of God is exchanged for idolatry (v 23), truth for lies (v 25) and the worship of the creator for the worship of creatures (v 25). In exchange for their blind refusal to recognize the creator in his works, God leaves these people to their own evil devices. He abandons them or ‘gives them up’ (παρέδωκεν in vv 24, 26, and 28) to unnatural practices, of which homosexual intercourse typifies the extreme (vv 26, 27). In abandoning rationality, they have been abandoned to what is inhuman and unnatural.

The list of vices has been endlessly analysed. It has been described as typical polemic against Gentile idolatry and as rhetoric reflective of popular usage. But recent research suggests that the list has an internal logic of its own.<sup>248</sup> In the symbolic world of Paul, three zones describe and characterise the human person. These zones are heart-eyes, mouth-ears and hands-feet. The activity associated with each zone is pointer to the integrity or fragmentation of the whole. In 1:18-32 all zones are mentioned: heart/eyes - greed; mouth/ears – deceit; hands/feet – murder. The entire picture is death-dealing and unwholesome. The irreligious Gentile lifestyle is perverse. Without the Gospel it is doomed.

From a literary point of view, the panel being analysed represents some of the best and most colourful of Pauline writing. The images and the arguments are in dialogue at many levels, constellated around exchanges and ‘handing over’ (παρέδωκεν). The panel 1:16-32 captures in dense pictorial form the essence of a godless world, while making an inverse plea for the reasonableness of faith. It works more from a philosophical standpoint than from a theological one, as if the author is

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<sup>248</sup> John J. Pilch, *Romans*, Collegeville Bible Commentary (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1988), 1082.

trying to anticipate and counter future philosophical arguments. In this sense it prepares the ground for what is to come in Chapters 5-8, addressing in a forceful manner the reality of human freedom and the prospect that human beings, prone to blindness, may refuse to accept the saving message of the Gospel. Structurally, the panel hangs on the hinge verses 16-17, which declare the Gospel to be revelatory of the Righteousness of God. The unit represented by vv 18-32 may be described as revelatory of quite the opposite. By inner inverse logic these verses make a convincing plea for a reasoned acceptance of the Gospel of God which Paul announces. Revelation and counter-revelation become the twin faces of that plea.

### **Jews under Sin's dominion (2:1- 3:8)**

This panel offers a nuanced parallel to 1:18-32, addressing the situation of Jews. It may usefully be considered as composed of four dramatic dialogues, all closely connected in theme and thrust, distinct and even contrasting in certain aspects, yet in constant conversation with one another and with elements of the arguments in the previous panel 1:18-32. Four sub-units may be identified: 2:1-11, 2:12-24, 2: 25-29 and 3:1-8. Together they build a comprehensive, structurally dialogical argument that Jews, especially when assuming an air of superiority, are as much in need of the Gospel as the Gentiles.

#### **2:1-11. Dramatic Dialogue 1: Paul v. Imaginary Opponent**

This sub-unit marks a sharp departure in tone from the generalised polemic against the Gentiles in 1:18-32, but the purpose is the same. Now the message is addressed to Jews, to those who pass judgement on non-Jews. Like their Gentile neighbours,

they are also ‘without excuse’. Paul addresses his audience in second person. The ill-defined ‘you’ of 2:1-6 (‘whoever you are’) is remote enough to allow the apostle to speak harsh words of judgement, yet close enough to allow for a personal appropriation of the message by Jewish Roman converts to Christianity. Whether or not one reads v 2 as a retort from an imaginary interlocutor, the passage reads as a dramatic dialogue, a conversation between Paul and an imaginary opponent. The Roman readerships retreat to the background as if overhearing a dialogue meant for their benefit. This is a clever Epicurean tactic employed by Paul. It gives him license to have judgement pronounced, as if in court of law, on anyone who judges another. It anticipates the plea made in 14:6-21. Variants of the noun κρίμα (and of the associated verb κρίνω) occur no less than seven times within vv 1-3. The wrath of God (ὀργή θεού) is now juxtaposed with the goodness of God (χρηστόν θεού) as a new note is introduced: the call to repentance (μετάνοια). Paul is not noted for laying emphasis on repentance. In this case he does so in the context of the goodness of God. Quoting directly from Ps 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12, he issues a strong reminder that God will reward everyone justly, and ‘according to each one’s deeds’ (v 6). It is of interest that both OT references in their contexts issue warnings against complacency. This connects neatly with Paul’s intention in 2:1.

Verses 7-11 revert to third person reporting and to past tense, employing a tactic similar to that used in vv 1-3 above. Those who chose depravity (αδικία) for their guide instead of truth (αλήθεια) can expect their just rewards. Here is a powerful image, reminiscent of the disastrous transactions and exchanges mentioned in 1:18-27 above. It also evokes the Wisdom teaching of the Two Ways and the possibility that some will abuse the inalienable gift of human free will. The sub-unit

2:1-11 ends by a reiteration of the priority set by Paul in the hinge verse 1:16: ‘Jews first, but Greeks as well’. It is a nuanced way of reminding his Roman audience that the gospel is for the whole world, as already announced in 1: 6, 16, while respecting the historic fact that God chose Israel as first recipient of the Covenant. In typical Pauline revisionist style, the sub-unit ends with the quasi-paradoxical statement: ‘God has no favourites’. To this tormenting topic Paul will return again and again.

### **2:12-24: Dramatic Dialogue 2: A Court of Law – Accusation v. Defence**

In continuity with the previous unit and in conversation with it (the topic is the same: Jews under the dominion of Sin) the unit represented by vv 12-24 moves the action forward. The scene is forensic, set in a court of law. There is accusation and defence, anonymous witnesses as well as the judge who is, at once, the Law (v 12) and God (v 16). Ironically, Paul’s argument is about the value of the Law and of Jewish claims regarding it. In vv 12-15 he seems to be dealing with another imaginary interlocutor, probably not identical with the aforementioned, because the concerns here relate directly to the value of being a Jew. Again, within a forensic landscape, conflicting thoughts are personified as opponents arguing the case for Gentiles who, though they do not possess the Law, obey the law written on their hearts.

Turning attention directly to the Jews and reverting to second-person address, Paul reminds them of their privileged state and of the obligations involved. As beacon to those in the darkness (v 19) and light to the nations, Jews are meant to teach themselves as well as teaching others. An accusatory phrase follows: ‘You preach against stealing, yet you steal; you forbid adultery, yet you commit adultery...’ (v 20). Once again Paul points out the contradiction in declaring oneself

for the Law, while disobeying it in practice. Texts from Is 52: 5 and Exodus 36: 20 are invoked, showing that such behaviour brings God into contempt: ‘It is your fault that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles’ (v 24).

### **2:25-29: Dramatic Dialogue 3: For and against Circumcision**

This brief interlude continues in dialogical mode. Paul addresses his interlocutor as ‘you’, but then reverts, as formerly, to third person narrative when developing his argument. This is a typical example of Paul’s use of the Socratic Censure, where he confounds his (imaginary) opponent. He argues at one level for circumcision, at another against it. Juxtaposing circumcision and Law, he is really making a case for circumcision of the heart (περιτομή καρδίας v 29), while condemning the practice of judging by exterior observance.<sup>249</sup> The passage is characterised by sequences of diametrically opposed pairs: letter versus spirit, appearance versus inner reality, and human approval versus divine approval. It is a good example of dramatic art at work in the service of Paul’s wider dialogical method of proceeding in Romans.

### **3:1-8: Dramatic Dialogue 4: Does God have favourites?**

Jews first, but Greeks as well! Twice already Paul has so named the prospective recipients of the Good News he brings (1:16; 2:10). The precise meaning of *πρώτον* in these contexts has been hotly disputed. Is Paul thinking in purely chronological terms or is he giving precedence to Jews as God’s chosen covenant people? However

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<sup>249</sup> Deuteronomy 30:6



one reads the sequence, one of the central questions in Romans is broached here: Does God have favourites? The corollary is implied: Is God really righteous, really trustworthy? 3:1-8 gives the impression that Paul is retracting, or at least modifying, his earlier statement in 2:11 that ‘God has no favourites’. He now lists the advantages associated with being a circumcised Jew, as if answering an interlocutor (or an imaginary one) concerned about that core issue. The Jews are the people to whom God’s message was entrusted (echo of 1:2), and their lack of fidelity in the past does not negate God’s eternal fidelity. Not losing sight of the case already made in v 6, Paul reverts to the arguments around *ὁργή θεού* in 1:18 –2:11 with the qualifier, ‘to use a human analogy’. It is as if he is keeping the previous argument in mind, but applying it in a different manner. As is his custom when the Jew-Gentile question arises, Paul appeals to the authority of scripture to clinch his argument. He invokes in quick succession, an amalgamation of references to Psalms 62:12, 33:3, 116:11, and 51:4. In this forensic setting God is indisputably judge of the world.

Surprisingly, in such a setting Paul introduces a personal note. He comes on stage as the defendant, as one who has been accused of teaching (somewhere) that one should do evil as a means to good. This is the first certain reference to Paul’s opponents in the Letter. He labels them slanderers and considers them judged and condemned. The personal interjections in 1:8-15, 1:16 and 3:8 serve as strong reminders that the real Paul is indeed seeking to make contact with real people in his Roman readership. They need to know that he has enemies as well as friends.

### **Closing Statement of Theme (3:9-20): The Answer to the human predicament: God's Good News is intended for all**

The brief question in v 9 (“Are we any better off?”) connects neatly with what precedes in 3:1-8. However, it is clear that the general thrust of Paul’s argument is moving towards a conclusion. The chief protagonists, Sin (ἁμαρτία) and the Law (νόμος) are personified as conspirators who are intent on enslaving humankind. They will re-appear on stage in 7:1-25. There is no escape from the human dilemma except through the Gospel of God. The panel reaches its climax in a catena of loosely-connected quotations from Ps 14:1, Ps 14:3, Ps 5:9, Ps 140:36, Ps 10:7, Is 59:7-8a, Ps 36:1b – the most lengthy set of references supporting a topos in the New Testament. It is noteworthy that the list respects the Jewish notion of the human body with concentric arrangement of heart-eyes, hands-feet, and mouth-ears. Broadly, these references confirm the universality of sin and mankind’s inability to escape its power. Once again Paul appeals to scripture as to a final court of appeal, as he firmly re-states his thesis: sin abounds, and the power of the Gospel is the answer. The closing statement of theme, represented by 3:9-20, serves as an *inclusio* with the opening statement of theme in 1:16-17 (‘the Gospel is the saving power of God for all who have faith’) and also as a distinctive boundary-marker at the end of a structurally complex panel. See detailed analysis in Chapter 4 and Table 11.

### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the Second Dyad (1:16 - 3:20)**

A clear overall two-fold structure can be identified, even though the two panels are unequal in length and contrasting in their styles of discourse. Panel 1 corresponds

with typical polemic against the Gentiles (1:18-32), while Panel 2 may be considered as a more nuanced invective against the Jews and others who engage in judging others from an assumed position of superiority (2:1-3:20). Structurally these panels contrast quite sharply with one another, even while some internal features serve a complementary and balancing function. See Table 9.

The structural sub-units in Panel 2, designated here as mini-dialogues, while advancing Paul's arguments at one level, seem revisionist of a previous position at times (echo of the revisionist Prologue, 1:8-15) and even contradictory of it (as in the arguments for and against circumcision) as the views of imaginary opponents are taken into consideration in typical diatribal fashion. It is as if Paul is 'togglng' back and forth, changing the lens through which he views the issue.<sup>250</sup> Arguments at times flow into one another, at other times echo or reinforce one another, and often contrast starkly with one another. Understandably, many theories of interpolation surround certain texts and passages, notably 3:1-8, of which C.H. Dodd's dismissal is memorable: "The whole argument of 3:1-8 is obscure and feeble...The argument of the epistle would go much better if this whole section were omitted."<sup>251</sup> Yet, structurally all fit into the wider frame of a two-part segment, where two dialogical/dyadic panels convey one message. That overarching message is that Gentiles and Jews are both under God's wrath. Both are under the dominion of sin as a damaging force. Both

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<sup>250</sup> Richard B. Hays writes: "Paul's diverse statements... are best understood as narratively ordered within an unfolding dramatic plot." This approach allows the dialogue to advance, while exploring different aspects of a topic, as happens in 2:1-3:20. For more on this see Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination. Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2005), xiii.

<sup>251</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932 ), 46.

Gentiles and Jews (in Paul's terms, all humankind) are therefore in need of the Gospel. Gentiles do not need the Law if they live according to the inner law of conscience within. Jews will not be saved by the Law unless they exchange external ritual circumcision for internal 'circumcision of the heart'. Gentiles and Jews stand equally condemned and in need of the power of the Gospel.

There are times then when certain elements of the discourse do not hang easily together; times too, when they undo one another to the point of being in apparent contradiction (3:30, 31a). This is a feature of the diatribal dialogues often used by Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom as imitations of the Socratic technique of critical questioning.<sup>252</sup> Paul is in negotiating mood, willing to concede some ground already won for the sake of a present or future conquest. The sub-text in Panel 2 is that of Paul employing Socratic Censure in engaging with imaginary objectors. He tests the validity of each argument by entering the sphere of a possible or real opponent, hearing the counter-argument and re-asserting his own strongly-held position. One may even argue that there are dialogues behind dialogues, arguments and counter-arguments – all in dialogical tension with one another and with the partner-unit, 1:16-32. The lesser systems where Paul is 'toggling' back and forth, or seemingly keeping both sides of an argument in view, serve to contribute to the visibility of the argument in Panel 1: Gentiles are enmeshed in sin. The main system with its one main argument in Panel 1 is balanced against another more complex argument in Panel 2: Jews also are enmeshed in sin, and powerless to escape from it.

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<sup>252</sup> The Socratic Censure was a technique by which the ignorance of the respondent was uncovered by simulated interrogation. Here in 3:1-8 Paul uses the Socratic Censure to effect. See Stanley Kent Stowers, "Paul's Dialogue with a Fellow-Jew in Romans 3:1-9", *CBQ* No. 46 (1984), 707-722.

In these two contrasting panels the power of images is noteworthy. They function rhetorically as Paul takes sides with Jews in their prejudice against Gentiles (Panel 1) and the reverse (Panel 2). Gentiles engage in reprobate behaviour and encourage it in others because “their foolish hearts are plunged into darkness” (1:21). Paul will use this metaphor again in 11:10, quoting Psalm 69:24 “Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see”. In describing homosexual practices in 1:27, rather strong and colourful Hellenistic imagery is used. People who engage in such activity are “consumed (ἐξεκαύθησαν) with passion (ὀρέξει) for one another”. To one acquainted with Hellenistic understanding of emotion, the use of such metaphoric language would spell sexuality gone off course.<sup>253</sup> A powerful effect is obtained by the use of the image of ‘storing up’ God’s wrath as one might store treasure (2:1). The metaphor suggests incomprehensible foolishness. Contrasting with the image of the darkened heart in 1:21 is that of the hardened heart in 2:5. The image of the hardened heart serves Paul well in more ways than one. As an image from prophetic literature (Ezekiel 3:7) familiar to Jewish audiences it would evoke resistance to God’s word. Gentiles cannot see. Jews can see but they resist. Furthermore, the image is linked in biblical terms with circumcision, and this will feature significantly in the next panel. Both Deuteronomy 10:16 and Jeremiah 4:4 mention the condition of cardio-sclerosis (σκλήροκαρδια), referred to in 2:29, a condition that calls for

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<sup>253</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 188.

‘circumcision of the heart’. Here is a fine example of Paul invoking Scripture without the more usual IF indicators.<sup>254</sup>

In terms of register, Paul rings the changes from private to public, from personal to general, from microcosmic to macrocosmic fields. Surprising personal interludes like those in 3:8 (reminiscent of 1:13) give strength and immediacy to the general argument. Appeals to reason mark the movement of the argument in 1:18-32 regarding the position of Gentiles. Appeals to Scripture (Psalms and Isaiah) characterise the passage 2:1 - 3:20 where Jews are concerned. The hinge on which all structures rely and to which all units and sub-units relate is the hinge-verse 1:16-17. It can be asserted that everything in the two-fold prologue (1:1 – 1:15) is prelude to this, and everything in the succeeding dialogical panel under discussion (1:16 - 3:20) is, in some sense, explanatory of it. The worlds of Gentile and Jew are under sin’s dominion. In other words, the whole world is in need of the Gospel.

## **Summary**

This dyad is magnificently constructed. It consists of two panels of unequal length, clearly dialogical, expressing the one message that humankind is under Sin’s dominion, powerless to save itself, and therefore in need of the Gospel, which is ‘the power of God to all who have faith’. The first panel deals with the Gentile world, using typical Jewish polemic against idolaters, enmeshed in sin, exchanging the truth of God for a lie. The position of Gentiles is ‘without excuse’, because they will not listen to reason. The second panel addresses complacency among the Jews who are

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<sup>254</sup> IF (Introductory Formula) for example, ‘As Scripture says’, or ‘It is written that...’ often precedes a citation from the Hebrew Scriptures in NT writings.

foolishly reliant on former promises and external observance of the Law. In a complex arrangement of four related mini-dialogues, the core question is raised: What is the point of being a Jew? The first panel opens with a statement of theme: The Gospel for all, Jews and Greeks (1:16-17) while the second panel ends with an inverse reminder of that theme, backed up by a sevenfold invocation of the Psalter: Jews and Greeks are all under Sin's dominion (3:9-20). The Second Dyad is framed by a strong *inclusio* (the message of 1:16-17 confirmed in 3:9-20).

**Table 9**

**The Second Dyad 1:16-3:20**

**General dialogical/chiastic structure**

**First Panel (1:16-32)**

**Second Panel (2:1-3:20)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Statement of Theme:</b></p> <p><b>God’s Righteousness revealed through the Gospel (1:16-17)</b> – for Jew first and Gentile also- Ιουδαίω τε πρώτον καὶ Ἕλληνι<br/> <i>(Implication: The Gospel is God’s answer to the human predicament)</i></p> <p><b>The Gospel</b> has power to save - δύναμις θεοῦ (1:16)</p> | <p><b>God’s Wrath revealed</b> in wickedness ... message for all - Jew and Gentile :<br/>         Ἰουδαίου τε πρώτον καὶ Ἕλληνας ... δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίω τε πρώτον καὶ Ἕλληνι (2:9-10)</p> <p><b>The Law</b> will not save (2:12-16)</p> <p><b>Theme re-stated:</b></p> <p><b>God’s Righteousness revealed through faith</b> – not by works of the Law. ‘Jews and Greeks are all under sin’s dominion...No one can be justified by keeping the Law (3:10, 20)</p> <p><i>(Implication: The Gospel is God’s answer to the human predicament)</i></p> |
|--|---|



**Table 10**

**The Second Dyad 1:16-3:20**

**God’s Righteousness revealed through faith –not works**

**Summary of detailed dialogical/dyadic structure**

**First Panel (1:16-32)**

**Second Panel (2:1-3:20)**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Statement of theme: Justification by faith (1:16-17)<br>Gentiles are under sin’s dominion (1:18-32) | Jews are also under sin’s dominion (2:1-3:8)   |
| Appeal to Reason  | Appeal to Scripture  |
| Typical polemic against idolatry  | Nuanced attack on Jewish complacency   |
| Internal logic – 3 zones of human behaviour   | Internal logic – 4 dramatic dialogues  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> person narrative. Opponents ‘out there’.  | Predominant use of 2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular. Opponents, real and imagined, are ‘in here’.   |
| Single, formal register   | Multiple registers   |
| Imagery – of prison warden (v 19), barter (vv 23-27), judgement (v 32)                              | Forensic imagery – of court/defence/witness/judgement (2:12-29)  |
| Gentile failure is ‘without excuse’ (1:20)  | Jewish failure is ‘without excuse’ (2:1)   |
| Uncompromising, condemnatory tone   | Compromising, conciliatory tone  |
| ‘Darkened’ hearts of Gentiles (1:21) - καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδία - without the Law      | ‘Hardened’ hearts of Jews (2:5) - κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν – with the Law  |
| Appeal to reason and to Greek standards (1:26-30)   | Appeal to Jewish Scriptures (2:11-18) and Re-statement of theme: Justification by faith – not by works of the Law (3:9-20).<br><i>Inclusio</i> with 1:16-17. |

**TABLE 11**

**The Second Dyad (1:16-3:20)**

**Internal dyadic structure in detail**

| First Panel   |  |   | Second Panel 2  |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1:16-17   | 1:18-32  | 2:1-11  | 2:12-24   | 2:25-29   | 3:1-8   | 3:9-20  |
| <b>Opening statement of theme</b>                             | <b>Gentiles under Sin's dominion</b>   | <b>Dramatic Dialogue 1</b><br><b>Jews under Sin's dominion</b><br><br><b>Paul v. Opponent</b> | <b>Dramatic Dialogue 2</b><br><b>Jews under Sin's dominion</b><br><br><b>Accuser v. defendant</b>   | <b>Dramatic Dialogue 3</b><br><b>Jews under Sin's dominion</b><br><br><b>Debate: Circumcision /pro &amp; contra</b> | <b>Dramatic Dial. 4</b><br><b>Jews under Sin's dominion</b><br><br><b>Debate: Is God righteous/ faithful?</b> | <b>Closing statement of theme</b><br><i>(Inclusio with 1:16-17)</i> |
|   | Typical polemic against idolatry.<br><br>Appeal to reason (Philo, Aristeeas, Wisdom 13)<br><br>Gentiles 'without excuse'(1:21) | Against Jewish complacency. Appeal to Scripture (Ps 62:12)<br><br>Jews 'without excuse' (2:1) | Value of the Law.<br><br>Appeal to Scripture (Isaiah & Exodus).<br><br>"It is your fault..." (2:24) | Value of circumcision:<br><br>(Implied) appeal to Deut 30. Letter v. Spirit. Human v. Divine approval.              | Value of being a Jew:<br><br>Is God fair? Appeal to Scripture (Psalm 116:11)                                  | Jew & Gentile under Sin's dominion (3:9)                            |
|   | "Their hearts were darkened"<br>(καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά): 1:21  | "your hardened hearts..." καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν (2:5)                                       | The Law as judge (2:12) v. God as Judge (2:16)  | Physical circumcision will not save (2:27)  | A great advantage – The message was first entrusted to Jews (3:1-3)   | Humankind is powerless (3:11-18)                                    |
|   | They exchanged the glory of God for idols (1:23)   | Jews first, Greeks as well: God has no favourites (2:11)                                      | The Law – a matter of the heart – 'engraved' on the heart (2:15)                                    | Only 'circumcision of the heart' matters (2:29)   | Human infidelity v. God's fidelity (3:7-8)  | The Law will not save (3:20)  |
| Scripture invoked (Hab 2:4): Gospel is life-giving.           | God abandoned them (1:26), 'handed them over'(παρέδωκεν) 1:28  | Semantic field: lawcourt/ judgement   | Semantic field: The Law personified as judge/guide  | Semantic field: Letter of the Law v. Spirit of the Law  | Semantic field: External observance will not save   | Scripture invoked (Psalms 14, 10, 140, 16)                          |
| <b>The Gospel as revelation of God's Righteousness (1:16)</b> |  |   |   |   |   | <b>No one can be justified by keeping the Law (3:20)</b>            |

## **The Third Dyad (3:21-4:25)**

**Theme: God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law – in Christ and in Abraham’s faith**

The Third Dyad represented by 3:21-4:25 introduces Christ as Paul’s answer to the human dilemma outlined in the previous two-panel segment. The answer comes as God’s just provision for humankind. God is righteous in his dealings with Jew and Gentile. There is only one God, who will justify the circumcised and the uncircumcised through faith. God’s righteousness is revealed outside the Law, in Christ (first panel) and through Abraham’s faith (second panel).

### **The Dyad 3:21-4:25**

| First Panel (3:21-31)                                    | Second Panel (4:1-25)  |
|--|--|
| God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law - in Christ | God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law - through Abraham’s faith |

## **First Panel**

### **God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law – in Christ (3:21-31)**

This densely packed panel, the first of several important parts of the Letter which formulate the essence of Paul’s gospel,<sup>255</sup> allows for several interpretations. D. A.

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<sup>255</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 341.

Campbell describes this section as “the key to the structure and thought of the Letter”, because it explains how Jew and Gentile can find salvation.<sup>256</sup> While there are major problems in identifying the role of the Law as Paul presents it, and in squaring his apparent identification of Law with ‘works of the Law’ (vv 30-31) and with his line of argument for the abrogation of the Law, which culminates in an apparent contradiction confirming the Law (v 31), the mainline argument is clear: faith is the way to salvation. The meaning of πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (v 22) has been endlessly debated. Does it refer to the faith (or faithfulness) of Jesus Christ as obedient to God and exemplar for Christians, or to the gift of faith bestowed on those who follow the Christian way? There are valid arguments for both readings, depending on a given context in Paul’s writings. The present study follows the majority of scholars in opting for the former interpretation within the context of 3:21-31, because it is more in keeping with the totality of Paul’s argument in the segment under consideration.<sup>257</sup>

Reams have been written on the hapax in 3:25. Paul’s description of Christ as the ἰλαστήριον is found only here in Paul’s writings (with a variant in Heb 9:5). The position held by most commentators is that Paul is borrowing the entire phrase

ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς

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<sup>256</sup> D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26*. JSNT Supplement 65 (Sheffield, UK: Academic Press, 1992), 56.

<sup>257</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.* 350-351. Richard B. Hays, *Ibid.* xiii. Also Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 16.

from a pre-Pauline Jewish-Christian formula.<sup>258</sup> Understood as a noun, ἱλαστήριον can be understood as ‘the means of propitiation/expiation’ or as ‘the place of propitiation/expiation’, or as ‘mercy-seat’ on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The background is complex. The associated verb is found in Hellenistic sacrificial language to refer to votive offerings for appeasing angry gods.<sup>259</sup> It is also found in LXX usage, particularly Levitical sacrificial language, associated with the Day of Atonement rite.<sup>260</sup> In this latter sense, it would depict Christ as the new ‘mercy seat’, Luther’s *Gnadenstuhl*, presented by the Father as a means of wiping out the sins of humanity in the context of the sacrifice of Calvary.<sup>261</sup>

There are valid reasons for thinking that Paul in Romans as a whole is exploring the richness of the mercy-seat metaphor. The conclusions reached at the end of Chapter 11 bear this out. Rom 3:25 provides a key anticipation of Paul’s

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<sup>258</sup> Fitzmyer writes, “Part of the problem is that Paul uses the word only here. See Heb 9:5, where it is also found. Here it is part of the adopted pre-Pauline formula.” (Ibid. 349-350).

<sup>259</sup> Fitzmyer, Ibid. 350. Also Daniel P. Bailey. “Jesus as the Mercy-Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul’s use of ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25” in Tyndale Bulletin 51.1 (2000), 155-158. Bailey argues that Paul’s use of the term is “a specialised allusion to the biblical mercy-seat (which is not a gift to the gods)” and that it fits in the context where the previous verse (3:24) closely parallels Exodus 15:13. The Song of Moses in Exodus 15 closely links God’s Righteousness with redemption, therefore with mercy. Later in Rom 9-11 we will notice that Paul deals with the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, where Righteousness and Mercy merge in God’s gracious plan of salvation for Jew and Gentile. See Appendix ii.

<sup>260</sup> Lev 16:2ff. Also 4 Macc 17-22.

<sup>261</sup> Morna D. Hooker, *Paul. A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), 77-78.

‘solution’ to the question which underlies the whole of Romans: How is the Righteousness of God revealed? It is revealed in Christ, the place of propitiation *par excellence* (3:25). As will be shown later, it is revealed even in the hardening of some human hearts, ‘so that God’s mercy will be shown to all mankind’ (11:32). Ultimately it is revealed in the inclusiveness of Paul’s gospel as the divine, merciful plan of salvation, working through Christ, excluding none, ‘so that the pagans will give glory to God for his mercy’ (15:9).

Leaving all the textual difficulties aside, the panel (Rom 3:21-31) makes a clear case for the equality of all – Jews and Gentiles – before God. Neither has reason to boast, since both are in need of redemption. Seen in this light the panel is in dynamic conversation with the previous dialogical panels, 1:18 and 3:21. But there is newness here. Christ is God’s answer to the problem. Having painted a gloomy picture of sinful humanity – involving both Jew and Gentile – Paul now introduces God’s solution to the problem. God has a way of bringing all people into right relationships, namely through faith- the faith of Christ Jesus. Paul’s basic thesis is expressed in v 28: A person enters into a right relationship with God through faith and not by seeking to observe all the minute prescriptions of Torah. Therefore Gentiles are not excluded. This new message does not contradict or negate the Law and the Prophets. On the contrary it makes possible, through the faithfulness of Christ Jesus, that which was impossible because of the infidelity of Israel. And this is for the benefit of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. The one God (echo of *Shema Israel*: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God’) is God of all - Jews and Gentiles. Through carefully balanced statements about Torah and δικαιοσύνη θεού, Paul shows how the true Israelite, Christ Jesus, reveals the righteousness of

God, that for which the Prophets longed (echo of 1:1). The argument is developed along three lines: Firstly, justification is a free gift (δωρεάν, v 24) neither deserved nor purchased;<sup>262</sup> secondly, it implies redemption – a heavily-laden metaphor borrowed from the slave-market and the law court, with echoes of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt; thirdly, this redemption happens in and through Christ Jesus. N.T. Wright sums up the message of “this dense and explosive paragraph” as follows: “The righteousness – saving justice, the covenant faithfulness – of the Creator God was unveiled once and for all in the death of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah”.<sup>263</sup>

## **Second Panel: God’s Righteousness revealed through Abraham’s faith (4:1-25)**

This panel opens with a notoriously difficult text in Greek (4:1). Paul asks the question: What is it that Abraham, our father (according to flesh?) has found?

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα.

He is challenging the prevalent Jewish notion that Abraham obeyed Torah, even though he lived long before it was revealed to Moses. Appealing to Genesis 15:6 and Psalm 32:1-2, he shows that Abraham believed God and “it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (4:3-6). Arguing according to Jewish rules (Deut 19:15), Paul cites two witnesses to support his view: Abraham (Genesis 15) and David (Psalm 32). An imaginary opponent is introduced to give counter argument, and Paul responds with

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<sup>262</sup> Δωρεάν is rare in the NT, but see cognate in Rom 5:15, 17. Cf. N.T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans* (NTB Vol. X. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 471.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 477

a clarification: Abraham was declared justified in Genesis 15:6, even though he is not recorded as being circumcised until much later (Genesis 17). Clearly then, circumcision in Abraham's case was not a pre-requisite for his justification. Abraham therefore is father of all who believe in God, whether Jews or non-Jews, because he believed. In addition, God made a promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:4; 22:16-18) making him father of many nations (including Jews and Gentiles). Abraham believed God, even though parenthood seemed impossible to him and to his elderly wife, Sarah. He believed that God could bring life from improbable seed (Genesis 15:3-6). Three times in this panel, Paul repeats his appeal to Scripture, affirming that Abraham's faith was reckoned or credited to him as righteousness (4:3, 9, 22).

As if reminding his Roman audience that the foregoing arguments (1:18-4:25) are relevant to their situation and that he has an ultimate purpose in all of this, Paul concludes in homiletic fashion with a reminder that Scripture refers not only to Abraham but "to us as well". In a successful culmination of his arguments, he identifies with those he addresses: "Our faith too will be credited as justifying, if we believe that God raised Jesus from death and raised him to life for our justification"(4:25). By making a personal link with his Roman audience/readership, Paul is typically deploying his rhetorical skills at the service of the pastoral situation. Here is a foretaste of Paul's message in segments to come. Here, too, is an implied invitation to the kind of faith exemplified in Abraham.



### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the Third Dyad (3:21–4:25)**

The central unifying concept in the two panels under consideration is God's Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεού) revealed through faith. This Righteousness was made known through the Law and the Prophets in the past (echo of 1:2). Now it has been revealed in Christ – revealed apart from the Law. What was understood as a Jewish privilege has now been extended to Gentiles as well. Both Jew and Gentile sinned and forfeited God's glory (echo of 1:18-3:20). Both are now justified or placed in a right relationship with God through a free gift of God's grace. This happens, not by obeying regulations, but by faith. There is only one God. This God is not only God of the Jews, but God of the Gentiles as well. This God justifies both the circumcised and the uncircumcised through faith. The Law has not been abrogated. On the contrary, it is being given its true meaning.

Abraham provides an example of one justified by faith apart from the Law. In a thoroughly Jewish reading of Genesis, Paul argues that Abraham's faith was considered as justifying him (Genesis 15:6) ever before he was circumcised. Psalm 32:1-2 confirms this. Invoking two reliable witnesses, Abraham and David, in his appeal to Scripture, Paul is respecting accepted Jewish procedure. God's promises were made to Abraham on account of "the righteousness which consists in faith" (4:13), not because of any works accomplished. As father of many nations, Abraham received the promise. The fulfilment of this promise is offered to all who are true descendants of Abraham, whether circumcised or not. Abraham's faith is considered as a model of genuine faith. It trusts that God can do the impossible. Abraham believed that a child would be born to him and his wife Sarah, because God said so,

even though in the normal order of things Sarah was well past childbearing age. This is the faith “that was considered as justifying him” (4:22).

These two panels are complementary in several ways, though they differ widely in density, Panel 1 (3:21-31) being the more dense. The leitmotif of δικαιοσύνη θεού and its cognates is dominant in both panels. So is the lesser motif of faith/justification by faith. The contrasting elements of ‘according to the Law’ and ‘outside the Law’, with corresponding pointers to Jew and Gentile worlds, ‘before circumcision’/‘after circumcision’(4:9-12), provide a confirmation that Paul’s gospel confirms the Law, as stated in 3:31. Abraham, through whom many have been blessed, is prototype whose faith prefigures the faithfulness of Christ, through whom many will be blessed. As a dialogical segment, these two panels work complementarily to advance Paul’s argument that the Gospel of God is meant for all – Jew and Gentile – since the dual witness of Abraham and David conveyed in Scripture shows that the Righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεού) has been revealed to the uncircumcised as well as the circumcised. See Table 7.

## **Summary**

The importance of faith is emphasised in this dyad, whether faith ‘outside the Law’ or ‘according to the Law’, yet both panels affirm the importance of the Law (3:21 and 4:1-25). For Gentile and Jew, faith is the revelation of the Righteousness of God in Christ. Since there is only one God, who is God of Gentile as well as Jew, there is only one path to justification ‘through the free gift of his grace’ (3:24). That path is through the death and resurrection of Christ. The answer to the (partly rhetorical) question in the first panel: “Is God the God of the Jews alone and not of the Gentiles too?” (3:29-30) comes in the second panel with the riposte that Abraham is prototype

and model of that faith which justifies “the circumcised and the uncircumcised” (4:12). It is noteworthy that the first panel concludes with a strong statement that the Law is not being negated. On the contrary, the Law is being given its true value (3:21). Here we notice an anticipation of 10:4: Christ is the end of the Law (τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός).

The second panel ends with a balancing statement that the promises of God are not confined to children of Abraham according to the flesh, but “to us as well” – people of faith – “the faith that was considered as justifying him” (3:22). The parallel passages 3:21-23 and 4:13-17 both deal in a complementary way with God’s promises made in the past and the revealing of God’s Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεού) in the present. Furthermore, 3:23, stating that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ), finds its contrasting partner in the faith of Abraham and Sarah (4:20) who “gave glory to God” (δοῦς δόξαν τῷ θεῷ). Here, as elsewhere in the universe of Romans, faith and glory are allied. The death and resurrection of Christ exemplify this, as a semantic study of the dyad reveals.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> See Greek Supplement which accompanies this study (p.3).

**TABLE 12**

**The Third Dyad (3:21- 4:25)**

**God’s Righteousness revealed outside the Law – in Christ/in Abraham**

**First Panel (3:21-31)**

**Second Panel (4:1-25)**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>The Righteousness of God revealed in Christ – outside the Law</b>                        | <b>The Righteousness of God revealed through Abraham’s faith – outside the Law</b>                              |
| <b>‘now revealed outside the Law’ (3:22)</b>  | <b>‘Available to all Abraham’s descendants...who belong to the Law’ (4:16)</b>                                  |
| <b>To Jew and Gentile alike - to the circumcised and the uncircumcised (3:22).</b>          | <b>To Abraham after circumcision (4:18-25) and before circumcision (4:10-12).</b>                               |
| <b>Justification as free gift to those who have faith (3:23-24).</b>                        | <b>Justification ‘credited’ to Abraham because of his faith (4:9-10 and 4:22-23).</b>                           |
| <b>One God - God of the Gentiles and of the Jews (3:29-30). Rhetorical question (3:29).</b> | <b>The God of Abraham - God of the uncircumcised and of the circumcised (4:1-25). Answer to question (4:12)</b> |
| <b>Faith gives the Law its true meaning (3:31).</b>   | <b>Abraham’s faith ‘considered as justifying him’ (4:22).</b>   |
| <b>Justification by faith - past and present (3:26).</b>                                    | <b>Justification by faith - past and present (4:1-24 and 4:25).</b>   |
| <b>The Law is not abrogated. It is given its true meaning as νόμου πίστεως (3:27-31).</b>   | <b>‘Belonging to the Law’ is ‘belonging to the faith of Abraham’ (4:16).</b>                                    |
| <b>Faith and glory linked: “ they fell short of the glory of God (3:23)</b>                 | <b>Faith and glory linked: “Abraham drew strength from faith and gave glory to God” (4:20)</b>                  |
| <b>Justification through the sacrificial death of Christ (3:24-25)</b>                      | <b>Justification linked with resurrection (4:17, 25)</b>  |

## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON BLOCK 1 (Rom 1-4)**

### **Theme: God's Righteousness revealed through faith-not works**

By surveying Romans 1-4 as a block composed of three segments, each consisting of two panels in dynamic, dialogical/dyadic relationship, a robust and convincing picture emerges of Paul's rhetorical method of proceeding in this foundational section of the Letter. A two-fold Prologue (1:1-7 and 1:8-15) is followed by a two-fold portrait of sinful humanity (1:18-32 and 2:1- 3:20) and this, in turn, is followed by a two-fold apologia for God's Righteousness revealed through faith (3:21-31 and 4:1-25). This two-fold approach represents a discernible and significant structure by which Paul's gospel (the Gospel of God) is announced.

The two-part Prologue serves as a nuanced and balanced introduction to the Letter, where formal and informal elements merge at the service of Paul's purpose. In the threshold statement of theme (1:16-17) – the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all, both Jews and Greeks, and its reiteration in formulaic question and answer form in 3:9-20, the two main panels the second dyad (1:16-3:20) are complementary, bookended and set in high relief by the statement of theme in 1:16-17 and the summary appeal to scripture in 3:20. Paul states his thesis (1:16-17), then presents a two-part antithesis, which turns out to be an inverse, doubly reinforced argument for the Gospel (1:18-3:20). He concludes by reinforcing his thesis in the strongest terms, formulated as answer to the question: 'Are we any better off?' This is followed by the answer, backed up by the most extended catena of Scripture references in the New Testament (3:9-20).

The third dyad (3:21-4:25), with panels unbalanced in terms of length and density of argument (the first panel being the more dense), is nevertheless a compact and tightly structured two-fold argumentation for Paul's main thesis: God's Righteousness is revealed to Gentile and Jew, to uncircumcised and circumcised, through faith. Through a series of balanced and parallel examples, as shown in Table 12, Paul demonstrates the limitations of the Law, though he points out at the end of Panel 1 that he is giving the Law its true value (3:31). The *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9) is invoked: There is only one God and this God is God of all. Abraham, even before he was circumcised (i.e., outside the Law) believed God. His faith 'was credited to him' as justification. This justification is God's free gift, available to Jew and Gentile alike, through faith.

Appropriately, this third dyad, ending the first main section of the Letter, concludes with a plea on Paul's part for faith in God 'who raised Jesus Christ from the dead'. This provides a compelling link with the thesis already announced in 1:16-17 as well as a lead-in to the following section which will develop at length the topic of God's Righteousness revealed in Christ.

## CHAPTER SIX

### GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED IN CHRIST

#### Realm of Newness, Freedom, Life in the Spirit, Mercy

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#### Three Dyads (5:1-21; 6:1-7:25; 8:1-39) + a Triad (9:1-11:36)

**Thesis illustrated – Structure illuminating Content - An analysis of the Functioning of Structural Dyadic and Triadic Panels – General Observations.**

#### Introduction

This chapter will deal with what is for many the most disputed section of Romans. For some,<sup>265</sup> the pericope 5:1-11 belongs with the previous section, because it begins with the conjunction οὖν meaning 'therefore', and may be read as a conclusion to the previous argument that Abraham is father in faith to Jew and Gentile alike.<sup>266</sup> However, the conjunction οὖν is often used to indicate a transition or a movement to a new phase.<sup>267</sup> This seems to be the more likely usage here, because the argument is moving to a new level with 5:1. Some scholars, including Luke Timothy Johnson, see Romans 5 as the

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<sup>265</sup> For example, Morris and Stuhlmacher.

<sup>266</sup> See Appendix (1) for sample Structural Divisions.

<sup>267</sup> See, for example, Lk 3:7; Acts 25:1; 1 Cor 8:4

core of Romans.<sup>268</sup> For others, especially those who read Romans mainly as a treatise on justification by faith, Romans 6 and 7 are central because they deal with Sin, Grace and the Law. Romans 8, with its emphasis on the role of the Spirit, eschatology and the new creation, is invoked as crucial by cosmologist and ecological schools, while Romans 9-11 has generated intense controversy, being regarded by some as a parenthetical excursus of some kind with little relationship to what precedes or follows it.<sup>269</sup> Today, however, the scholarly consensus is moving towards reading 9-11 as not only integral to Paul's message in Romans but as the climax of the argumentation in the entire Letter, which is the position corroborated by this study. Many of the major problems associated with the interpretation of Chapters 5-11 are solved, as we shall see, by a reading of 5-8 as three structural segments, each consisting of two interactive panels, followed by one climactic triadic segment (Chapters 9-11) which corresponds with the thematic high-point of Romans and the climax of Paul's explication of the gospel. In summary, the proposed structural division of 5-11 looks like this:

## **An Analysis of the Functioning of Dyads/Triads in Rom 5-11**

### **Fourth Dyad: The realm of Christ surpasses that of Adam (Rom 5:1-21)**

Rom 5:1-11. The realm of Christ

Rom 5:12-21. Christ's realm surpasses that of Adam

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<sup>268</sup> For example, Luke Timothy Johnson, "Chapter 5 is the heart of Paul's argument concerning how God's righteousness revealed itself by making humans righteous by free gift". *Reading Romans. A literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 98.

<sup>269</sup> For example, C.H. Dodd, *Ibid.*, 149-151.



**Fifth Dyad: Freedom from slavery (Rom 6:1-7:25)**

Rom 6:1-23. Slavery and Sin

Rom 7:1-25. Slavery and the Law

**Sixth Dyad: The Spirit – Source of life and hope of glory (Rom 8:1-39)**

Rom 8:1-13. The Spirit gives life

Rom 8:14-39. The Spirit-based life leads to glory

**Seventh Segment: Israel’s fate and the mystery of God’s mercy**

**(Rom 9-11)**

Rom 9:1-29: Lament over Israel (9:1-5). God is sovereign (9:6-29)

Rom 9:30-10:21: Israel’s unbelief and the acceptance of the Gentiles

Rom 11: God’s Righteousness/Mercy will restore all Israel

**TABLE 13**

**The Fourth Dyad (Rom 5:1-21)**

**God’s Righteousness revealed in Christ**

**Realm of Newness, Freedom, Life in the Spirit, Mercy**

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>The Realm of Christ (5:1-11)</b>                          |  | <b>Christ’s realm surpasses that of Adam (5:12-21)</b>          |
| <b>Slavery and Sin (6:1-23)</b>                              |  | <b>Slavery and the Law (7:1-25)</b>                             |
| <b>The Spirit gives life (8:1-13)</b>                        |  | <b>The Spirit-based life leads to glory (8:14-39)</b>           |
| <b>Lament over Israel (9:1-5). God is sovereign (9:6-29)</b> | <b>Israel’s unbelief and the acceptance of the Gentiles (9:30-10:21)</b> | <b>God’s Righteousness/Mercy for all, including Israel (11)</b> |

## **The Fourth Dyad (5:1-21)**

### **Theme: The Realm of Christ surpasses that of Adam**

Robert Jewett notes that the theme of dominion or ‘ruling over’ provides a crucial link between these two pericopes. Of the first (5:1-11) he writes: “The role and appropriateness of this pericope in the argument of Romans have been debated for a long time but I conclude that the main theme is how Christ’s life (v.10) defines the future destiny of believers just as Adam’s life defined the destiny of his descendants”.<sup>270</sup> This makes sense, not only in terms of respecting the sequence of Paul’s argument in the wider context of the Letter, but also in terms of redeeming the pericope 5:1-11 from the avalanche of bridging theories under which it has laboured,<sup>271</sup> as well as from interpolation theories and questions about its authorship and authenticity.<sup>272</sup> As a panel or conceptual unit it has definite boundaries as well as organic links to Paul’s thesis in 3:21- 4:25 (the accomplishment of salvation by God in Christ) and to what follows in 5:12-21 (Adam and Christ contrasted). In a word, if the pericope 5:1-11 is read as a panel in dialogue with 5:12-21, as

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<sup>270</sup> Robert Jewett. *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press) 2007, 370.

<sup>271</sup> See, for example, P. McDonald, “Romans 5:1-11 as Rhetorical Bridge” in JSNT No. 40; Nils A. Dahl, “Two Notes on Romans 5” in ST 5 (1952) 37- 48; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT: Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1996), 290-295; David R. Wallace, *The Gospel of God. Romans as Paul’s Aeneid* (Eugene, Oregon.: Pickwick, 2008), 151-153.

<sup>272</sup> See, for example, J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 85.

proposed here, three things follow: firstly, the integrity and continuity of Paul's argument in the total doctrinal section of the Letter (1:18- 11:11:36) become obvious; secondly, the need for interpolation theories regarding 5:1-11 and/or 12-21<sup>273</sup> disappears and thirdly, some of the persisting questions<sup>274</sup> about the continuity between chapters 4 and 5 of the Letter and about the rhetorical functioning of 5:1-11 within that sequence are answered satisfactorily.

### **First Panel: The Realm of Christ (5:1-11)**

At one level this panel may be read as a reformulation of the thesis proposed in 3:21-31: human beings are made righteous by faith through the death of Christ. But it represents a development as well as a reminder. For Paul this teaching is so central that it must be reworked again and again into the fabric of the doctrinal section of Romans. Here he argues from experience, as his use of first person plural shows clearly.

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<sup>273</sup> Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul. His life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 327.

He writes: "The Adam/Christ typology gives the impression of being a coherent unit independent of this context", citing Brandenburger, Wilckens and Schade in support of this. He continues: "It could be that standing in the background of the Adam/Christ contrast in 1 Cor 15:22, 45 and Rom 5:14 is the Alexandrian Jewish interpretation of Gen 1:26-27 and 2:7 as found in Philo, *Alleg. Interp* 1:31: "There are two types of men; the one a heavenly man, the other an earthly. The heavenly man, made after the image of God, is altogether without part or lot in corruptible and terrestrial substance; but the earthly one was compacted out of the matter scattered here and there, which Moses calls 'clay'".

<sup>274</sup> For example David R. Wallace, *The Gospel of God. Romans as Paul's Aeneid* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2008), 151.

Paul begins with a dense introductory statement of theme, reminiscent of his approach in 1:1-7. The theme of the following four chapters is announced in summary form. The elucidation will follow in detail. Departing from the polemical tone of the previous block (1:18-4:25), Paul sounds a note of hope.<sup>275</sup> This note will be reinforced with a strong *inclusio* in 8:31-39 with “the hope that springs from God’s love”. The section represented by Chapters 5-8 is bookended with the divine gifts of hope and love. The tone is intimate and personal. Paul identifies with his audience, speaking in first person plural: “we have been made righteous” (v 1), “we have obtained access” (v 2), “we can boast” (vv 2-3), “we were reconciled to God” (v 10). A new eschatological reality has been inaugurated. The “state of grace” (v 2) to which faith gives access is envisaged as a new domain with promise of future glory. Here is reason for genuine boasting. Variants of the verb ‘to boast’ (καυχάομαι) occur three times in the passage (vv 2, 3 and 11). This boasting is not the self-advertising held in high esteem in certain Greco-Roman circles but an expression of confidence based on what God has done in Christ. Furthermore, it allows for a new and countercultural understanding of suffering as the road to glory: suffering leads to patience, patience to perseverance and perseverance leads to certain hope (v. 4). All of this is possible because “the love of God has been poured into our hearts” (v 5). It is likely that Paul, while keeping Calvary and his own sufferings in view, is addressing a prevailing culture in Rome, perhaps even an antagonistic Stoic

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<sup>275</sup> “Faith now yields to hope as the major theme” (Brendan Byrne, *Romans and Galatians* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 93.

teaching.<sup>276</sup> In Christ an alternative world order is announced. This is a realm of peace (v 1)<sup>277</sup>, righteousness (v 9) and reconciliation with God (v 10). It is a domain of right relationships under the lordship of Christ Jesus.

In 5:5 the Spirit is mentioned for the first time in Romans. Again in this context Paul aligns himself with his hearers. He and they have received the Holy Spirit. In inter-testamental times, centuries before a theology of the Trinity was developed, receiving the Spirit was understood to signal the inbreaking of God's new age.<sup>278</sup>

In summary, the panel represented by 5:1-11, while reiterating the thesis of 3:21-31, introduces a note of hope. Paul's personal experience is linked, through the use of first person plural, the outcome of what God has done in Christ. In fact Paul announces that a new situation has arisen and that a new existence is possible for all through faith. In this new realm right relationships prevail. Faith gives free access to this new realm, not because it

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<sup>276</sup> Douglas Campbell, *The Deliverance of God. An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 495ff. Also N.T. Wright, *Romans* in *New Interpreters Bible, Vol.X* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 516.

<sup>277</sup> It is a domain of peace, irrespective of whether one chooses an indicative or an imperative reading of the contested *ἔχομεν/ἔχόμεν*- "we have peace" or the alternative "let us have peace".

<sup>278</sup> N. T. Wright, 517ff.

Also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 398: The Spirit is understood as "the first instalment of eschatological glory". Referring to the Qumran idea of God "spreading abroad the holy Spirit", Fitzmyer quotes from IQH 7:6-7: "I thank you, O Lord, for you have supported me with your strength and you have poured upon me your holy Spirit that I may not waver".

is deserved but because of what God has done in Christ. This is the realm where Christ Jesus reigns. “Reconciled to God through the death of his son” (v 10) and “saved from the wrath” (v 9),<sup>279</sup> subjects in this new realm have valid reason to exult and to “boast in God” (v 11). Here we note the re-appearance of threads from a previous argument relating to false boasting in 2:17. For Paul, justification has already occurred through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Through faith it is possible to enter the state of being made righteous, or justified,<sup>280</sup> even in this present time. The new age and the new realm have been inaugurated.

## **Second Panel: Realm of Christ surpasses that of Adam**

### **(5:12-21)**

Paul does not immediately continue his discussion as developed in 5:1-11. Instead he resumes the polemical tone, casting his argument in third person singular. Comparing Christ to Adam, he proceeds in three phases (vv 12-14, vv 15-17, vv 18-21) to show the superabundance (the ‘much more’) of

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<sup>279</sup> Many English translations, including NRSV, NJB (but not NAB) add “of God”, which is not in the Greek. In Jewish apocalyptic understanding, ‘the wrath’ refers to the fate of those who persevere in evil. It would not have been understood as the emotion of anger in God. For more on this, see Brendan Byrne, *op. cit.*, 96.

<sup>280</sup> Morna Hooker speaks of ‘rightwising’ as descriptive of the action by which humans are justified or made right with God (IBA Lecture “Paul as Pastor”, Dublin, Irl., 2008). This terminology is also used by Robert Jewett: *Romans. A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, 139-143, while Paul Barnett suggests ‘righteoused by faith’, *Paul, Missionary of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 193.

Christ's work as compared and contrasted with that of Adam. The source of human ruin was one man, Adam, head of the human race. The source of restoration is also in one man, Christ, who is head of all the redeemed. Paul assumes without proof that Adam and Christ are type and antitype respectively. He also assumes, as foundation for his arguments, the Jewish notion that physical death is the result of Adam's sin transmitted through posterity. Verses 12-14 deal with similarities and contrasts between the deeds of Adam and those of Christ. Verses 15-17 address the differences in the outcomes, and vv 18-21 offer a summary of the parallels.

The Adam-Christ typology 'works' for Paul, by offering a rhetorical means of portraying Christ as the Adam of the *eschaton*. Sin and death, as personified forces in the realm of Adam, have wrought havoc on the human race. Freedom from sin and death comes with the new life in the new realm introduced by Christ. This is a summary of all that Paul has been saying so far in the Letter, and in this resides its theological importance. Fitzmyer holds this pericope to be second in importance only to that of 3:21-26. He writes: "In a sense, this paragraph constitutes the second most important passage in the letter, the first being 3:21-26".<sup>281</sup> While certain elements of the typology limp, as for example, the inferences presumed regarding physical and spiritual life/death, or the surprise anacoluthon in v. 17, "If, because of one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life...", the entire passage successfully

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<sup>281</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 406

draws contrasting pictures of Adam and Christ as dominant and representative figures of beginning and end times respectively. Adam unleashed sin and death into the world. Christ, by contrast, brought life in superabundance. The final verses (20-21) present the Law as a personified force which ultimately leads humankind into the clutches of Sin and Death.<sup>282</sup> A dramatic climax follows in which another personified force, namely Grace ruling through Righteousness, engages in battle with (personified) Law and wins the day. Grace has the final word. Life triumphs over death.

### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the Fourth Dyad (5:1-21)**

As conceptual blocs of unequal length (the second being longer, which suits the theme of ‘how much more...’) the two panels under consideration stand in marked contrast to one another in many respects, with many mismatched elements, yet they belong together because of the common themes of realm/reigning and right of access. The first panel (vv 1-11) portrays the realm of the redeemed, where grace and life abound, where peace and reconciliation and the love of God ‘poured out’ in human hearts give assurance of ‘the hope of glory’. This is the domain where Jesus Christ reigns. Entry into this realm is accessible to all through faith. No one deserves entry here. It is accessed and received as sheer gift.

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<sup>282</sup> Personification is understood here in the general literary sense, where human characteristics are attributed to non-human realities. Here the Law is seen as a person who acts as captor, taking human beings captive to the evil forces of Sin and Death.



By contrast, the second Panel (vv 12-21) portrays the realm of Adam as the domain of the unredeemed, where ‘sin entered through one man’ (v 12), where even the Law of Moses engenders trespass, where ‘death reigned over everyone as a consequence of one man’s fall’ (v 17). Yet a strong connection is made with the former panel. All is not darkness because the head of this realm, Adam, father of the human race, prefigured the One to come. This realm of sin is not just balanced but “outweighed” by the realm of grace (vv 15, 16). Jesus Christ, the antitype, “will cause everyone to reign in life” who has received the free gift of righteousness. Type and antitype are locked in a dramatic encounter which presumes a traditional Jewish understanding of Genesis 3:17 and the transmission of the effects of Adam’s sin as suffering and death for all his descendants. The actors in this colourful dramatic act are Sin, Death, the Law and Grace. The Law collaborates with Sin to bring about Death. The drama ends on a note of surprise: Grace will preside as queen.

The first panel is intensely personal and reads as Paul’s apologia for the Gospel. He identifies himself with those whom he addresses, those “who have been made righteous and at peace with God” (v 1). It is coloured by personal experience. Present reality is described and present tense is predominant. The use of first personal plural throughout makes this passage reminiscent of the second part of the Prologue (1:7-15) where a personal note is used to reinforce a weighty message (1:1-6). It is also redolent of the section 3:7 ff., where a change to first and second person plural serves Paul well in addressing the crucial question of the advantage of being a Jew. The

second panel, by contrast, is polemic and argumentative in tone, reminiscent of 1:18-3:20, cast in past tense and third person narrative. The stage is set at a comfortable remove from the audience. The dramatic battle between Sin, Death, and the Law on the one hand and Grace on the other is still backstage. It will come fully into the light in the next segment. The realm of Adam is meant to prefigure and give way to the realm of his antitype, Christ Jesus. Subtle hints at the outcome of the battle are provided by narrative notes of superabundance like ‘outweigh’ (vv. 15, 16), ‘even greater’ (v 21) and ‘certain...even more certain’ (v 17). These are balanced by the impression created in Panel 1 by phrases such as ‘but that is not all’ (v 3) and by the rhetorical question ‘Is it likely that he (Christ) would now fail to save us...?’ (v 9). A reinforcing mirror-panel can be discerned within Panel 2, where the contrast between the life-giving deed of Christ and the death-dealing sin of Adam are placed in sharp relief.

## **Summary**

In this fourth dyad, the two constitutive panels function both contrastively and complementarily. The realm of Christ is presented in the first Panel as a realm of hope, peace and righteousness. Two valid reasons are given for boasting: Firstly, through Jesus we can look forward to God’s glory (5:3); secondly, we can also boast about our sufferings because they lead to salvation and reconciliation with God (5:4-11). The realm of Christ is portrayed as surpassing that of Adam. The realm of Adam in the second panel is a realm where personifications of Sin, Death and the Law conspire to entrap humankind. Death is in charge in this realm (5:14), while hope, peace

and righteousness reign in the realm of Christ. The Second Adam, Christ, head of the new humanity, is contrasted with the first Adam, head of the original human race. The first Adam prefigured the Second (5:15). Through the disobedience of the first Adam, Sin entered the world. Through the obedience of Christ, the new Adam, life and grace came to all humanity as free gift.

There is a measure of continuity between the two panels in that both confront the reality of sin and death. Grace (First Panel) far ‘outweighs’ the burden of Sin (second panel). Suffering leads to hope (first panel), while death is portrayed as the legacy of Sin (second panel). A mirror-panel can be identified within the second panel, with its own internal set of dialogical/dyadic features. The literary device of personification begun here (of Sin, Death, the Law, Righteousness and Grace) continues like a thread throughout the sequences in the next two dyads, ending with 8:39.<sup>283</sup>

See Tables 14 and 15.

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<sup>283</sup> When human attributes or activities are assigned to something that is not human, this is known, in literary circles, as personification. It is a literary tool commonly used to emphasise a point. Beginning at Rom 5:12, Paul introduces a team of *dramatis personae*, beginning with Sin (ἁμαρτία). Sin ‘enters’ (v 12); Sin ‘spreads’ (v 12); Sin pre-existed (v 13); Death ‘reigned’ (v 14); Sin must not ‘reign’ (6:12); Sin ‘enslaves’ (6:15); Sin ‘pays wages’ (6:23); The Law ‘commands’ (7:12). William McNamaraOCD, in his book, *The Art of Being Human* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1962) presents a convincing argument for reading Romans 5-7 as drama which could be enacted on stage.

**TABLE 14**

**The Fourth Dyad (5:1-21)**

**The Realm of Christ and the Realm of Adam**

**First Panel (5:1-11)**

**Second Panel (5:12-21)**

**The realm of Christ**

**Christ’s realm surpasses Adam’s**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>The realm of Christ - Head of the new humanity.</b>   | <b>5: 12-21: The realm of Adam - Head of the old humanity.</b>  |
| <b>Tone: personal. Use of first person singular (18 times). Paul’s personal apologia for the Gospel.</b>   | <b>Tone: polemical and argumentative. Use mainly of third person singular. First person plural (5:21). Narrative approach to Adam’s role.</b> |
| <b>Present reality described.</b><br><br><b>Identification of Paul with the redeemed. “We have been made righteous...” (v1). Sin terminology (5:6, 8, 10).</b> | <b>Past reality described.</b><br><br><b>Death spread through the whole human race. Everyone has sinned. Sin terminology (5:12-21).</b>       |
| <b>Access to the new realm through faith.</b><br><br><b>“We have entered...” (v 2).</b>  | <b>Access to the old realm through Adam.</b><br><br><b>“Sin entered the world through one man...” (v 12).</b>                                 |
| <b>Realm of peace/ reconciliation/ hope of glory (5:1-5).</b>  | <b>Realm of Sin, Death, the Law (5:12-21).</b>  |
| <b>The hope that springs from the love of God ‘outweighs’ everything.</b>  | <b>Personification of Sin, Death, The Law (a literary device that will run like a thread to 8:39).</b>  |

**TABLE 15****Mirror-dyad: Adam-Christ Typology (5:12-21) <sup>284</sup>**

| <b>Adam as Type</b>  | <b>Christ as Antitype</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Adam – Head of the old humanity</b>   | <b>Christ – Head of the new humanity</b>                                |
| <b>The disobedience of one man brought sin and death into the world (5:12, 15)</b> | <b>The obedience of one man brought faith and life (5:17)</b>           |
| <b>One man’s offense brought condemnation to all humanity (5:18a)</b>              | <b>One man’s good act brought justification to all humanity (5:18b)</b> |
| <b>The reign of sin brought death (5:20)</b>                                       | <b>The reign of grace brought eternal life (5:21)</b>                   |
| <b>The Law multiplied offences (5:20a)</b>   | <b>Grace was ‘even greater’ (5:20b)</b>                                 |
| <b>The offense was great (5:15a)</b>   | <b>The gift ‘outweighed’ the offense (5:16)</b>                         |

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<sup>284</sup> The term ‘mirror-dyad’ has been devised to denote a dialogical mini-structure which mirrors the dialectic in the larger context. There are several such mini-structures in Romans, of which the above (Rom 5:12-21) is an exemplification.

## **Fifth Dyad (6:1-7:25)**

### **Theme: Freedom from Slavery**

Returning to the language of the scholastic diatribe, Paul sets out to elaborate, in two parallel systems, some implications of being freed from sin. His first argument in 6:1-14 is built around Christian baptism as a dying to sin and a rising to new life. The second argument, in 6:15-23, relies on the notion of transfer of allegiance, particularly that of a slave transferring from one master to another. The unifying planks linking both systems are the personifications of Sin, Death, Grace and Righteousness already mentioned in 5:12-21.

### **First Panel: Freedom from Sin (6:1-23)**

The pericope 6:1-14 opens with an objection from an imaginary interlocutor: Why not go on sinning (on the basis of the previous reasoning in 5:12-21)? Paul appeals to the baptismal rite for his answer. It is presumed that his Roman hearers will have understood the rite of baptism as a dying to sin and emergence from the water as a sign of resurrection. Yet it is not Paul's intention here to develop a theology of baptism.<sup>285</sup> He is simply making the point that if one is dead to sin one does not live in sin. Here, as in 5:12-21, Sin is personified as a ruler in a given realm, a force that commands obedience (6:12). Paul exhorts his hearers to make a choice between the realm of Sin and the realm of Grace (v 14). The realm of Grace is the realm of the risen Lord. Being baptised "into" Christ Jesus signifies being baptised

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<sup>285</sup> Brendan Byrne, *Romans*. Sacra Pagina, Vol 6 (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), 189.

into his death, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ, being ushered into a new existence which is a sharing in his risen life.

The second plank in Paul's argument opens with another objection, similar to that proffered in 6:1 above: If grace always wins out over sin, why not multiply sin so as to multiply grace? The subject has been broached before, first in 3:8, and more generally in 5:1-11. Here Paul invokes another strategy, relying on the image of a slave transferring from one master to another. Continuing to personify Sin and Grace, he now portrays them both as slave-masters to whom one owes obedience. Noteworthy are the echoes here of Paul's self-portrait in 1:1 as Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, 'Paul, slave of Christ Jesus'. Obedience in the realm of Grace is 'from the heart', not simply an external discharge of duty such as a slave might unwillingly give to a slave-master, but a willing 'handing over' of one's allegiance to the new master, Christ. The recurrence of the verb παραδιδώ ('to hand over') here is significant. This verb has featured several times as a key determinant in the argument represented in the Panel 1:18-32. The language of exchange is important in the overall context of Romans.

### **Second Panel: Freedom and the Law (7:1-25)**

The overall thrust of Paul's argument in this panel is clear: Being 'in Christ' means being free from the demands of the Law (understood negatively). His manner of arguing the point, however, is quite complex and he ends by differentiating between two interpretations of the Law: (i) the true Law of Moses, given by God and therefore spiritual (v 14) and good in itself, from

which one does not seek freedom, and (ii) the counterfeit Law, produced by Sin, hijacker of human passion in the cause of Death, which is to be rejected.

The argument opens with an analogy taken from marriage (7:1-6). Here, for the second time in the Letter, Paul addresses his audience as ἀδελφοί (brethren). Reminding them that a woman's obligations to her husband cease with the physical death of the husband, leaving her then free to remarry, he argues that they (his hearers) are equivalently in a new marital situation. By death "through the body of Christ" (possibly a reference to baptism as entry into the sphere of salvation) they are now legally free to enter into a new relationship with the One who rose from the dead. If pushed to the limits, the analogy breaks down, though the notion of being dead to the Law and freed for a new existence can be read into the passage, as Paul would probably have intended. The sequel argument in 7: 5-6 of giving birth to a stillborn child as opposed to being productive for God acts as a reiteration of the themes in the previous Panel, where Life and Grace are in antithetical stance to Death and Sin. Again there is poetic breakdown here, because the implied wife/mother is none other than the 'brethren' whom Paul is addressing, and with whom he identifies in v 6 ("we are rid of the Law"). The 'death' mentioned in 7:1-5 is not to be identified with personified Death of 6:1-23, or with the personification in the following verses, 7-25.

The second stage of the argument may be considered as an alternative approach in two phases. Firstly, in vv 7-13 Paul examines the function of the Mosaic Law and concludes that it is good. Answering an imaginary opponent, he states emphatically in v 13 that the Law itself is sacred and that



its commands are “sacred, just and good”. Yet it has been hijacked by Sin who (as personified evil force) took advantage of the knowledge that the Law provides. The second phase of the argument moves from third person narrative to first person singular. Whether the verses 14-25 represent autobiographical material from Paul’s own life has been disputed. Most commentators today favour a reading of the passage as a biography of Everyman.<sup>286</sup> It moves to the internal domain where evil and good are engaged in battle for a conquest of weak human nature, who is “a prisoner of the law of sin” (v 23). The passage ends, as 5:1-11 opened, with a ray of hope: The prisoner will be rescued by Jesus Christ our Lord (v 24). Paul has concluded his apologia for the Law of God by distinguishing it definitively from the unspiritual “law of sin” (v 25). He is not advocating freedom from the Law of Moses/Law of God which is ‘spiritual’, but from the Law which makes a prisoner of weak humanity, equated here with ‘the flesh’ (*σάρχ*). Paul’s anti-nomism is quite selective!

### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the Fifth Dyad (6:1-7:25)**

Freedom is the common theme which links the two panels. Behind the ramifications of scholastic diatribe, of argument and counter-argument, one reads the Exodus story, even though Paul does not quote it directly. N.T. Wright argues, rightly, I think, that Paul in Romans 5-8 especially, but also in Romans 4, is working “within the controlling Exodus story.” He writes,

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<sup>286</sup> C.K. Barrett, *Romans*, 147ff. Also F. F. Bruce, *Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1985, 143ff, and Brendan Byrne SJ, *Romans*, 225ff.

“Baptism corresponds to the Red Sea, the Spirit to Torah; and Abraham’s family, now defined in terms of Jesus’ messianic death and resurrection, are therefore on their way to inheriting the promise and must not think of going back to Egypt”.<sup>287</sup> He further argues that Romans 5-8 is a continuation of the story, begun in Chapter 4, of Abraham’s family passing through slavery to freedom. This interpretation, offered also by Douglas Moo<sup>288</sup> and Sylvia Keesmaat<sup>289</sup> gives, incidentally, solid ground for seeing Romans 9-11 as integral to Romans, by giving Paul reason to return to the ‘problem’ of Israel.

The journey from slavery to freedom (6:7-22) echoes the Israelite journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the land of Canaan. The Genesis story (Chapters 2 and 3) is to be presumed as background to the Adam/Christ typology in 5:12-21.<sup>290</sup> Yet it is remarkable that Paul does not quote directly from the Old Testament in Rom 6-7. The first panel (6:1-23) opens with a question which acts as a link to the previous discussion about sin and grace. It deals in two complementary phases (1-11 and 12-23) with the reality of the Christian’s freedom from sin. The second panel (7:1-25) argues, also in two

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<sup>287</sup> N. T. Wright, “The New Inheritance according to Paul” in *Bible Review*, 14.3 (1998). Also, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), Ch.10.

<sup>288</sup> Douglas Moo writes, referring to Romans 7, “It seems best to conclude that Paul describes the experience of Israel...but uses the first person, because he himself is a Jew.” NTS, 32 (1986), p.129.

<sup>289</sup> Sylvia Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: Reinterpreting the Exodus Tradition*. JSNT Sup 181 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

<sup>290</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001), 95.

complementary phases, that the Christian is free from the Law. The personified forces of Sin, Death, the Law, Grace and Righteousness inhabit both panels, with dramatic effect. Panel 2 may be read as a logical sequel, in Pauline terms, to Panel 1, clarifying especially what Paul means by ‘freedom from the Law’.

Both panels display a mix of approaches. Narrative, dramatic dialogue, speech-in-character, appeals to reason and to human experience, as well as Paul’s first impassioned plea to his hearers as to ‘brethren’ (7:1,4) – all mark these passages as crucial to Paul’s rhetorical purpose. But they function complementarily. If Panel 1, in arguing for freedom from sin, could lead to a possible misinterpretation of Paul’s view of Mosaic Law, Panel 2 comes to the rescue. Sinful human nature, not the Law as given by Moses, now emerges as the villain of the piece!<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> There is much more to be said about the rhetorical richness of 7:7-25. It would merit a lengthy excursus, beyond the scope of this work. I am indebted to Alain Gignac for insights into the complexity of the dialogical structure of Rom 7. Alain Gignac, “La Mise-en-Scene de Rm 7, 7- 8, 4: Une Approche Narrative et Synchronique” in Udo Schnelle: *Romans* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 113-134. Gignac treats 7:7-25 as a dialogical mirror-panel incorporating many of the elements from the wider context of Romans 5-8. For Stanley Kent Stowers, Rom 7:7-25 is an example of extended *προσώποποιία* or speech-in-character. See S.K. Stowers, “Romans 7:7-25 as a Speech-in-Character” in Troels Engberg Pedersen, *Paul in his Hellenistic Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 180-202.

## Summary

This fifth dyad deals with the issues of Sin, Death, the Law, Grace and Freedom, but under differing guises. Panel 1 opens with the question which has already been asked in 3:8: Why not sin more so as to give grace more scope? Paul's negative answer, "Of course, not" is bolstered up by a lengthy treatment of baptism as entry into the death and resurrection of Christ. Since the death of Christ was death to Sin, Christian baptism is also death to Sin and the beginning of life for God. Living the Christian life means living no longer under the dominion of Sin, but living instead under the dominion of Grace. Using the image of slave-master relationship, Paul presents Christian baptism as a transfer of allegiance from the slavery of Sin to "the slavery of obedience that leads to Righteousness" (6:16). Under the old regime of Sin the body was used as weaponry at the service of immorality (6:13-14). Now, under the regime of Grace, the body is placed at the service of "Righteousness for sanctification" (6:23).

Panel 2, dealing with same themes of Sin and Grace, deals with the place of the Law in Christian life. Continuing with the metaphor of baptism as a death to former ways, another metaphor, that of the death of a marital spouse, is superimposed to strengthen the argument that death releases one from former allegiances. This could be interpreted as an argument for abandoning the Law, but this is not Paul's intention. He hastens to distinguish between the 'spiritual' Law of Moses, which is also the Law of God, therefore to be honoured, and the 'unspiritual' Law of the flesh which takes humankind captive to Sin. The former is "sacred, and what it

commands is sacred, just and good.”(7:12). Panel 2, therefore, is not an argument against the Law, but a plea for freedom from a false understanding of it. In what has often been understood as an autobiographical excursus (7:14-25), the Panel ends with a statement of the human dilemma with its contradictory stance towards the Law: at times captivated by it in the cause of Sin, at other times raised to victory through it in the cause of Righteousness. The victory comes through Christ Jesus, Our Lord (7:25).

The panels balance each other in their complex presentation of the same topics, in their dramatic twists, metaphors, speech-in-character and in their climactic referral of all glory to Jesus Christ, Our Lord (6:23; 7:24). A dialogical mirror-panel, 7:7-14 and 7:15-25, emphasises the twin-messages that the Law, as given by God, is good (7:7) while human beings must wrestle with sinful tendencies, trusting in the victory won by Christ Jesus (7:24). See Tables 16 and 17.

**TABLE 16**

**The Fifth Dyad (6:1-7:25)**

**Freedom, Sin and the Law**

**First Panel (6:1-23)**

**Second Panel (7:1-25)**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Freedom from sin</b>   | <b>Freedom from the Law which enslaves humanity</b>  |
| <b>Argument in two phases (6:1-11 and 6:12-23)</b>  | <b>Argument in two phases (7:1-13 and 7:14-25)</b>   |
| <b>Identification with audience by use of first person plural (1-6). Otherwise a mix of address forms in third person singular/second person plural.</b>                      | <b>Identification with audience, <i>αδελφοί</i> (7:1, 4). Mix of address forms, including 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural &amp; person singular</b> |
| <b>Rhetorical questions/diatribe. Analogy: Baptism as participation in the death of Christ (1-11). Christian life as freedom from slavery/transfer to new master (15-19).</b> | <b>Rhetorical questions/diatribe. Analogy from marriage (1-6).<br/><br/>Speech-in-character: the moral dilemma (7-25).</b>   |
| <b>Personification of Sin (vv 12-13, 16, 20-23), Righteousness (v17), Grace (v 1)</b>   | <b>Personification of Sin (vv 11, 13), the Law (7-14)</b>  |
| <b>Presumed background: Gen 3 (The Fall)</b>  | <b>Presumed background: Exodus</b>   |
| <b>Sin linked with the Law (15-23)</b>  | <b>Sin linked with the Law (7-11)</b>  |
| <b>Old life ‘under the rule of Sin’ (12-14).<br/><br/>New life under the rule of Righteousness/God (20-23).</b>   | <b>Old life as imprisonment under the Law (vv 6, 23), as slavery to Sin (v 15).<br/><br/>New life as release from legal obligation (vv 2-6)</b>  |
| <b>Two vivid images as underlay for argument: (i) Baptism as death/entry to new life ( 3-11) (ii) Exchange of slave-master (16-19)</b>  | <b>Pictorial ‘speech-in-character’ – autobiographical note/ the story of Everyman (vv 14-24)</b>   |
| <b>Christ is the Answer: Both phases of argument end on a note of hope (vv 11, 23)</b>  | <b>Christ is the Answer. Final phase ends with thanksgiving (v 24)</b>   |

**TABLE 17****Mirror-dyad: The Law (7:7-25)****First Panel: Rom7:7-14a****Second Panel: Rom 7:14b-25**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The Law is good (7:7)  | “I agree that the Law is good” (7:16)   |
| The Law is spiritual (7:14a)   | “I am unspiritual” (7:14b)  |
| The Law is sacred (7:12)   | “I delight in the Law of God” (7:22)  |
| Yet, the Law conspires with Sin (7:13)   | “doomed to death” (7:24)  |
| The Law conspires with Death (7:9-10)  | “a prisoner of that law of sin”(7:23)   |
| Interlocutor/Narrator Dramatic sequence:<br>I (7:7); N (7:8-12); I (7:13a); N (7:13b-14) | Interlocutor/Narrator Dramatic sequence:<br>I (7:15-24); N (7:25a); I (7:25b) |

## **Sixth Dyad (8:1-39)**

### **Theme: The Spirit, source of life and hope of glory**

While the sixth dyad falls naturally into two panels, the flow of Paul's argument in the previous dyad (6:1-7:25) continues in 8:1-13. The answer to the 'unspiritual' Law, repudiated by Paul in 7:1-25, is found in 'the Law of the Spirit' which sets Christians free from the Law of sin and death. The initial verses of Chapter 8 act as opening boundary marker for the next dyad. They also act as link with the previous dyad by means of the vocabulary of 'law' (νόμος), and 'law of the Spirit' (νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος) as well as the vocabulary of Sin and Death (νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου (8:1-2).

### **First Panel: Freedom for the Law of the Spirit (8:1-13)**

At this point in the Letter there is an obvious change of focus. Arguments relating to Sin, Death and the Law, as in the previous segment (6:1-7:25), are now replaced by a description of life in the Spirit. Paul paints an alternative picture where the human dilemma, described in 7:14-24, is solved by "what God has done" (v 2). Freedom from Sin and the (unspiritual) Law, which Christ won for mankind, is now portrayed as freedom for a new way of living, under another law – the law of the Spirit. A stark contrast is drawn between the 'unspiritual' and the 'spiritual', between 'flesh', understood as 'sinful flesh' (σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, 8:3), and 'spirit' (πνεῦμά), understood as its opposite. Those who are "in Christ Jesus", who live "according to the Spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμά 8:4) are free from the demands of the unspiritual Law.



Therefore they have no fear of condemnation. They are free to have their minds set on things of the Spirit. As a result ‘life and peace’ are assured (v 6).

Changing abruptly from third person narrative, Paul addresses his Roman audience with affirmative comment (vv 9-12): “But you are not living according to the flesh...” reminding them that the Spirit of God is dwelling in them. This Spirit is “the spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead” (v 10). The gift of the Spirit has been given to those who are ‘in Christ Jesus’. Therefore they can look forward in hope to the ‘making alive’ of their mortal bodies through the power of God’s Spirit living in them (echo of 6:8-11). Resurrection is linked to the indwelling Spirit. Verse 11 is hortatory. Paul reverts to first person plural, addressing his “brothers and sisters”. They are now under a new law – the law of the Spirit. Freed from their “unspiritual selves” (v 12) they are enabled to live in such a way as to “put to death the deeds of the flesh”. Because they possess the Spirit of Christ they belong to Christ (v 9b). For a justification of the delimitation proposed here, see Chapter Four, under Block 2.

### **Second Panel: Freedom for Glory (8:14-39)**

The notion of being co-glorified with Christ (συνδοξασθώμεν v 17) links the previous panel with that which follows, where the twin topics of suffering and glory will be central. The person who is ‘in Christ’ is freed for a life of glory. The human response to the gift of God is hope for eschatological glory. This glory is something quite specific and it has been prefigured in 5:1-11 and in 6:22-23. It is life incorruptible and everlasting, the antithesis of suffering and death. Already in 5:3-5 Paul has linked suffering with positive

‘boasting’, because of the promise that it holds. Here in 8:14-39 he will elaborate further. Suffering and glory are organically linked. There are three witnesses to this:

- (i) The ‘inward groaning’ of creation (vv 19, 23). The entire cosmos is waiting with ‘eager expectation’ for the revealing of the children of God. Here Paul uses an unusual expression ἀποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως (translated as ‘eager longing of creation’, v. 19) to denote the present inchoate state of creation. The present participle, ἀπεκδεχόμενοι in v. 23, usually translated as ‘eagerly awaiting’, reinforces the notion of the incompleteness of the cosmos in the ‘now’. The whole of creation is labouring as if in childbirth, awaiting the manifestation of its true glory.
- (ii) Hope is constant. It is a witness to the unfinished status of humanity and of the created universe (v 25). Both are in a state of looking forward in hope (v 21).
- (iii) The Spirit plays a vital role as witness in this process – that of giving expression to the unspoken ‘pleas of the saints’ (8:27).

The pericope 8:28-30 reads like an elevated digression. Yet it serves to emphasise that glory is the end of a sequence for the Christian: First there is election, then call, then justification and, finally, salvation and glory. While v 28 has been variously interpreted - the exact meaning a matter of much disagreement among scholars – it introduces the other side of the coin regarding the love of God. Paul now speaks of humans loving God. Up to

now the emphasis has been on the great gift of God's love for humankind revealed in Christ Jesus. Now there is a hint of anticipated glory for "all those who love God" (v 28): God is cooperating with them in the here and now by ordering everything to their ultimate good.<sup>292</sup> The presence of the Spirit at work in the lives of people at present is foretaste and earnest of the glory which is to be theirs in the future.

Paul brings this section to a close by returning to the discourse of the diatribe and the passionate forensic language characteristic of earlier parts of the Letter (especially 1:18-3.20). The setting is a courtroom. The questions belong in the domains of judgement and law: "Who shall bring a charge? Who shall condemn?" (vv 33-34). An obvious answer follows: The one who intercedes for us, who died for us, could scarcely be the one to condemn

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<sup>292</sup> Troels Engberg-Pedersen, in a Paper presented at *Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, 2007*, argues for a complex understanding of gift-giving, common to Paul and Seneca, as underlying grid for Romans 8: "How will it be possible to combine the idea of the real gift with the idea of God's own interests behind the gift? The answer should be found in the idea that just as human beings stand in a personal, emotional relationship with God, so God too stands in the same kind of relationship with human beings. That is how I understand Rom 5:5." And the hope does not put to shame; for God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (by God)." And a little later in Rom 5:8: "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." This is also how one should understand the last verses (8:35-39) of chap. 8. In all three places Paul speaks primarily of God's love (and Christ's love) for human beings. But the whole section that comes in between, from 8:14 to 8:30, leading up to the claim in 8:28 about human love of God, suggests that Paul does not only wish to speak of God's love for human beings, but also the other way round.

us.<sup>293</sup> Invoking Psalm 44:22, Paul returns to the theme of suffering as path to glory (initiated in 5:4-6): The sufferings of Christians, like those of Christ, were foretold. They are a guarantee of an overwhelming victory to come. Here Paul uses an uncommon verb, ὑπερνικώμεν, to describe the excess. The victors will be ‘more than conquerors’ or ‘supervictorious’! The panel ends with a glorious tribute to Christ as Lord of the astrological powers, the angels and princes who wield spiritual power over humans. Fittingly, in this context, as at the ending in 7:14-25, Paul sounds a personal note of witness, “I am convinced...” (v 39). The final verse emphasises once again the cosmic nature of the final victory. It is the climax of Paul’s hymn to the gracious love of God. Nothing in created reality can ever break the bond between the redeemed and the love of God manifested in Jesus Christ.

### **Dialogical functioning of panels in the 6<sup>th</sup> dyad (8:1-39)**

Both panels serve to underline the freedom theme which has been central to the arguments in the previous segments, 5:1-7:25. But the focus now changes to life in the Spirit and the role of the Spirit. It is for this that Christians are freed from the tyranny of Sin and the Law. In the first panel (8:1-13) the battle lines are drawn between ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit’. Two antithetical worlds are portrayed – the world of the flesh, synonymous with death, and the world of the Spirit which is life eternal. Empowered by the Spirit, Christians become part of God’s household, adopted children of God. They are entitled to call

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<sup>293</sup> C.K Barrett writes: “Paul here reflects Jewish ideas of the Messiah as intercessor.” Op. Cit.173.

God ‘Abba’. They have the same inheritance rights as God’s own Son, Jesus. Their sufferings, like those of Jesus, will issue in future glory.<sup>294</sup>

The second panel (8:14-39) develops the theme of inheritance. Future glory is portrayed as a sharing in cosmic transformation. Creation has been damaged by the Fall, according to a Jewish apocalyptic reading of Gen 3:17. It is ‘groaning’ as it waits for the revealing of the children of God. In all of this the Spirit plays a vital role. “The ultimate mission of the Holy Spirit is not only to create a new humanity, but to transform the entire created order; to bring God’s kingdom into reality on a redeemed earth and throughout the cosmos.”<sup>295</sup> It is interesting to note that the Spirit is mentioned 21 times in Chapter 8. This is the greatest number of references to the Spirit in any chapter of the New Testament. Just as, at the beginning of this segment (5:3-5), the Spirit is shown to be the source of hope even in intense suffering, here at the end (8:35-37) the same message is reiterated in a convincing *inclusio*.

## Summary

The common theme of freedom – ‘freedom from’ and ‘freedom for’- marks these two panels as complementary and dialogical. The role of the Spirit is central to both, as source of life and hope of glory. Suffering is the path to future glory, and all of creation ‘groans’ in anticipation of the redemption of

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<sup>294</sup> Robert Jewett says that, in Roman usage, “‘glory’ had a physical realness and was sharply reified”. It was associated with imperial grandeur and splendid displays. At root, *δόξα* (8:18) meant ‘weight’, and sometimes ‘radiance’ – the *shekinah* of God (Exod 40:34). See R. Jewett, *Ibid.*, 510.

<sup>295</sup> Geoffrey Harris, *Paul* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 155.

the children of God and cosmic transformation. The segment ends with a magnificent hymn to God's love (8:31-39) which is marked by an *inclusio* emphasising the importance of hope (5:3-5 and 8:35-37).

**TABLE 18****The Sixth Dyad (8:1-39)****The Spirit - source of life and hope of glory**

| <b>First Panel (8:1-13)</b>   | <b>Second Panel (8:14-39)</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Freedom from sin and death (v 2)</b>   | <b>Freedom for glory (v 18)</b>   |
| <b>Freedom from condemnation (v 1)</b>  | <b>Freedom for adoption as children of God (vv 14-16)</b>   |
| <b>Freedom from the weakness of human nature (v 3)</b>  | <b>The Spirit strengthens (vv 26, 27)</b>   |
| <b>The Spirit of God has ‘made his home in you’ (v 9)</b>   | <b>The indwelling Spirit is ‘first fruits’ of glory (v 23)</b>  |
| <b>The Spirit is guarantor of resurrection from the dead (v 11)</b>   | <b>“We groan inwardly for our bodies to be set free” (v 23). The Spirit is one of three witnesses to cosmic transformation (v 26). Triumph through trials (v 37)</b>                                  |
| <b>Life in the Spirit implies self-denial – ‘putting an end to the misdeeds of the flesh’ (v 13)</b>  | <b>Suffering leads to glory (v18). The entire cosmos is ‘groaning’ in expectation of a new birth (vv 19-23). This ‘groaning’ is in itself a witness to future glory (vv 19-21)</b>                    |
| <b>Personal hortatory appeal to brothers (ἀδελφοί) to obey the law of the Spirit (v 12)</b>   | <b>Personal witness: “I am convinced...” (of Christ’s victory) (vv 38-39). Laudatory hymn to the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ (vv 35-39)</b>   |
| <b>Life in the Spirit implies two-way belonging/possession: Anyone who does not possess the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ (v 9b)</b> | <b>Two-way gift-giving: The love of God made manifest in Christ and reciprocated love (v 28) on the part of those destined for glory. “Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ” (v 35)</b> |

## **The ‘Discordant Seventh’: A Triad**

**(9:1-29; 9:30-10:21; 11:1-36)<sup>296</sup>**

### **Theme: Israel’s Fate and the Mystery of God’s Mercy**

This pivotal segment, which may well be described as ‘the Dominant Seventh’ precisely because it is discordant, departs from the dialogical/dyadic structure in favour of a triadic approach.<sup>297</sup> The departure from dyad to triad corresponds with the movement to its climax of Paul’s argument in the Letter. From a consistent dyadic system which carries the thrust of the message so far (two-fold Prologue (1:1-15), two-fold presentation of the human condition (1:16-3:20), two-fold presentation of faith which justifies (3:21-4:25), two-fold portrait of humankind in Adam/The New Adam (5:1-21), two-fold picture of life ‘in Christ’ (6:1-7:25), two-fold description of life in the Spirit (8:1-39), there is a notable departure to a three-fold structure, as Paul addresses in depth the vexed question of Israel’s place in the divine plan.

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<sup>296</sup> The traditional division of Romans 9-11 according to Chapter divisions has been abandoned here in favour of the amended arrangement as shown. It is done in the interest of emphasising the complex literary triadic system in Romans 9-11, the climax of Paul’s Letter. I follow Luke Timothy Johnson, Charles Talbert, Frank Matera, and others in placing 9:30-33 thematically with what follows. Arguments from the Hebrew Scriptures, including the testimony of Moses, run from 9:30 through 10:21. The traditional chapter division breaks the sequence of this section of the argument.

<sup>297</sup> In the history of Western music, the Dominant Seventh was the first discordant chord to be used as freely as the consonant major and minor triads.



## A Triad: 9:1–11.36

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>9:1-29</b>  | <b>9:30-10:21</b>                                | <b>11:1-36</b>                                      |
| Lament over Israel (9:1-5).<br>God is sovereign (9:6-29) | Israel's unbelief and acceptance of the Gentiles | God's Righteousness/Mercy for all, including Israel |

### First Panel

#### Lament over Israel (9:1-5); God is sovereign (9:6-29)

In his defence of the gospel up to now Paul has hinted several times at what was for him an existential question: What is the fate of those Jews, people of the promise, who have not accepted Jesus as Messiah? In the Prologue (1:2) he has introduced the gospel as “that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures”. In 1:17 this gospel is presented as “the power of God saving all who have faith – Jews first, but Greeks as well”. In 3:1-4 he broaches the question: “Is a Jew any better off (than a believing Gentile)?” and he hastens with an affirmative answer: “The Jews are the people to whom God’s message was entrusted” (3:3), although he seems to qualify this in 3:9-18 by enlisting a catena of scriptural references to show that the archetypical Jew and the archetypical Gentile alike are “under sin’s dominion” (v 9). Abraham is presented in chapter 4 as father in faith to both Jew and Gentile, ‘to the circumcised and the uncircumcised’ (4:11, 12), as one who trusted in God while not relying on the badge of circumcision. Now

Paul addresses himself more seriously to the two-pronged problem: What is the position of those Jews who have not recognised the Messiah? And the corollary: Has God been faithful to promises made long ago to a Covenant people? In other words, is God trustworthy? And is God a righteous God after all? <sup>298</sup>

Panel 1 (9:1-29) begins with an impassioned apologia by Paul. The importance of this issue is emphasised by an oath and a calling on God's Spirit as witness (v 1). Paul is willing to go to the extreme of being ἀνάθεμα ('cursed' or, 'cut off from Christ'), if only he could assure the salvation of his fellow-Jews.<sup>299</sup> The implication is that someone, inside or outside the Roman audience (or in the role of interlocutor in the continuing diatribe) has suggested that their salvation is in doubt. The fact that Paul speaks of his heartfelt sorrow and pain as 'unceasing' (λύπη μοί ἐστιν μεγάλη καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὁδύνη τῇ καρδίᾳ μου, v 2) and that similar personal expressions of sorrow mark the opening verses of the next two panels (10:1-2; 11:1-3) provide strong indications that this issue is a significant one in the context of

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<sup>298</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson notes that 'the language of "promise" is virtually absent from the LXX. However, in Romans, Paul makes explicit what is implicit in Torah. See Johnson, *Ibid.* 156.

<sup>299</sup> The exact meaning of ἀνάθεμα in this context is disputed. It can mean 'cut off' or 'accursed'. It is likely that Paul had both meanings in view here. In 11:17-21 he will present the parable of the olive tree, whose branches have been 'cut off' from the trunk. Elsewhere (Gal 3:13) he speaks of Jesus as the one 'cursed by God', invoking Deut 21:23, 'Cursed is the one who hangs upon a tree'. Behind the reference is an implicit self-identification by Paul. He casts himself in the role of Moses, who was willing to be 'blotted out' by God for the sake of his people (Exod 32:32). See Luke Timothy Johnson, 155, for a full analysis of Jesus as 'the new Adam', and Paul as 'the new Moses'.

the Letter. It is not a passing problem that can be dispensed with lightly. In fact it will require the most intense and intricate argumentation, involving complicated and sometimes puzzling appropriations<sup>300</sup> of Scripture, all at the service of showing that God has been righteous – in this context, consistent and trustworthy – in dealing with Israel.

Paul argues that the Israelites<sup>301</sup> are God’s chosen people, adopted children, recipients of the Law and the worship (ἡ λατρεία) of God, “the glory and the Covenants” as well as God’s promises (9:4) – an assertion already made in 3:3. They are descended from the patriarchs, and from their lineage came Jesus, the Messiah. The place of Israel in God’s plan in the past is assured, and God is to be blessed forever.<sup>302</sup> But that is not the end of the issue, because the privileged place of Israel is under threat, now that the promised salvation is available to all, Gentiles included, ‘apart from the Law’. It looks as if Israel is relegated to second place, and so Paul returns to the question asked in 3:1-4: “Is a Jew any better off than a believing Gentile?”

The diatribe continues as he grapples with three implied objections in the form of questions: Has God proved unfaithful to the Covenant and to a Covenant people? Is God therefore unrighteous (untrustworthy)? Is it right to

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<sup>300</sup> Or ‘reconfigurations’, according to Vernon K. Robbins. See Footnote 303.

<sup>301</sup> Some commentators, including Johnson, distinguish between ‘the Jews’ (descriptor of ethnic identity) and ‘Israelites’ (descriptor of religious identity). For Paul, ‘the true Israel of God’ is recipient of the promises, being ‘called out of the Jews and out of the Gentiles too’ (9:24).

<sup>302</sup> Rom 9:5 is a notoriously difficult text, because the Greek can be read in two ways. However, in the context, ὁ θεὸς refers in all likelihood to God, who is the subject. See Johnson, p. 157.

blame God? Paul's answer comes in the form of a lengthy and complex midrashic exposition. He proceeds to show, by recourse to some reconfigurations of Scripture,<sup>303</sup> that ethnic identity understood as physical descent from Abraham is not the distinguishing mark of the true Israelite. "Not all the descendants of Abraham count as his children." (9:7) Examples from stories of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the womenfolk, Sarah and Rebecca, as well as Pharaoh in the Exodus narrative are invoked in support of God's supreme right to bypass the most likely routes and human expectations. Isaac was born of the promise to an elderly couple (v 10). He was chosen above Ishmael. Likewise, Jacob was chosen above his elder brother Esau (v 12), to show "that God's choice prevails" (v 11). God is free to choose as God pleases. Pharaoh was 'raised up' and his heart was 'hardened' so that Israel might experience liberation. God is God, and God has the right to make choices.

Replying to the second question about God's trustworthiness, Paul turns to Scripture again, this time to the Exodus story. Exodus 33:19 gives evidence that God is gracious to whom God wills. God's sovereign right to choose is asserted. A rhetorical question, in reality a 'put-down' of the objector, follows: "Who do you think you are, as a human being, to cross-

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<sup>303</sup> Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts. A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press Intl, 1996), 39-40. Robbins writes, "Reconfiguration is the situation where a writer uses an existing text in such a way that something new is carved out of it." In Romans 9-11 Paul makes use of reconfiguration in a variety of ways, using scriptural texts, images, events, personalities and teachings to serve his purposes in the light of his Christ-experience.

examine God?” At one level - that of the diatribal classroom - the matter is clinched. In answering the third question, Paul resorts to an ancient near-Eastern biblical allegory, also found in Isaiah 29, of the potter at work. The potter may do as he chooses with the clay in his hands, creating utensils that are for special or for ordinary use (v 21). ‘Instruments of retribution (wrath)’ and ‘instruments of God’s merciful love’ are juxtaposed in a rather puzzling sequence, where the reader is meant to read ‘Jews’ and ‘Gentiles’ respectively, but the point is clearly made in v 24 that Paul is identifying himself with God’s new chosen people – Israel of the promise: “We are that people, called not from among Jews only but also from among Gentiles”. Paul is asserting that he belongs to that remnant (the ‘seed’ of Abraham), called by the God who directs human history as God chooses. Israel of the promise, the new Israel, is not identical with that Israel which claims physical descent from Abraham. Israel of the promise is at once the ‘seed’ and the remnant. As such, it will be smaller than the population of Jews, but it can also be larger, because its chosen ones will also come from outside ethnic Israel. From a logical point of view, this does not seem a satisfactory closure of the argument, but Paul is more interested in existential truth than in logic.<sup>304</sup>

The following bloc, vv 25-29, is heavily laced with scriptural references and midrashic interpretation. Hosea 2:1 and 2:25 are the referents

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<sup>304</sup>Luke T. Johnson writes: “Paul’s perspective...is not that of the philosopher, but of the religious person.” (p.162). “He is a religious person for whom existential truth is of greater value than logical consistency” (p. 150).

for God's freedom to call whom God wills. Citing in v 27 the apocalyptic message from Isaiah (an amalgam of Isaiah 10:22 and 28:22 and perhaps also Isaiah 37: 31-32) 'only a remnant will be saved', Paul gives a preview of the imagery and argument to come in Panel 3, that of 'remnant by faith' (11:5). The panel closes with an apt appeal to the text of Isaiah 1: 9, "Had the Lord not left us a 'seed' (σπέρμα) ...we should be like Sodom, we should be the same as Gomorrah". This is an important boundary marker, with echoes from Genesis 19:24-25 of sinful cities destroyed, but with promise of restoration too, because the 'seed' is the source of new growth, that 'remnant by faith' which is the true 'seed of Abraham'.<sup>305</sup>

## **Second Panel**

### **Israel's unbelief and acceptance of the Gentiles (9:29-10:21)**

This Panel is a complex unit, framed by an *inclusio* which encapsulates the theme: Jews who looked for righteousness did not find it, while Gentiles who were not looking for it, received it as a gift (9:30-33 and 10:20-21). Further elaborated, the Jews were looking for righteousness through law-keeping, while the Gentiles recognised that righteousness could only come through faith, ἐκ πίστεως, (9:30). The blindness of the Jews, which caused them to stumble, is 'without excuse'. They have been filled with zeal, but their zeal was misguided (10: 2). They have tripped over the 'stumbling-stone' (which

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<sup>305</sup>Luke T. Johnson points out that some English translations, including the RSV, miss the point by translating σπέρμα as 'survivors' or even 'children', thus losing the most important notion in the citation.

is Christ), when they ought to have relied on that stone (9:33-10:3). This rich mixed metaphor of ‘stone’ (alias ‘cornerstone’) and ‘stumbling’ will re-surface in 11:11 in the final phase of the argument. It is garnered from an amalgam of texts, chiefly Isaiah 8:13-16; 28:16 and Psalm 69:22-23. Paul’s re-reading of these scriptural texts leads to the conclusion that some Jews failed to recognize Christ as τέλος νόμου – the ‘end’ or the ‘goal’ of the Law (10:4).

While much scholarly ink has been spilled on the interpretation of this text, few would disagree that it is a crucial element of the discourse in Rom 9-11 and, by extension, in the entire Letter. Righteousness comes through faith, but some Jews have relied on their own righteousness, failing to see what the Law foretold. Whether one reads τέλος as ‘end’ (meaning ‘terminus’), or as ‘goal’ (meaning ‘purpose’ or ‘fulfilment’), the message is a trenchant re-iteration of what Paul has been saying in Rom 5-8: salvation comes through Christ, and it comes ἐκ πίστεως.<sup>306</sup> Whether one reads ‘Law’ as Sinaitic Covenant or as the Law in a more general sense, Christ brings an end/fulfilment to Jewish paradigms that relied on Law for salvation.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Steven R. Bechtler, in an interesting article on *Christ, the τέλος of the Law. The Goal of Romans 10:4* (CBQ.No.56. 1994, 288ff.) points out that ‘goal’ is the more accurate reading here because of the language of ‘race’ and ‘running’ and ‘stumbling’ which features in the bloc 9:30-33 and 10:1-4.

<sup>307</sup> “The Greek term τέλος has the same ambiguity as the English noun ‘end’, in that it can mean ‘termination’ and ‘goal’. Both senses are probably contained in Paul’s use here. See G.E. Howard, “Christ the End of the Law: The Meaning of Romans 10:4ff,” JBL 88(1969): 331-337”, Luke T. Johnson, 169. Also Talbert, 254-255. Talbert traces the history of interpretation of this text from Erasmus, through Schoeps, Conzelmann, and Bruce to contemporary readings. His own preference is

In the final phase of the argument (10:5-21) Paul returns to the text of Deuteronomy 30, which he has already invoked in his argument for circumcision of the heart as badge of the true Israelite (3:28). Here, in a series of free renderings of Leviticus 18:5 and Joel 3:5, as well as a personification of ‘Righteousness out of faith’ extracted from Deut 30:12-14, he calls for an internalising of the Law: “The word is very near to you: It is on your lips and in your heart” (10:8). Here the Wisdom tradition is recalled as Paul’s last resort in trying to find an excuse for his fellow-Jews.<sup>308</sup> It is also a pointer towards that inclusivity and unity which will be a feature of the hortatory section, 12-15. Respect for the other’s position is the way forward for Jew and Gentile alike, because “all belong to the same Lord” (10:12). But the mention of the word κύριος generates another train of thought in Paul’s mind. Knowing Christ, hearing about him and receiving the gift of faith – all are dependent on the preaching of the word: “Faith comes from what is preached and what is preached comes from the word concerning Christ” (10:17).<sup>309</sup> Is Paul thinking of his own mission as apostle to the Gentiles, or is he thinking of the preaching of the prophets, who foretold the Messianic age? If the former, it would seem to be a diversion from his main point in 10:4 that Christ is the τέλος of the Law. This is possible. If the latter, it would be

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indicated as follows: “When Paul said Christ was the end of the law, he meant that the Mosaic covenant of obligation and performance had been terminated by God’s acts in Christ.” (Talbert, 256).

<sup>308</sup> E. Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press) 1989, 174-175.

<sup>309</sup> Some translations wrongly give ‘word of Christ’ or even ‘word of God’ here.



issuing from a reconfiguration of Isaiah 52:7, giving voice to Isaiah's message through a "collapsing of horizons" between past and present.<sup>310</sup> Such a reading would seem to be more in keeping with Paul's assertion in 1:2 that his gospel was 'foretold by the prophets'. Luke Timothy Johnson opts for this second approach and summarises his reasons:

"The effect of Paul's daring midrash on Isaiah is to secure two points. The first is that the good news was quite literally 'pre-promised in the prophets, and 'the message about Messiah' was already proclaimed in Torah. The second is that such a knowledge of Torah should have enabled Israel to recognize in Jesus the sort of suffering Messiah that Isaiah proclaimed. The question of God's fairness to Israel is settled by this intricate and elusive argument".<sup>311</sup>

In a trawl of the Wisdom tradition (especially Psalm 18:1-5) Paul continues to seek a more satisfactory explanation for the unbelief of some Jews. Perhaps they never heard the word? (10:18). Perhaps they heard but did not understand? (10:19). Yet he comes to the conclusion that Israel is without excuse because "they did hear the message". Psalm 18:4 says that it was proclaimed worldwide: "Their voice went out throughout the earth..." Paul's analysis of the second scenario (they heard but misunderstood) leads to a rather shocking conclusion, extrapolated from Deut 32:21: Moses has answered this long ago when he foretold that God would make Israelites so jealous of the Gentile position that they would wish things otherwise. To this hard-hitting blow (hardly likely to win converts from Judaism!), Paul adds a final stroke, citing Isaiah 65:1, "I was found by those who did not seek me. I

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<sup>310</sup> L.T. Johnson, *Ibid.* 172.

<sup>311</sup> L.T. Johnson, *Ibid.* 174.

showed myself to those who did not seek me”, thus linking, by an appeal to scripture, the end of the argument with its beginning in 9:30-31. The final word is given to Isaiah 65:2: “Of Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people’ ” (10:21). This is a further reminder that those who refused to see and therefore ‘stumbled’ are ‘without excuse’. The panel ends with Paul still defending God against a charge of being unfaithful to Israel.

### **Third Panel**

#### **God’s Righteousness/Mercy for Jew and Gentile (11:1-36)**

Israel’s position is not beyond hope because God has not rejected his people. Citing 1 Kings 19:18, Paul is convinced that there is a remnant, chosen by God, a chosen group of people who have seen the truth (v 8). In a word, Israel has not fallen to the ground. It has just stumbled. In what may be termed by modern standards an idiosyncratic interpretation of the curse in Psalm 69:22-24, Paul reads a blessing into Israel’s stumbling: “Their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world” (11:15). But Paul is thinking in apocalyptic terms, relying on the contemporary belief that the end would come when the entire world had heard the gospel. Then, at last, Israel would be included and saved. A parallel situation to that already described in 10:19b is envisaged where Jews are expected to be made jealous of Gentiles, with worldwide repercussions. The jealousy motif (from Deuteronomy 32) is

central to Paul's theology of salvation here.<sup>312</sup> The admission of Jews to faith in Christ is seen as an eschatological event foretold in the scriptures (Isaiah 27:9). This is why Paul describes it as 'a resurrection from the dead' (11:15). The argument reaches its term: Israel's place is assured because God is both righteous and merciful.

Drawing on two images – the batch of dough and the olive plant - Paul highlights the continuity between Israel (as God's elect) and the community of those who are in Christ' (Jew and Gentile Christians). If the first batch of dough and the root of the olive are holy, so is the rest. Leaving the dough image undeveloped, Paul works the olive-tree image into an allegory, by identifying the original source (root of the parent olive tree) with Israel. It is both source and supporting root. Paul's gospel and the community of believers are organically linked with Israel. He compares Gentile Christians with branches of a wild olive tree that have been grafted on to a cultivated olive tree. The life they now live is dependent on the cultivated olive stock. In an elaborate gardening parable he shows that pruning and grafting are both the work of God to whom all things are possible. If God could prune the original olive plant (Israel) for the sake of future growth and for the grafting of 'unnatural' branches (Paul's gospel to the Gentiles) on to the parent plant, how much more surely can God graft

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<sup>312</sup> See Appendix (ii) for a detailed examination of the role of the jealousy motif in revealing mercy as the other side of God's righteousness.

back the natural branches (Israel ‘broken’ from the original plant <sup>313</sup>) on to the cultivated tree from which it came! It is Paul’s artistic reconstruction of a future eschatological juncture, when all Israel will be saved.<sup>314</sup> But, in the interim, salvation is only for the remnant – the true ‘seed’ of Abraham. Mercy and disobedience are linked in a strange embrace in 11:30-32. The disobedience of all has provoked mercy for all. This too has been part of God’s mysterious plan for Israel and for the world: “God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all” (11:32).

The panel ends with a glorious Wisdom hymn (11:33-36). This hymn, beginning with the exclamatory “O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God...” has been recognised to have traditional elements with parallels in Jewish and Greco-Roman sources.<sup>315</sup> The first part (11:33) praises the unsearchable depths of God’s wisdom; the second part (11:34-35) asks three rhetorical questions concerning this wisdom and knowledge, while the third part (11:36) is a doxology in praise of God “from whom, through

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<sup>313</sup> Mark Nanos writes: “I write ‘broken’ not ‘broken off’, which is true to the Greek, since it allows for ‘broken’ as in ‘dislocated’ or ‘sprained’, while ‘broken off’ implies fallen, because Paul denies they have fallen; rather he insists they are stumbling.” Mark D. Nanos, “Romans 9-11 from a Jewish Perspective on Christian-Jewish relations” in *Paulus Magazine*, April 2009.

<sup>314</sup> I understand ‘all Israel’ to be ethnic Israel, including both remnant and resistant (or ‘hardened’) Israel, and I agree with Pablo Gadenz that this understanding “is not inconsistent with OT understanding of ‘all Israel’ in terms of a representative section from the twelve tribes.” (Gadenz, 325).

<sup>315</sup> Elizabeth E. Johnson, 164.

whom and to whom all things exist". It seems fitting that Paul should end the central explanatory section of the Letter with a traditional synagogue hymn which celebrates the impenetrable plan of God. But it also seems likely that this hymn was understood as a Christological proof text referring to Christ as the pre-existent Wisdom of God.<sup>316</sup> If that is so, as the reference to the *ἰλαστήριον* in 3:25 possibly supports, then Paul is deliberately ending this section of the Letter with a doubly emphatic and climactic address simultaneously to the Wisdom of God and to Christ, the pre-existent One. The sophisticated linking of mercy, mercy-seat (*ἰλαστήριον*), Christ's sacrifice and Wisdom at this juncture in the Letter is material for another dissertation, providing as it does a further clue to what is central to Paul's message to Christians in Rome.

### **Triadic functioning of panels in the pivotal 'Discordant Seventh' (9:1-11:36)**

All three panels address the crucial question for Paul of the fate of his fellow-Jews who have not accepted the gospel. All three panels contain impassioned

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<sup>316</sup> Elizabeth E. Johnson, *Ibid.* 167. Citing Hanson, *New Testament Interpretations* 85, she writes:

"The combined citation in Romans 11:34-35 is in fact an implicitly Christological statement. Paul has ended his exposition of the whole design of God, and exclaims with admiration at the depth and unexpectedness of that design. But, far from suggesting that God's intention has always been inscrutable, he implies by his two citations that it has always been known to God's counsellor, the pre-existent Christ, or Son, to whom God disclosed his whole mind and in whom his whole plan for the redemption and justification (of humanity) has been carried out".

and personal pleas on the part of Paul. Panel 1 begins with Paul's assertion that he is willing to face the ultimate anathema of being cut off from Christ if only he could save his own flesh and blood (9:1-5). The premise here is that Israel has missed out on salvation by seeking it avidly, while the Gentiles, who did not seek it, received it as gift. In turn this leaves Paul with the task of defending God and God's righteousness, because now God's chosen people seem to have been left in the lurch. After all, God made promises to Israel, and it looks as if those promises have not been honoured.

In answering three questions put to him by an imaginary interlocutor, Paul argues from scripture that God has not forgotten God's chosen people; that God is fair and just in his dealings with all; and that blame for Israel's refusal rests with Israel and not with God. Yet all is not lost. Israel has not fallen to the ground. It has merely stumbled because of blindness – the failure to recognise that the stumbling stone (προσκόμματος) was in fact the cornerstone.

There is a problem with the flow of the argument in 9-11, because Israel means different things at different stages. It can mean ethnic Israel, or all of God's chosen people, or that section of God's chosen people which failed to recognise its moment of salvation, as in 9:6-33. In 9:27 Paul anticipates a window of hope by a reference to Exodus 33:19: "a remnant will be saved". He will return to this in 11:5-6, but first he will deal with the grim picture of Israel's blindness in 10:3: By failing to recognise the righteousness of God and by promoting their own righteousness instead, some Jews have been guilty of misguided zeal. They are "without excuse",

and possible excuses are listed: Perhaps they never heard the message of the gospel? Paul is certain that this is not the case, and Psalm 19:4 is invoked as evidence. Panel 2 ends on a note of condemnation: Israel has been “disobedient and contrary” in refusing the hand of God stretched out in invitation, as mentioned in Isaiah 65:1,2. So ends Paul’s scathing indictment of Israel in Panel 2. It is surpassed in his letters only by what he says in 1 Thess 2:14-15. Cf. Acts 13:45; 28:22”.<sup>317</sup>

The third panel, while dealing with the same question, approaches it from a different angle. Here Paul argues that the rejection of the gospel by some is in tune with God’s greater plan for the salvation of a remnant, as foretold in the scriptures (11:3-5). In support of this he invokes the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19, drawing a parallel between the “seven thousand who have not bent the knee to Baal” and the remnant of Israel destined by God’s grace for salvation. As for the vast unseeing majority, they were destined to be tripped up at their own table. Psalm 69 (cited twice by Paul in the Letter) is interpreted as a foretelling of this. In a clever and complex reworking of the image of the stumbling block, Paul sees a window of opportunity for his fellow-Jews (11:11). Their stumbling has led to a greater grace – “the reconciliation of the world.” Israel’s failure has brought salvation to the Gentiles. The outcome of this will be that Israel will be ‘provoked to jealousy’ (11:11) as already stated in 10:19; and so restoration will come when Israel recognises that Gentiles have also been recipients of God’s graciousness. Their acceptance of the gospel will be nothing less than “a

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<sup>317</sup> Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, 600.

resurrection from the dead” (11:15). Deuteronomy 32 and particularly the jealousy motif as employed there, underpin the entire argument in 9-11. Paul interprets his own ministry in terms of Deuteronomy 32:21.<sup>318</sup>

Calling on Wisdom and apocalyptic traditions, as well as Isaiah 27:9 and 40:13, Paul returns to the question which has dominated Panel 1: Has God forgotten God’s people? He answers with a resounding negative: “The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (11: 29). The chosen people are still loved by God. Their disobedience has been a source of blessing because it has provoked God’s mercy for all. Panel 3 paints a bright and inclusive picture of an eschatological homecoming for Jew and Gentile alike. It ends with a Wisdom hymn and a doxology in praise of God, “from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (11:36). There is not a hint of supersessionism here. Paul, confessing Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (11:2), recognises that God has not abandoned God’s chosen people, but rather has opened horizons to include a Gentile family. God’s choice of Israel has not been revoked. God is faithful to the promises once made.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> See Appendix II, especially pages 10-12.

<sup>319</sup> Cyril of Alexandria writes: “I marvel at your kindness, Paul, and the way in which you so artfully craft the words of divine dispensation. You assert that the Gentiles were called, not because the Israelites had lost all hope, after they had stumbled on Christ the stumbling stone, but rather that they would imitate those who were so unexpectedly accepted by God, that they would recognise their wickedness, that they would want to understand better than before and that they would accept the Redeemer.” *Explanation of the Letter to the Romans*. Migne74. Cited in Bray, op. cit., 280.



All three panels work in complementary and contrasting manner, in a pattern of A, B, A\*.<sup>320</sup> Panel 1 begins with an oath and Panel 3 closes with a hymn. This rather solemn *inclusio* marks the segment as distinctive in the argument of Romans. A second *inclusio* beginning with 9:30-31 and ending with 11:30-32 frames the ironic situation as Paul sees it: Gentiles who were not looking for righteousness have stumbled upon it, while Jews who were seeking it failed to find it! Just as the disobedience of Gentiles in the past has occasioned God's mercy

(συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθείαν, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσει (11:32)

so will the present disobedience of Jews occasion that mercy in the future! Between 9:1 and 11:32 we find a complex bloc of material, which is best read as a whole. C.E.B. Cranfield warns against arriving at premature conclusions,<sup>321</sup> while Brendan Byrne warns against the temptation to stop at stations along the way in pursuit of a theological answer.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Talbert, *Ibid.* 246.

<sup>321</sup> "It is of utmost importance to take these three chapters together as a whole, and not to come to conclusions about Paul's argument before one has heard it to the end; for chapter 9 will be understood in an altogether un-Pauline sense if it is understood in isolation from its sequel in chapters 10 and 11". C.E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 2, 447-2,448. Cited in Talbert, *Ibid.* 247.

<sup>322</sup> "It is seriously misleading to rest at stations along the way and derive from them theologies of independent and lasting validity." Brendan Byrne, *Galatians and Romans*, 132.

The A section (Panel 1) deals mainly with the past: Part of Israel failed, but God has not failed Israel. The B section (Panel 2) sets out to explain the present situation: Part of Israel is still in refusal, and is without excuse. The A\* section (Panel 3) addresses the future of Israel: Seeing the Gentile acceptance of the gospel, Israel will be provoked to jealousy and a ‘seed’ (remnant) will be ‘grafted’ on to the original olive plant, resulting in fresh growth. Israel’s refusal is only partial and temporary. Israel has stumbled, not fallen. Israel will be restored, and God’s mercy (ἐλέος) to both Jew and Gentile will be revealed (11:31).

The ultimate answer to Paul’s simmering question in the triple block, by extension, in the entire Letter comes in apocalyptic terms: ‘All Israel’ will be saved, in accordance with God’s mysterious plan (11:25-26). Human disobedience leads to an outpouring of God’s mercy (11:32). God has not revoked God’s choice of Israel, nor gone back on promises once made (11:29). God is faithful. God is trustworthy. God is righteous. God is sovereign.

The concluding verses in this panel (11:25-36) read as an invitation to reverence before the mystery (μυστήριον) of God’s ways. In Jewish apocalyptic, ‘mystery’ carried the sense of something yet to be revealed.<sup>323</sup> Paul will return to it in 16:25. “The mystery of the Jews as the chosen people of God is to be understood in the light of the wider biblical view that God

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<sup>323</sup> Talbert, *Ibid.* 263.

intends his covenant of grace for all humanity.”<sup>324</sup> The hymn to God’s wisdom (11:33-36) suggests that God’s plan is wider and more comprehensive than the salvation of ‘all Israel’ (v 26), however that phrase is understood.<sup>325</sup> Echoes of 8:28-30 are sounded here, where the mysterious divine plan is linked with the revelation of God’s glory. Rom 11 ends “as Paul brings his argument to the place it needed to reach, namely, the recognition of God’s glory in creation.”<sup>326</sup> S. K. Williams aptly speaks of Romans as a defense of “who God is – Lord of all peoples and forever true to his own nature and purpose.”<sup>327</sup> 11:33-36 proclaims ‘the wideness of God’s mercy’. The Gospel is for all - Jew and Gentile alike - as announced at the beginning (1:16; 2:10; 3:22).

## **Summary**

Three structural features set this block apart from what has gone before and from what follows. Firstly, the triadic segment represented by Rom 9-11 marks a radical departure from the dyadic pattern which characterises the rest of Romans. This raises significant questions about the relationship between structure and the progress of Paul’s argument. Secondly, in the overall

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<sup>324</sup> Donald G. Bloesch, “All Israel will be saved”. *Interpretation*. No 43. 1989,134.

<sup>325</sup> Talbert summarises four possible ways of interpreting ‘all Israel’ – every living Jew; the total of elect Jews; the church, both Jews and Gentiles who believe; the corporate people of Israel. Talbert, *Ibid.* 264.

<sup>326</sup> L. T. Johnson, *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>327</sup> S. K. Williams, “The Righteousness of God in Romans”, *JBL* 99 (1980), 254.

pattern of three major divisions (described as ‘blocks’ here) a surprise element enters – an extra segment! This gives the striking structural framework as 3+4+3 which, in itself, makes a statement about the significance of the central 4-segment block. Thirdly, the placing of the distinctive triadic segment (Rom 9-11) as the fourth and last in the series in the central block indicates movement towards a structural climax. Rightly may one expect the literary highpoint of Romans to occur here! It does.

**TABLE 19**

**The ‘Discordant Seventh’ - A Triad (9-11)**

**Israel’s Fate and the Mystery of God’s Mercy**

**First Panel (9:1-29)      Second Panel (9:30-10:21)      Third Panel (11:1-36)**

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>(a) Lament over Israel (9:1-5). God is sovereign (9:6-29)</b>  | <b>(b) Israel’s unbelief and acceptance of the Gentiles</b>                                | <b>(c) God’s mercy for all</b>   |
| <b>Begins with an oath (9:1)</b>  | <b>Israel fails to see (10:2-21)</b>   | <b>Ends with hymn (11:33-36)</b>   |
| <b>Israel has been privileged (9:1-13)</b>  | <b>Appeal to Scripture (10:5-21)</b>   | <b>The remnant of Israel (11:1-10)</b>   |
| <b>God’s promise has not failed (9:1-13)</b>  | <b>Israel has not recognised that Christ is the ‘end/goal’ (τέλος) of the Law (10:3-4)</b> | <b>Israel’s stumbling will not lead to final downfall (11:11)</b>  |
| <b>God is not unjust (9:14,15)</b>  | <b>No distinction between Jew and Greek (10:12)</b>  | <b>Israel is still God’s chosen people (11:16)</b>   |
| <b>God is merciful (τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ) (9:16, 18)</b>   | <b>Israel has no excuse (10:18-20)</b>   | <b>Two images of Israel as holy – batch of dough and olive plant (11:16-24)</b>                                      |
| <b>God is sovereign (9:14-18)</b>   | <b>Israel is to blame. Israel has heard the message (10:18)</b>                            | <b>Allegory of the olive plant - God is sovereign: God can prune and graft (11:12-24).</b>                           |
| <b>God is not to blame for Israel’s failure (9:19)</b>  | <b>Israel is to blame. Israel has understood (10:19)</b>                                   | <b>Israel’s ‘hardening’ is only temporary (11:25)</b>  |
| <b>The potter has rights over the clay (9:20-21)</b>  | <b>Israel will be provoked to envy of the Gentiles (10:19)</b>                             | <b>‘All Israel’ will be saved (11:26)</b>  |
| <b>God has been patient with ‘vessels of wrath’, so that the glory of ‘vessels of mercy’(σκεύη ἐλέους) may be revealed (9:23)</b> | <b>Israel: ‘a rebellious and disobedient people’(10:21)</b>                                | <b>Israel – ‘imprisoned in disobedience’ so that God’s mercy may be revealed (ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλέησῃ...) (11:31)</b> |
| <b>The only thing that counts is the mercy of God (9:16)</b>  | <b>Isaiah: “I have allowed myself to be found by those who did not seek me” (10:20)</b>    | <b>Hymn of praise to God’s mercy and wisdom (11:33-36)</b>   |

## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON BLOCK 2 (Romans 5-11)**

**Theme: God's Righteousness revealed in Christ**

**Realm of Newness, Freedom, Life in the Spirit, Mercy**

The second and central block in Romans consists of three dyads and one triad. It is structurally distinctive on two counts: Instead of the typical 3x2 pattern found elsewhere (three dyads per block, as in Rom 1-4 and 12-16), here there is a notable variant, 3x2+1x3. The fourth segment (9-11) represents an extra dimension and a different structure. This differentiating structure is threefold. It marks a notable departure from the dyadic pattern observed elsewhere. In the context of a structure that is otherwise twofold, Romans 9-11, as a threefold structure or triad, stands out as distinctive. This reinforces its role within the Letter as climactic, as the ultimate focus.

Paul's argument moves along a series of upward-oriented dyads from 5:1 until it reaches a climax in a triad in 9-11. The first dyad shows how the realm of Christ, the new Adam, surpasses that of the first Adam (5:1-21). The second and third dyads portray new life in Christ as life free from slavery (6:1-7:25), as life that is Spirit-led with hope of glory (8:1-39). The magnificent hymn to God's love in 8:31-31 captures the exuberance and sheer beneficence of this new life in Christ. But a key question lurks in the background. It has been broached already in 3:1-8: What will become of those from Paul's own beloved Israel who have not accepted this new life? Who is better off – Gentile or Jew? If God is truly God of the Jews and of the Gentiles, there must be an answer. If God is righteous and trustworthy,

God's promises to Israel cannot be null and void. If God's Righteousness is revealed in Christ, for whom is it revealed - for some or for all? To these questions Paul returns in the climactic triad which follows.

The dyad (5:1-21) announces something new: salvation comes through Christ. The following dyad (6:1-7:25) announces the freedom which the Gospel brings, while the sixth dyad (8:1-29) focuses on the role of the Spirit as source of life and hope of glory. In a seeming excursus, the seventh segment breaks the trend. But it is really in continuity with what has gone before. The more Paul has lauded the characteristics of new life in Christ (Rom 5-8) the more ill at ease he is about the fate of Israel. A triadic structure supports Paul's impassioned and somewhat convoluted arguments about the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation. That plan is mysterious: Jews will be provoked to jealousy as has been foretold and prefigured in Deuteronomy 30-32. As a result, both Jew and Gentile will find salvation because God is infinitely merciful as well as infinitely just. In God's mysterious plan none will be outside the scope of mercy. A hymn to the mysterious Wisdom of God brings the climactic triad (9-11) to a close.

The strategic placing of the triad (9-11) within the sequence of ten segments, where nine function as dyads, makes a powerful statement about the significance of the triad. The visual image presented by the numerical pattern of 3+4+3 (See Table 4) corresponds with and reinforces the movement of Paul's argument from 1:1 to 11:36. After this (12-16) there will be a movement earthwards, dealing with the everyday implications of living according to the Gospel.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED IN DAILY LIFE**

**(Rom12-16)**

**Three dyads: 12:1-13:14; 14:1-15:13; 15:14-16:27**

**Thesis illustrated – Structure illuminating Content - Analysis of the Functioning of Structural Dyadic Panels in Romans 12-16 – General Observations**

#### **Introduction**

The final chapters of Romans, Chapters 12-16, bring a significant change in tone and focus. The transition from doctrinal to hortatory concerns is, in many respects, abrupt and definitive. There is a new departure here, and a deliberate break with what has gone before, in terms of a move from exposition to exhortation. Yet there is continuity, especially around the notion of mercy, and these final chapters are organically linked with Paul’s previous purposes in other ways as well, as we shall see.

In Chapters 1-4 Paul has announced the Gospel of God and outlined the plight from which humanity has been delivered by God in Christ. In Chapters 5-11 he has described the power of that Gospel: It gives grounds for hope, and faith in Christ Jesus will save. In plumbing the depths of God’s hidden plan, with particular reference to the question: ‘Has God forgotten



Israel – God’s own chosen people?’ he has provided the ultimate assurance: God’s Mercy is inseparable from God’s Righteousness.

Now, as the Letter draws to a close, Paul will deal with some practical implications of his teaching. He will deal with the Gospel as it is revealed in everyday life. The imaginary interlocutor is absent. But his voice lingers on as that of the real opponent mentioned in 3:8: If nobody is justified by good actions or by adherence to prescriptions of the Law, but solely by faith in Christ, what is the point in living an ethical life? Paul has already dealt with that question in embryonic fashion in 3:9-25, but it has not gone away. It seems to have pursued and preoccupied him because he addresses it again in 10:4 with the unqualified assertion that Christ is the end/ fulfilment (τέλος) of the Law. Chapters 12-16 may be read as an application of the Gospel (the implications of 3:8 and 10:4 especially) to sample everyday situations, with a particular emphasis on the reasonable nature of Paul’s argumentation (12:1).

Already in 1:28 Paul has hinted that it is reasonable to acknowledge God by living uprightly. There he invoked the established Wisdom doctrine which insisted that upright praxis follows from upright thinking. Here, in the hortatory section of Romans, the reasonableness of ethical behaviour, informed by faith in Christ, comes to the fore again. It undergirds Paul’s arguments and his appeals. In this sense also the final chapters of Romans are organically linked with issues in Chapter 1 and with their resolution. Basic behavioural standards are portrayed as utterly reasonable. Paul is aware of certain tensions or fragmentation in the Church at Rome (14:10) and his exhortations are strong, authoritative and transferable to Christian life in any

place or time. Appropriately, despite impressions of a disconnect, Chapter 12 begins with the conjunctive ‘therefore’ (οὖν) which links what follows with all of Paul’s foundational arguments in Chapters 1-11. As we shall see later, the organic links between this hortatory section and what precedes it will be evident in the reprise of many thematic and linguistic features, particularly from Chapters 1, 3, 6 and 8. The block represented by Chapters 12-16 will be considered here as three dyads, as shown in Table 20 below.

**TABLE 20**

**BLOCK 3: Romans 12-16**

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>8<sup>th</sup> dyad</b></p> <p>Mercy in daily life (12:1-13:14)</p>                                     | <p>Exhortation: Reflect God’s mercy by love of neighbour. Be different (12:1-21).</p> | <p>Exhortation: Respect civic authority. Live in the Light (13:1-14).</p> |
| <p><b>9<sup>th</sup> dyad</b></p> <p>Concern for ‘the weak’ - love, faith, hope (14:1-15:13)</p>              | <p>Do not judge. Faith accepts ‘the weak’ (14:1-23)</p>                               | <p>Do not scandalise. Acceptance brings hope (15:1-13)</p>                |
| <p><b>10<sup>th</sup> dyad</b></p> <p>Future plans of Paul and churches - amid difficulties (15:14-16:27)</p> | <p>Focus on Paul’s future plans. Reprise of <i>Proemium</i> (15:14-33)</p>            | <p>Focus on the churches. Commendations (16:1-27)</p>                     |

## **The Eighth Dyad (12:1-13:14)**

### **Theme: God's mercy in daily life**

#### **Introduction**

The two panels which make up this dyad share in common the theme of Christian love. While Chapters 1-11 also deal with Christian love, particularly with the theological underpinning of it, the focus there is more on the nature of the revelation in Christ of God's gracious love and humanity's need of salvation. Here in the hortatory section the focus is more on the mercy/ loving kindness of God, revealed in daily life through practical love of neighbour. In 13:9 Paul presents his own summary of Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 17 and Leviticus 19:18: "The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'". Covenant and Decalogue form the background to the exhortations given in the two panels under consideration, as they do in almost every page of Romans. For an analysis of the delimitation involved in establishing this dyad, see Chapter Four, Block Three.

#### **First Panel**

##### **Reflect God's mercy by love of neighbour. Be different (12:1-21)**

This panel opens with an urgent appeal (*παρακαλώ*) to the Christians in Rome "to think of God's mercy (*οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ*)" and to present their bodies

as a living sacrifice to God. Here Paul is revisiting the Wisdom teaching already developed in 6:11ff, that genuine worship of God entails bodily service.<sup>328</sup> 12:1-2, considered as a preamble to the larger homiletic section ending with 15:13, emphasises the complex dialectical nature of Christian ethical living as at once reasonable (λογικήν) and unworldly or spiritual. Christians are called to love their neighbours, their worship community, and the wider world, yet they are not to model their behaviour on that of the world. Instead of worshiping God by offering sacrifices of slaughtered animals, they are called to worship God by offering their bodies ‘in living sacrifice’. Here Paul is emphasising, in typical ambassadorial rhetorical style, both contrast and continuity: contrast between the sacrifices offered in times past (involving slaughter and blood) with those required in the new dispensation (‘living sacrifices’), and continuity in the sense of worship constantly due to the One God who is always merciful (12:1). This is true worship, worthy of thinking beings, and it is costly. It involves a process of being transformed “by the renewing of your minds” (12:2a) – a process of behavioural change, which in turn opens the door to further discernment of the will of God, “that which is good, acceptable and perfect” (12:2b).

While serving as preamble to the larger hortatory section, these two opening verses may be regarded as a concise summary of what follows (12:3-21): God’s mercy is foundational. Christian service entails bodily service, and this is worship. Genuine love requires realistic self-knowledge, humility,

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<sup>328</sup> Keeping the Law as an act of worship is featured in Sirach 35:1-6.

generous service of the other, honesty and perseverance. It will not repay evil with evil. It will seek peace with all. In appealing for humility or lowliness, Paul is going counter to the contemporary Hellenistic ethic which regarded lowliness as a vice to be avoided at all costs.

The image of ‘body’, introduced in the preamble, pervades the discourse in Panel 1. Paul’s imaging of the Christian community as a human body with diverse parts and functions is not as developed here as in 1 Cor 12:12-30, but it is illustrative of the message being delivered. He does not tell the Roman Christians that they *are* Christ’s body. Yet the image of body underlies his urgent plea in 12:4-13 for generous service of the whole body by each member, according to each one’s gifts. The focus is on diversity and unity, rather than on hierarchy of gifts as in 1 Cor. It has been noted that the types of service listed here in 12:4-13 are those associated with the field of worship – prophecy, administration, teaching, preaching, overseeing and care of the needy.<sup>329</sup> Yet Paul does show in 12:9-11 and again in 13:8-9 that the love commandment applies to all aspects of life, both inside and outside the worshipping community.

12:9 announces the generic principle that love is primary, and that Christians must do what is good and avoid evil. Verses 10-13 spell out the implications of this in the form of ten basic counsels, and verses 14-21 follow this with directives for Christians about how to treat persecutors. Many commentators are of the opinion that there are echoes of the Jesus tradition

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<sup>329</sup> Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul. His Life and Theology*. Trans. M.E. Boring (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 354. Also Talbert, *Ibid.*, 283-284. L.T. Johnson, *Ibid.*, 189-190.

(particularly as recorded in Matt 5:44-47, Luke 6:27-28 and perhaps even 1 Pet 3:8-9) in these latter verses.<sup>330</sup> Linguistic features, for example the repeated use of participles instead of imperatives in vv 9-13, as well as a discernible chiasmic pattern in the arrangement of these verses, give support to Barrett's view that Paul is using "a Semitic source originating in very primitive Christian circles".<sup>331</sup> However, Cranfield does not agree.<sup>332</sup> In any case it is likely that Paul is either using some version or versions of the Sayings of Jesus as he had received them or else, possibly, reworking, within a Christian framework, some suitable summary of Jewish maxims such as those found in Psalm 34:12-16. Here they function as a coherent set of counsels for Christian living.

A Pauline hapax (καταρᾶσθε) occurs in 12:14 in the plea regarding response to enemies, "Never curse them". It may well provide a hint regarding persecution of Christians in Rome in the years leading up to the persecution under Nero. It may just as likely be an indication that Paul had knowledge of existing tension or even enmity between certain groupings within Christian circles in Rome. Certainly 14:10 gives reason to believe that this may be the case.

The panel closes with a double appeal to Scripture. Verse 19 invokes Deuteronomy 32:35: "Vengeance is mine" says the Lord". It is reinforced

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<sup>330</sup> Luke T. Johnson, *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>331</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Black) 1971, 239ff.

<sup>332</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, *Commentary on Romans* 12-13, 40. No.3.

with the stronger instruction from Proverbs 25:21-22: “If your enemy is hungry, you should give him food...”<sup>333</sup> Paul completes his urgent petition to Roman Christians with unambiguous directives: They are to love one another; they are to love their enemies; they are to live in a manner that is notably different from that of ‘the world’. The Panel falls naturally into three literary blocs represented by vv 1-2, 3-8 and 9-21 respectively and, while the prescriptions may be said to hold much in common with Rabbinic and even pagan moral codes,<sup>334</sup> the difference resides in the appeal made to ‘mercy’ (12:1) and to the enabling power of the Spirit which is indwelling in believers, as Paul has already explained in 8:4.<sup>335</sup> The appeal to Deuteronomy 32 links this panel and its hortatory message organically to the former doctrinal segment, especially the crucial seventh segment (9-11).

## **Second Panel**

### **Respect civic authority. Live in the light (13:1-14).**

In this contrasting but complementary panel Paul now turns his attention to the Christian’s relationship to civil authority. It provides yet another example of the typical Pauline interplay between general and specific. Panel 1 has painted

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<sup>333</sup> The origin of the phrase is obscure. Fitzmyer mentions Egyptian ritual practices as a possible source. Fitzmyer, *NJBC. Romans*, 863.

<sup>334</sup> Talbert points out that Diodorus Siculus expected the devotees of pagan cults to become ‘more just than they were before’. Talbert, *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>335</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 752.

the general picture with regard to love of neighbour as genuine worship of God. Now Panel 2 turns to specifics. The precise relationship between Christians and those who govern them is addressed. Furthermore, Paul changes focus as if addressing a wider audience than that envisaged in Panel 1. His use of the Hebraism ‘all souls’ (13:1), meaning ‘every person’ could be an indication that he intends to address others outside the Christian circle.<sup>336</sup>

Even if his appeal is dictated by information about civil disobedience by Christians in Rome, his word is strongly, even strangely authoritative. As in Panel 1, there are three literary blocs. The first, 13:1-6, is a set of specific commands about respecting the civic authority as God’s servant, about obeying civic law as servant of the common good, about paying taxes and due revenue as required. The second bloc, 13:7-10, is a reminder about the connection between love and upright living. Love is the sum of all the commandments (13:8-10). The third bloc, represented by 13:11-14, which functions as an *inclusio* with 12:1-2, is a reiterated appeal for compliance, a call to act as children of the light because the dawn of the new age is approaching.

Addressing people who are living in the shadow of Roman imperial power, Paul deliberately uses secular language. The disputed passage, 13:1-7, often taken to be an interpolation from a later era, stands in sharp contrast to the surrounding literary landscape and even to Romans as a whole. It draws

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<sup>336</sup> Fitzmyer, *Op. Cit.*, 665.



on a tradition that seems more philosophical and imperial than Jewish or Jewish-Christian, but Paul has already demonstrated his capacity for drawing on unlikely sources to suit his purpose (1:18-32). According to some, this makes a direct Christological interpretation of 13:1-7 impossible.<sup>337</sup> While the tone may appear more dogmatic than pastoral, and the voice a little uncharacteristic of Paul's general approach, the pericope 13:1-7 synchronises with the overall appeal for respect and harmonious living in the dyad as a whole. Structurally it belongs as a constituent in Paul's plea for responsible living in society. This includes respect for authority, paying one's taxes and one's debt of love, while remaining alert because 'the time' (the eschaton) is at hand (13:11). This study argues for the integrity of the dyad 12:1-13:14. Within that context the disputed verses 1-7 function in conjunction with verses 8-14 as counterpart to Panel 1 (12:1-21), exemplifying Paul's typical manner of addressing a topic in general (12:1-21) followed by more specific treatment (13:1-14). Talbert illustrates the deliberate chiasmic pattern involved.<sup>338</sup> That pattern looks like this:

**A -12:1-2: Ethical implications of eschatological existence**

**B- 12:3-13: Genuine love**

**C – 12:14-21: Christian life and God's wrath (cf. 12:19)**

**C' - 13:1-7: Christian life and God's wrath (cf.13:4)**

**B' – 13:8-10: Love one another**

**A' – 13:11-14: Ethical implications of eschatological existence**

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<sup>337</sup> Udo Schnelle, *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>338</sup> Talbert, *Ibid.*, 281/294.

This discovery by Talbert serves to point up the integrity of the dyad as a whole, and specifically the organic relationship of the contested verses (13:1-7) to the surrounding literary context.

While it may well be true that 13:1-7 represents Paul's considered response to urgent concerns of Christians in Rome – concerns about how they were to relate to a civic authority which regarded them as a dangerous breakaway group from within Judaism, a group holding strange religious beliefs that could threaten the empire - it also represents a call to responsible living in society. Already in 49 CE Claudius had expelled some of their rioting predecessors from Rome and, even after their return, tensions ran high and confusion reigned regarding their obligation to civil authorities. A pastoral response to their need could well have been some straightforward directives regarding their relationship to civic authorities, such as 13:17 provides. Romans 13:1b emphasises the divine origin of all authority, thus insinuating that resistance to authority is resistance to the divine order. Subjection (ὑποτασσέσθω, v 5), and not simply obedience to civic authority is specified. This entails paying taxes and other due revenues, and also paying respect “to whom respect is due” (13:7). For civic-minded Christians there is no place for fear, because authorities will punish only those who do evil.

Thematically 13:1-7 belongs within Panel 2, and it parallels Panel 1. Both panels deal with Christian living in practice. Even if Paul has temporarily cast aside the φιλαδελφία (brotherly love) command so

characteristic of 12:1-21, while he seems to be calling for subservience (“be subject”, v 5) rather than obedience, for contributing to civil authority as servant of the body politic more from a sense of duty than from love, thematic and semantic connections can be made with the previous panel. See Table 15, also Greek Supplement, page 8. 13:17 may be considered as a particularised application of the exhortation in 12:18: “If it is possible, insofar as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”. Furthermore there is the connecting link of ‘paying the debt’ of love, an oxymoron surely, because love in any form cannot be ‘owed’! But Paul does not leave it there.

The following verses (8-10) mention the key word ‘love’ twice, thus restoring balance to the two-fold presentation. By citing Torah in abbreviated form, both negatively and positively, the vital Jewish traditional connection between *ἀγάπη* and *νόμος* is established. Four prohibitions (Exodus 5: 17-20, 21; Ex 20: 13-15, 17) followed by the positive command (Leviticus 19:18) serve to place the whole of Panel 2 within the ambit of neighbourly love as “the fulfilling of the Law” – a flashback to the critical teaching in 10:4. Udo Schnelle’s insight into the functioning of this passage is worth citing. He sees Paul making a successful appeal to diverse groups within the Roman audience: “Through the transformation of the law/Torah into the love command, Paul succeeds in taking up *the nucleus of both Jewish and Graeco-Roman thinking about the law* ... thus providing a means by which all groups in the community could find his understanding of the law acceptable.”<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Udo Schnelle, *Ibid.*, 358.

The final verses of this panel (13:11-14) provide a reason why Christians must be different from the world. Because they belong to the new aeon, their behaviour must correspond to life in an ‘awakened’ world. The underlying image is that of awakening from sleep, moving out of the domain of darkness into the light of day, and putting on as clothes ‘the armour of light’ (v 13), rephrased in v 14 as ‘putting on Christ’. Again we note the organic connections with 6:12-14, where Paul associates ‘bodily service’ with ‘worship’ of God, where the call to armour comes with the appeal: “No longer present your members to sin as weapons of wickedness”. By introducing eschatological motivation into these climactic final verses of Panel 2, Paul is also making valuable links with 2:5-11, where he has reminded his readers that a day of reckoning will come when “God’s just judgement” will be revealed, and also with 8:18-25 where he compares the sufferings of this age with “the glory to come”. Noting the use of what Fitzmyer calls ‘apocalyptic stage-props’ in these final verses,<sup>340</sup> it is clear that Paul is emphasising the primary reason given for being ‘different from the world’. Because Christians are now people of the new aeon, their behaviour must speak radical newness: light rather than darkness, watchfulness rather than sleep, action rather than lethargy.<sup>341</sup> Now it is *καιρός* - precious time of opportunity - and salvation is nearer now than ever before (v 11).

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<sup>340</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 680.

<sup>341</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 682.

## **Dialogical functioning of Panels in the Eighth Dyad**

### **(12:1-13:14)**

Structurally the two panels form a unit, as Talbert's configuration of the chiasmic pattern shows. Therefore the disputed bloc 13:1-7 fits organically within the segment. Thematically, there is as much contrast as complementarity within the dyad. The primary unifying factor resides in the admonition in 12:18, "live peaceably with all". There are many matched elements in the panels (See Table 13), but a significant number of unmatched and contrasting literary features too.

Most notable is the contrast between the target audiences - that of the Christian worshiping assembly in Panel 1 and "all persons" in vv 1-7 of Panel 2. The reasons given in Panel 2 for submission to civic authority are only vaguely linked to the Christian love command in Panel 1, but there is a reason for this. Paul in his address is including the wider civic population, as his appeal to reason rather than the Christian love-command shows, and he is respecting given imperial notions of the state.<sup>342</sup> The eschatological finale at the end of Panel 2 (13:11-14) contrasts strongly with previous appeals for love of neighbour and the motivation for this, namely the example of Christ. Structurally, 13:1-7 appears within the segment as a fascinating mirror-panel, reflecting another side of the Roman audience addressed. We have already seen mirror-panels work rhetorically for Paul (See Table 10). There the

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<sup>342</sup> Josephus asserts that the universe is subject to the Romans by God's act (JW 5. 366-368). Cited by Talbert, *Ibid.* 295.

Adam-Christ typology is brought into sharp relief within one panel in a distinct dyadic segment. Here it functions in a similar way, drawing attention to one particular aspect of an ethical directive. It is one of Paul's literary devices within his overall dialogical mode.

## **Summary**

Recurring rhetorical patterns in the dyad 12:1-13:14 reveal a significant measure of contiguity (See Table 21). It is a well-structured dyad, with balancing features and some of the most powerful imagery in Romans. The themes of love, ethical living and worship are common to both. Appeals to scripture and to reason feature in both, and a convincing *inclusio* marks the beginning and end of the segment respectively. This takes the form of two corresponding urgent imperatives (12:1-2 and 13:11-14).

**TABLE 21**

**The Eighth Dyad (12:1-13:14)**

**The Gospel revealed in daily living**

**First panel (12:1-21)**

**Second panel (13:1-14)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Exhortation in triple format (12:1-2, 3-8 and 9-21)</b>                                     | <b>Exhortation in triple format (13:1-6, 7-10 and 11-14)</b>  |
| <b>Theme: Ethical living. Genuine love towards fellow-Christians</b>                           | <b>Theme: Ethical living. Duty towards civic authority</b>  |
| <b>Appeal to Scripture (12:1-2/ 20-21)</b>   | <b>Appeal to Scripture (13: 8-10)</b>   |
| <b>Appeal to reason (12:1)</b>   | <b>Appeal to reason (13:1-7)</b>  |
| <b>Sacrificial love as act of worship – gifts of service to worshipping body (12:1-2, 6-8)</b> | <b>Subservience to civic authorities – service to the body politic (13: 1-7)</b>  |
| <b>Liturgical language/imagery(12:1-21)</b>  | <b>Secular language/imagery (13:1-6)</b>  |
| <b>Summary opening appeal (12:1-2). <i>Inclusio</i> with Panel 2, vv 11-14</b>                 | <b>Summary closing appeal (13: 11-14). <i>Inclusio</i> with Panel 1 vv 1-2</b>  |
| <b>Motivation: What God has done/The mercy of God/ ‘the grace I have received’ (12:1-3)</b>    | <b>Motivation: Life in the age to come, the new aeon. Apocalyptic ‘stage-props’ (13:11-14)</b>  |
| <b>Be different from ‘the world’. Be humble (12:16-17)</b>                                     | <b>Be different from ‘the world’. Be subservient to lawful authority (13:1-7)</b>   |
| <b>Organic links with doctrinal section (with 1:28, 3:8, 6:4, 10:4, 11:1-36)</b>               | <b>No strong links with doctrinal section, other than apocalyptic, e.g., 13:11-14 with 2:5-11, 6:12-14 and 8:18-25. Also perhaps 13:10 with 10:4?</b> |

**TABLE 22**

**Mirror-dyad (13:1-7)**

| <b>Civic authority</b>  | <b>Divine authority</b>  |
|---|--|
| Civic rulers must be obeyed (13:1a)   | All authority comes <b>from God</b> (13:1b)  |
| Subordination (ὑποτάσσεσθαι) is required of citizens (13:5)                         | Civil authorities were appointed <b>by God</b> (13:2a)   |
| Citizens must pay taxes (13:1)  | Resisting authority is <b>resisting God</b> (13:2 b)   |
| Citizens must pay tolls (13:7)  | The state exists <b>to serve God</b> /The authorities are there <b>to serve God</b> (13:4)   |
| The sword is symbol of authority (13:5)<br>– Citizens must respect authority (13:7) | The authorities carry out <b>God’s orders</b> – by punishing wrongdoers (διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργήν) – (13:5) |
| Citizens obey for conscience’s sake (13:5) – Internal motivation                    | All government officials are <b>God’s officers</b> (13:6)  |
| Citizens must pay what is just – in taxes and in honour (13:7)                      | They <b>serve God</b> by collecting taxes (13:6)   |



## **The Ninth Dyad (Rom 14:1-15:13)**

**Theme: Concern for ‘the weak’ – love, faith, hope**

### **Introduction**

The dyad under consideration is made up of two panels of unequal length (14:1-23 and 15:1-13) but the parallelism is clear. They both address the topic of Christian hospitality, but in differing ways. Paul is still dealing with the practical and homiletic implications of his teaching in Rom 1-11, but he becomes more specific in his approach than in the previous segment (12:1-13:14). To really love one’s neighbour implies acceptance and toleration of those with differing views and differing standards, “for God has welcomed them” (14:3). Christians are to welcome one another after the example of Christ, “Welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you” (15:7). Leaving aside the scholarly debates on the identity of ‘the weak’ and ‘the strong’,<sup>343</sup> it may be said in a general way that the ‘strong’ are those whose faith allows them to ignore food laws and the marking of certain days as ‘holy’, while ‘the weak’ are scrupulous about such things. There are hints that Paul is aware, at least in a general way, of some controversy in the Roman church around such matters (14:10). His advice is that each side should accept the other, since both are intent on honouring God and both belong to God. Negatively stated, his directive to Christians is “Do not judge one another. Do not condemn one another. Do not scandalize one another.”

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<sup>343</sup> For a summary of positions see p. 274 and accompanying footnotes.

**First Panel: Do not judge. Faith accepts the weak  
(Rom 14:1-23)**

This panel is internally dialogical because it addresses the tension presumed to exist between the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’. But who are they? Scholars have taken up many positions and the jury is still out on the question posed decades ago by Lagrange: “Le Chapitre XIV soulève une question très difficile: Quels sont les faibles que les forts doivent ménager?”<sup>344</sup> Are ‘the weak’ a literary construct based on the situation in Corinth (1 Cor 8-10) as proposed by Karris?<sup>345</sup> If so, this has implications for a reading of Romans more as a theological treatise than as an occasional letter. Or are ‘the weak’ those Jewish Christians in Rome, whose consciences are still governed by Jewish or even Hellenistic food-laws?<sup>346</sup> Could they be Gentile Christians, influenced by Gnostic or other superstitious practices?<sup>347</sup> Could they possibly be non-Christians, as advocated by Mark Nanos, who describes Rome in the first century CE as a melting-pot of many cultures?<sup>348</sup> Or again

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<sup>344</sup> M.-J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Epître aux Romains* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed., Ebib; Paris: Gabalda, 1931), 335.

<sup>345</sup> R. Karris, Essay: “Romans 14:1-15:13 and the Occasion of Romans”, cited in K. P. Donfried, Ed., *The Romans Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 65-84.

<sup>346</sup> Origen, Cranfield, Schneider, Fitzmyer, Moo, Dunn, Stuhlmacher, Barclay and others.

<sup>347</sup> Rauer, Kümmel, Stowers and others.

<sup>348</sup> M. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans*, 164-166.

could ‘the weak’ be a group not defined by Jewish or Gentile origins but simply by a scrupulous and legalistic approach to day to day issues involving food, wine and observance of certain days as holy?<sup>349</sup>

Even if questions remain about the identity of the opposing groups, ‘the weak’ and ‘the strong’, as addressed by Paul, it is possible to read the advice given in 14:1-12 as having universal relevance. Genuine love of neighbour must be more than mere toleration of an opponent. It involves acceptance and a refusal to judge adversaries “because God has welcomed them” (14:3). Because both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ are God’s servants, condemnation of either by the other is out of order. Both belong to God, both seek to honour God and both, by their choices, give thanks to God (14:5, 6).

A change of tone and emphasis is discernible in the second part of the panel, beginning at v 7. It opens with the doctrinal statement: “We do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves” (14:7). To judge and to condemn is not a trivial matter. It is a life and death issue. By connecting this with the death and resurrection of Christ, Paul transposes the entire ‘weak versus strong’ argument on to a higher plane. And he introduces the eschatological motif by a reference to the judgement seat of God (14:10) with a reminder that God is judge of all. The ‘elevation’ of the weak-versus-strong issue to eschatological status is supported by conflating Is 49:18 and 45:23, quoting from the LXX, while slightly changing the word order. It is noteworthy that this panel, like the previous one, ends with an appeal to an ultimate

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<sup>349</sup> Lagrange, Reasoner and others.

eschatological reality. 'The strong' are urged to refrain from judging 'the weak' (14:13a). They are also urged to avoid scandalising them (14:13b).

## **Second Panel: Do not scandalize.**

### **Acceptance brings hope (15:1-13)**

There is repetition and reinforcement in this corresponding panel, but also progression. Paul identifies himself with 'the strong' (15:1). Once again Psalm 69 is invoked, this time as a plea for unselfish behaviour, after the example of Christ Jesus "who did not please himself" (15:3-4). Paul appeals to his audience to learn about hope by consulting scripture. Presumably he still has Psalm 69 in mind, and the unselfish example of Jesus as ground of hope. Here in 15:5 he asks for tolerance and perseverance (a seeming climb-down from the appeal in 14:1 to 'welcome one another') so that all may be united and thus 'give glory to God.'

In 15:7 Christian unity is linked once more with the example of Christ Jesus and the glorification of God. By recalling that Christ Jesus as a Jew became 'servant of the circumcision' so that the promises to the Patriarchs might be fulfilled, Paul returns to the crucial issue of the salvation of Jew and Gentile in God's merciful plan. This plan involves Gentiles also (v.9), and their glorifying God for his mercy. To show that the salvation of Gentiles is truly within the horizons of God's plan, Paul invokes a catena of references to Psalm 18:50, Deut 32:43 (LXX), Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:1, 10. The panel ends with a blessing and a prayer for faith, joy, peace and unbounded hope.

## **Dialogical functioning of ‘panels’ in the Ninth Dyad**

### **(14:1-15:13)**

With a continuation of the love-command exemplified in the previous dyadic segment, these two panels concentrate on practical issues involving matters of food, drink and the observance of certain days as holy – contentious issues in the Roman church. Directives by Paul in both panels are addressed to ‘the strong’, whose actual identity cannot be determined. Because of their stronger position in the community the obligation rests with them to welcome their weaker brothers and sisters, and to refrain from judging or condemning “those for whom Christ died” (Panel 1). Furthermore they are not to scandalise the weak or cause the destruction of God’s work by ‘not walking in love’. Instead they are to look to the example of Christ Jesus “who did not please himself” (Panel 2). The Kingdom of God does not mean food and drink, but “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Panel 1). Unity, faith, peace and joy become the object of Paul’s prayer in 15:13 (Panel 2). In both panels Paul appeals to Scripture. In Panel 1 his appeal is chiefly to a conflation of Isaiah 45 and 49 (LXX), while in Panel 2 it is to Psalm 69, understood Christologically, and to Psalm 18, Psalm 117, Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 11. Paul identifies himself with ‘the strong’ in 15:1.

### **Summary**

The Ninth Dyad (14:1-15:13) develops the theme of fraternal love in practice.

Pleas for ‘welcoming one another’ characterise Panel 1, while pleas for

toleration and the avoidance of scandal predominate in Panel 2. The identity of ‘the weak’ and ‘the strong’ cannot be ascertained for certain from the text, but the onus is shown to rest clearly on ‘the strong’ to set good example. In both panels directives are issued to ‘the strong’, with whom Paul identifies himself (15:1). None are issued to ‘the weak’. In both panels Paul makes appeal to the example of Jesus (14: 9 and 15:5, 7), to Kingdom values (14:7 and 15:7-13) and to coming judgement (14:12 and 15:12), as he pleads for unity among Christians in Rome. Concretely, this implies avoidance of judging one another (Panel 1) and of scandalising one another (Panel 2). Panel 1 begins with faith (14:1) Panel 2 ends on a note of hope (15:13) and everything in between deals with the demands of love.

One of the most remarkable things about this dialogical unit is the way in which seemingly insignificant activities, like eating certain foods/observing certain holydays (otherwise ‘works of the Law’) are portrayed as taking on Kingdom significance. Ordinary deeds take on extraordinary importance, because they express love or the opposite. A balance is struck between the significant and the insignificant (14:2-6; 15:20-21), between everyday activities/petty squabbles and the repercussions of these at Kingdom level (14:7-10; 14:16-17). It is noteworthy that the dyad ends with a reprise of what may be termed the general aim of the Letter

(15:7-13) – “that all may give glory to God for his mercy” (15:9-12).<sup>350</sup> The reason why Christ came in human form as a Jew, as ‘the servant of the circumcised’ is reiterated. It was ‘that the promises to the Patriarchs could be fulfilled’ and the boundaries of the Covenant widened to include the Gentile world (15:8-9). God’s mercy and universal plan of salvation are kept in view as the Letter moves to a close.

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<sup>350</sup> J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans. Resurrection and the Justification of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2008), 49. Kirk writes: “Increasingly Rom 15:7-13 is being recognised for its highly significant role in the letter as the summation and conclusion of the letters parenetic and theological sections.”

**TABLE 23**

**The Ninth Dyad (14:1-15:13)**

**Love in practice**

**First panel (14:1-23)**

**Second panel (15:1-13)**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Theme: Brotherly love in practice</b>  | <b>Theme: Brotherly love in practice</b>  |
| <b>Directives addressed to ‘the strong’</b>   | <b>Further directives addressed to ‘the strong’</b>   |
| <b>Do not reject ‘the weak’ (14:1). Do not judge them. Do not condemn them. Accept them (14:10). Do not scandalise ‘the weak’ (14:14).</b>  | <b>Acceptance/tolerance– with perseverance and encouragement – engenders hope (15:1-5)</b>  |
| <b>Reasons given: ‘The weak’ belong to their Lord (14:4), whose business it is to judge. ‘The weak’ are “those for whom Christ died” (14:13). Both weak and strong are entitled to hold their opinion (14:5). Both intend to honour God by their actions (14:6). “We do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves” (14:7). All must face judgement (14:12). Christ is Lord of the dead and of the living (14:9). Appeal to Scripture – Is 45/49.</b> | <b>Reasons given: The example of Christ “who did not please himself” (15:3).<br/><br/>Appeal to Scripture – Psalm 69 ( LXX), Psalm 18, Deut 32:43 (LXX), Ps 117, Isaiah 10/11</b> |
| <b>Focus on reasons (14:1-23)</b>   | <b>Focus on the example of Christ Jesus (15:2-12)</b>   |
| <b>Links to doctrinal section, e.g., 14: 7-11 with Chapter 5</b>  | <b>Links to doctrinal section, e.g., 15:1-13 with 8:1-8</b>   |
| <b>Evidence that Paul has specific information (14:10)</b>  | <b>Hint that the ‘problem’ lies along Jewish/Gentile lines (15:8-9)</b>   |
| <b>A life and death issue (14:7-10)</b>   | <b>A ‘Glory of God’ issue (15:1-13)</b>   |
| <b>Clean/Unclean – a seemingly trivial matter. Yet scandalising ‘the weak’ – undoing “the work of God” (14:20)</b>  | <b>Unity linked to God’s salvific plan for Jew and Gentile (15:8-12)</b>  |
| <b>Kingdom of God –righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit(14:17)</b>  | <b>Paul’s prayer for joy, peace, faith, hope ...the power of the Holy Spirit (15:13)</b>  |



## **Tenth Dyad (Rom 15:14-16:27)**

### **Theme: Future plans for Paul and the churches**

#### **Introduction**

Just as Paul introduced the Letter with a two-fold Prologue (1:1-8 and 1: 9-15) he concludes it with a two-fold Epilogue. The first, represented by 15:14-33, may be considered as a reprise of the *Proemium* with specific reference to Rome and Paul's plans. The second, however, while re-introducing key concepts in the Prologue (e.g., δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, 'slave of Jesus Christ', 1:1 and 16:18) presents a set of specific commendations and greetings where, uniquely in Pauline writings as we have them, the scriptwriter, Tertius, is given voice (16:22). The final verses, 25-27, take the form of a doxology which incorporates in summary form Paul's purposes as outlined in the Prescript: to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, fulfilling God's plan foretold long ago in the Scriptures. In P46 this doxology occurs at the end of Chapter 15. In other MSS it occurs at the end of Chapter 14.

#### **First Panel: Focus on Paul's future plans (15:14-33)**

This panel consists of two distinct sections. The first takes the form of a review of Paul's ministry as it relates to Rome (vv 14 -21). The second section (vv 22-33) deals with his future plans. The tone in the opening verses is apologetic, as if signifying that Rome did not really need Paul's teaching! Has he been too presumptuous or 'bold' in addressing this Church which he has not founded (15: 15)? He even evinces reasons for this, because the

Roman Christians are “filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another” (15:14). There are echoes here of Paul’s hesitancy regarding Rome as expressed in the *Proemium*, especially in 1:12. He is tiptoeing carefully into conquered territory, even though his task is simply in the nature of refreshing memories (15:15b). His role is described in 15:16 as ‘liturgical’ (λειτουργον), in keeping with his understanding of worship as extending beyond sanctuary (12:1-2). He describes as liturgical action his preaching of the Gospel as well as his concern for the secure delivery of the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem Church. His role is portrayed as similar to that of a Jewish priest offering sacrifice in the Temple. “Paul implies that preaching of the word of God is a liturgical act in itself”.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore he looks on his ministry among the Gentiles as a form of sacrifice which is to be acceptable to God (15:16b). His strong *captatio benevolentiae* in these opening verses re-establishes positive relations with those he may have offended by an overly aggressive approach. The liturgical language, rich with echoes of Temple worship, would also elicit a favourable reaction from those Jews who may have regarded him and his teaching with suspicion. From a defence of his apostolic mission to all Gentiles (15:18-20) and an acknowledgement that his successful work has really been the work of Christ (15:18b), he moves strategically to cite Isaiah 52:15 (LXX) as support for his policy of tilling only virgin soil (15:20b). With good reason, this pericope (15:14-32) has been designated as Paul’s *apostolic parousia*. It is solemn, purposeful, and redolent of ancient Hebrew testaments.

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<sup>351</sup> Fitzmyer, *Ibid.*, 711.

The second part (15:22-33) deals specifically with Paul's travel plans. In many ways this is a reprise of 1:10-15, where Paul has already given four reasons why he wishes to visit Christians in Rome:

- (i) To share a spiritual gift with them (1:11)
- (ii) To find encouragement in common faith (1:12)
- (iii) To reap a harvest in Rome as he has done elsewhere among Gentiles (1:13b)
- (iv) To preach his gospel in Rome (1:15).

Now he adds two further reasons:

- (i) He wishes to pass through Rome and to find some rest and recreation there, before engaging on his mission to Spain (15:24, 32)
- (ii) He wants the prayers and moral support of the Roman church as he takes the collection (gifts from Christians in Macedonia and Achaia) to Jerusalem for the poor of that church.

Verses 23-24 are anacoluthic in structure. A partial clarification is found in v 28, though difficulties remain. Various suggestions have been made to make sense of the confused construction.<sup>352</sup> Paul seems keen on explaining that he wants to visit Rome, but not immediately, because he must first go to Jerusalem to deliver the promised collection. But then Spain figures twice on

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<sup>352</sup> Talbert, *Ibid.*, 327-328.

the travel plan as ultimate destination (vv 24, 32)! In all of this convoluted road map one detects an anxiety on Paul's part about his future reception in the Jerusalem church and about his safety among "the unbelievers of Judea". Appealing for prayer so that he may get safely through projected dangers, he uses a Trinitarian formula involving God, the Lord Jesus and the Spirit (15:30). The panel ends with a blessing prayer: "The God of peace be with all of you. Amen". Some ancient authorities add 16:25-27 here.<sup>353</sup>

## **Second Panel: Focus on the churches.**

### **Commendations (16:1-27)**

The final verses of the Letter, represented by this parallel panel, continue the work of establishing positive personal links between Paul and the Roman Church. The panel opens with a commendation of Phoebe, presumed to be the messenger who would carry this important Letter to destined recipients in Rome (16:1-2). Phoebe must have been a woman, perhaps a deacon, holding some position of authority in the church at Cenchreae. This is followed in 16:3-16 by a series of greetings to named individuals in Rome, twenty-four in all, including several women, a mention of an anonymous woman (mother of Rufus, 16:13), greetings to groups (the church that meets in the house of Prisca and Aquila (16:5), the household of Aristobolus (16:11a), the household of Narcissus (16:11b), the brothers of named persons (16:14), and "all the saints" associated with those named in 16:15. A strong plea for unity

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<sup>353</sup> See NRSV Bible, Harper Collins, 1999, 1316, Note *h*.

follows in 16:17-20, where a warning note is sounded. Christians in Rome must be on their guard against those who cause divisions. This would wreck the unity for which Paul has worked ‘as slave of Jesus Christ’.

An effective *inclusio* occurs here, linking this final plea with the beginning of the Letter (1:1), where Paul first introduced himself in the same terms. In the fourth section of this final panel (16:21-23) Tertius the scribe “who wrote this letter” gets a voice, and greetings are sent in customary style from Paul’s collaborators - Timothy, Jason and Sosipater, Gaius and his household, from Erastus, the city treasurer, and a brother named Quartus, though these are not named as co-authors of Romans. A solemn and lengthy doxology, capturing the spirit of Paul’s message in the Letter, forms a fitting conclusion to this final panel.

## **Dialogical functioning of panels in the Tenth Dyad**

### **(15:14-16:27)**

Travel plans, the reason for writing and a desire to gain approval from his Roman audience are the common concerns expressed in both panels. The notable common literary feature is linguistic register of the informal kind. There is a departure from the weighty formal register characteristic of the greater part of the Letter. Now, as it draws to a close, Paul returns to the informal register of the *Proemium*. ‘I-statements’ and personal concerns occupy almost every line in both panels. The only marked departure from this

occurs in 16:17-20, where a formal note of caution is sounded about avoiding possible sources of disunity.

The tone and style of the panels have much in common, dealing as they do with practical details and last-minute touches, though there are marked differences too. Panel 1 reads like a resumé of the *Proemium* with some additions. It is designed to re-establish personal and positive links between Paul and his hearers. It offers words of encouragement and affirmation (15:15) as well as repeated reasons for Paul's desire to visit Rome (15:22-29). It enlists the sympathy and support of Roman Christians for Paul's two projected projects – handing over the collection to the 'pillars' in Jerusalem, and using Rome as base for his future mission in the West. His preaching of the Gospel is presented as an act of worship (15:16a). His task is to present his converts "as an acceptable offering" (15:16b). His plea for prayer in 15:30-33 is tinged with anxiety for his own future safety.

Panel 2, by contrast, reads more like a down-to-earth, diplomatic business list, with a commendation of the emissary, Phoebe, followed by a list of greetings from Paul and his team to individuals and groups in Rome, and a final doxology. There is some emotional distance here, and a meticulous attention to detail, although the register remains informal. Destination Rome features centrally in both panels. Just as the Letter began with a two-part Prologue (1:1-7 and 1:8-15) incorporating complementary and contrasting features, so the Letter ends with a two-part Epilogue (15:14-33 and 16:1-27) displaying a similar pattern.

## Summary

The tenth and final dyad follows the established dialogical pattern. Panel 1 complements Panel 2 by being more general and more pastoral in tone. It reads like a reprise of the *Proemium* and reiterates many of the details mentioned there. But by contrast, Panel 2 strikes a business-like note, by mentioning twenty-six persons by name. Both panels act as Epilogue to Paul's Letter to the Romans, and they function complementarily. A two-fold Epilogue marks the ending of a Letter which began with a two-fold Prologue! In between is a succession of two-fold arrangements which carry the weight of Paul's argument in dialogical manner, with one notable departure in the form of a triad (represented by Chapters 9-11) which corresponds with the high point of Romans and the overarching message: God is righteous and God is merciful. Neither Jew nor Gentile is outside the scope of God's loving-kindness (ελεος). God's plan for the world is truly mind-boggling in its grandeur.

**TABLE 24**

**The Tenth Dyad (15:14-16:27)**

**Two-part Epilogue**

**First Panel (15:14-33)**

**Second Panel (16:1-27)**

| <b>Epilogue Part 1</b>  | <b>Epilogue Part 2</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Purpose – establishing links with Rome</b>   | <b>Purpose – establishing links with Rome</b>   |
| <b>Informal linguistic register</b>   | <b>Informal linguistic register</b>   |
| <b>Reprise of <i>Proemium</i> (in 15:22-23) with some additions – affirmations, apology, nature of Paul’s apostolic ministry. <i>Inclusio</i> with 1:8-15</b> | <b>Reprise of Prescript (in 16:25-27) with some additions - Commendations, greetings, and a request. <i>Inclusio</i> with 1:1-7</b> |
| <b>I-statements, personal plans, appeal for prayer, expressed anxiety about the future (15:30-33)</b>   | <b>I-statements, diplomatic connections, greetings, expressed anxiety about Rome (16:17-20)</b>                                     |
| <b>Informal and personal approach/semi-apologetic (15:14-16)</b>  | <b>Informal but more structured and diplomatic approach</b>   |
| <b>Two-tiered plan (i) immediate: Rome. (ii) Remote: Jerusalem and Spain</b>  | <b>Two postscripts: Note of warning (16:17-20) and identity of sender (16:21-25)</b>  |
| <b>Boasting – ‘in Christ’ (15:17-19)</b>  | <b>Amanuensis (Tertius) gets a voice (16:22)</b>  |
| <b>Liturgical context of Paul’s mission among the Gentiles (15:16). Trinitarian greeting and prayer (15:16 and 15:30-33)</b>                                  | <b>Doxology , incorporating a summary of Paul’s missionary objectives (16: 25-27)</b>   |
| <b>Rome and Paul’s mission</b>  | <b>Rome and Paul’s mission</b>  |



## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON BLOCK 3**

### **(Rom 12-16)**

#### **Theme: The Righteousness of God revealed in daily life**

This final block of three dyads balances the first block (Rom1-4) and sets the central four-part block (Rom 5-11) in stark relief. Now that the groundwork has been laid - God's Righteousness revealed through faith, not works (Rom1-4) and God's Righteousness revealed in Christ (Rom 5-11), the everyday implications of revealing God's Righteousness in daily Christian living are explored (Rom 12-16). Chapters 12-16 are devoted largely to exhortations and practical advice about living according to the Gospel as well as some further details about Paul's travel plans and some commendations. All are set in dyadic arrangements, where elements of the first panel are neatly balanced by elements in the second panel (See Tables 21, 22, 23, 24). Among these complementary elements are thematic links, common imagery, common or contrasting semantic fields, and appeals to Scripture. In many ways this final block echoes the first block in structure and theme. A two-fold Epilogue matches the two-fold Prologue, and Destination Rome features prominently in both.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Overview: Summary and Conclusions**

**Overview – Dyadic/Triadic panels making sense of the whole – Progress towards a climax in 9-11 – Panels/dyads/triads are not watertight compartments – The role of intra-panel/segment connections – Organic cohesiveness: Rom 9-11 and the rest of Romans - Confirming internal dialogical features - Summary of findings – Conclusion.**

#### **Introduction**

This final Chapter will offer an overview of the work done, the discoveries made and the methodology used in the process. It will attempt to bring together the key findings and their significance in terms of one valid reading of Romans. It will address some remaining issues regarding the structural coherence of Romans as a Letter-essay, where dyadic relationships prove to be fundamentally pervasive except in one noteworthy case. The cohesiveness of Paul's message in Romans is structural. This cohesiveness, while residing primarily in the underlying structure, is strengthened by recurrent intra-panel links and internal mirror-dialogues, as has been shown. As a literary and limited study of one structure in Romans which has yielded results, this dissertation does not pretend to have explored all the avenues that offer treasure. Instead, it invites critical appraisal and, if merited, perhaps even a sequel somewhere in the field!

## **Overview**

The opening Chapter presented a general historical overview of the reception of Romans from the second century CE to the present time. Its purpose was limited to showing that problems and dissensions have accompanied the reading of Romans through the ages. Because literary structure is the subject of this dissertation, a considerable amount of space was devoted to the critical analysis of some well-known structural divisions (pages 37-48). Chapter 2 (especially pages 52-61) introduced the methodological approach taken here, following the broad principles developed by Korpel and Oesch and Stephen Levinsohn in the identification of literary biblical panels. It highlighted relevant studies by Robert Alter, Raymond E. Brown, Thomas L. Brodie, Lawrence Boadt and others in identifying the importance of diptychs or two-fold structures in biblical prose and poetry. Chapter 3 (especially pages 63-82) dealt with Scriptural Unit Division and the criteria employed here in identifying literary ‘panels’, ‘segments (dyads and triads)’ and ‘blocks’ in Romans. It also set out a methodology for the entire project, offering exemplars from the two-part Prologue and two-part Epilogue as starting points.

## **Methodology reviewed**

The first three items in the programme set out in Chapter 3 included the following:

- (i) Identifying literary dyads (panels functioning as pairs-in-dialogue) in the entire text of Romans, and noting exceptions
- (ii) Analysing how these dyads/exceptions function within their micro-contexts
- (iii) Establishing some indicators of the significance of these dyads/exceptions and their patterns of functioning for a valid reading of Romans.

Chapter 4 presented further examples of delimitation at work in establishing panels and dyads across a spectrum of texts from the three ‘Blocks’ in Romans, namely those represented by Chapters 1-4, 5-11 and 12-16. The *pattern* which emerged from these samples corresponded with that already established in Chapter 3 in relation to the Prologue (1:1-15) and Epilogue (15:14- 16:27). From the five examples examined in detail it may be deduced that the *pattern* extends further, which it does.

An important Excursus is inserted between Chapter 4 and the detailed analytical work in Chapters 5-7. The Excursus deals with the clarification of a central concept, namely δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, and the problems associated with translating that phrase into English. Chapters 4 and 5-7 inclusive have been devoted entirely to the tasks of identifying and analysing segments (10), dyads (9) and one triad in their micro-contexts, and in establishing some indicators of the significance of their functioning in these contexts for a valid reading of Romans.

It must be stated that there is no limit to the number and type of literary parallels and contrasts that may exist in any dyad/triad. Therefore, to attempt to compose a satisfactory methodology for determining *all* of the relevant criteria would be fruitless and pointless in a dissertation such as this, which focuses, not on the details, on the broad outline of Romans. However, it is hoped that sufficient examples are provided, though not to the same degree in all cases, of balancing/contrasting literary features *which serve to illustrate a pattern*. Such features include the following: register, tone, person, tense, semantic fields and linkage, diatribal ‘tumbling’, thematic linkage, repetition, imagery, invocations, rhetorical questions, speech-in-character, personification, chiasmus, referencing (appeals to reason and scripture), identity-markers at beginning and end of panels, such as *inclusio* and/or oaths, prayer-wishes and blessings. The list is not exhaustive, and the examples provided simply offer a taster menu - prelude, it is hoped, to further investigation in an arena of promise. Examples of these literary features are provided in Chapters 4-7 and in the accompanying Tables, as well as in the Greek Supplement. To point out *all* of the relevant connections between panels would require a few books! To do so in relation to any two panels would merit another dissertation! By providing *differing samples* of pertinent literary inter-panel connectors, it is hoped to draw attention to the emerging *pattern*. It will be for others, and for other times and places to provide detailed analysis of what is proposed here. Chapters 4-7 are meant to be read in conjunction with the Greek Supplement accompanying this work. This Supplement presents *sample key findings* in visual form, highlighting some

significant *patterns* of correspondence in the semantic fields in each segment. It makes no claim to be comprehensive.

Essential to any outcomes of detailed analysis is the *overall picture* emerging from a survey of the macro-context, which is the entire Letter. This will be addressed later in this Chapter, under the heading Intra-Panel Connections.

### **Dialogical patterns and their significance**

Beginning with the discovery that the Prologue and the Epilogue in Romans are both structurally made up of two ‘panels’ which function dialogically and complementarily, this study pursued the search (Chapter 4) and discovered a similar pattern at work in the three main ‘blocks’ in the Letter. Three distinct building blocks were identified, namely those represented by Chapters 1-4; 5-11 and 12-16 in Romans. In turn, by concentrating on exemplar texts from each of these three blocks, the delimitation process, by which panels and dyads are established, was demonstrated and explained. By further exercises in delimitation, it was discovered that Romans as a whole, not excluding the disputed Chapter 16, was shown to consist of 10 segments, with Block 1 (Rom 1-4) consisting of 3 dyadic segments, Block 2 (Rom 5-11) consisting of 4 segments (3 of which are dyadic and one triadic) and Block 3 (Rom 12-16) consisting of 3 dyadic segments. The sequence 3+4+3 in itself suggested that the central block made claim to special attention. The overall tripartite structure was seen to correspond with the tripartite structure of Paul’s message to Christians at Rome:

1. BLOCK 1: The Righteousness of God revealed through faith - not works (Rom 1-4)
2. BLOCK 2: The Righteousness of God revealed in Christ (Rom 5-11)
3. BLOCK 3: The Righteousness of God revealed in daily Christian living (Rom 12-16)

The discovery of an integral link between literary structure and progression of argument provided an impetus for detailed work within each Block. This opened a door to what may be regarded as one satisfactory reading of Romans as a whole. It is proposed that the reading offered here is respectful of the entire received 16-chapter text of Romans as Letter-essay. It does not require scissors and paste to make sense of the total message.

### **Results of Detailed Analysis of Panels, Dyads and Triad**

This initial literary exploration led to the further discovery that each of the ten segments, apart from the seventh, was made up of two literary units, described here as ‘panels’ (influenced largely by the terminology used by Raymond E. Brown in describing the Infancy Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels and by Laurence Boadt’s analysis of Psalm 79). In all cases (bar the one notable exception) these panels functioned as pairs-in-conversation. They complemented one another, echoed one another, balanced one another and at times contrasted with one another in a literary interchange that was seen to be, in the main, dyadic and dialogical. A notable exception occurred in the seventh segment, represented by Chapters 9-11, where a three-fold pattern

replaced the dyadic pattern evident elsewhere. Sample structural elements of this peculiar functioning have been provided for 9 dyads and one triad. See Tables 4-24.

### **The Discordant Seventh!**

The crucial discovery, however, relates to the seventh segment, where three distinct literary units feature instead of the usual two. The panels in this segment function in triadic mode, balancing, complementing and reinforcing one another in a manner which marks this segment as apogee in the structure and argument of Romans. Everything in the Letter can be shown to lead up to, or descend from, this high point. Far from being a ‘foreign body’ in the Letter, as has been suggested by some, this seventh segment represented by Rom 9-11 is shown to be both indispensable and pivotal. The kernel of Paul’s message to Christians in Rome is here: God is Righteous and God is merciful. The Covenant stands. It has never been revoked, but it has been extended to include the Gentile world. God has been faithful, and God’s faithfulness to Israel has taken the shape of mercy (οικτιρισμος /ελεος). The unfolding of God’s saving plan for Gentiles has been prefigured and foretold in Deuteronomy 32 (2:19; 10:19; 15:9) and Isaiah 6. Just as the Jewish people, through Covenant and Prophets (Paul included) have been instrumental in the proclamation of God’s salvation to the Gentiles, so also will Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles in the new age be ‘instrument of mercy’ for ‘all Israel’ (Rom 11:32).



## **The Climax of the Argument proclaimed in the Structure**

All three panels in the seventh segment deal with the place of Israel in the divine plan. The first panel begins with a solemn oath. The third ends with a solemn hymn to God's mercy and wisdom. Here is solemn climax *par excellence*. This is God's Good News for the World. The entire masterpiece which is Romans revolves around this. Each of the ten segments 'speaks' the mystery in some way. The seventh proclaims and emphasises it – structurally, from its position at the head of the central block, and otherwise in its thoroughly Jewish triadic, inter-panel exchanges, revealing God's purposes as already announced in Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 30-32. God has not forgotten God's people. Instead, God has unfurled a plan so magnificent that it embraces the entire world. God's Mercy becomes the face of God's Righteousness.

## **The Lived Gospel reveals the Righteousness/Mercy of God**

Three dyads in Block 3 (Rom 12-16) are made up of six panels, all of which are set in the dialogical mode characteristic of most of Romans (all except those in the notable seventh segment). The good news of God's Righteousness/Mercy is meant to be 'brought home' in everyday living by Christians and revealed there. This has practical implications: Love of neighbour is costly. It involves 'being different from the world' (12:2), 'welcoming one another' (14:1-2), 'refraining from judgement' (14:10),

blessing those who persecute (12:14), respecting civil authority (13:1-7) and avoiding anything that would scandalise or diminish ‘the weak’ (14:1-15:6).

The tenth and final dyad is represented by a two-fold Epilogue (15:14-16:27) where the panels complement one another in a manner reminiscent of the two-fold Prologue (1:1-1:15). The message of Romans comes ‘encased’ in a two-part frame. Two-part structures (six panels forming three dyads) characterise the body of the Letter as has been demonstrated (Chapter 4), with one notable exception. Deciphering and analysing these structures in their immediate contexts has been rewarding. But the task does not end there. Exercises in segmentation when applied to any work of art are not ends in themselves. They are prelude to a new reconstruction of the whole, and a new way of seeing the whole.

So it is with Romans. Reading it satisfactorily means reading Romans ‘as a whole’. This implies reconstruction at the macro-level, based on the findings at micro-level and their implications. Therefore the identification of cross-panel coherence at the macro level is vital. It aims at keeping the totality in view, while not obscuring or diminishing the crucial function of dyadic structures (and the one notable triadic departure) at the micro-level, in making Paul’s argument visible and accessible.

### **Integrity and Intra-panel Connections**

It must be emphasised that panels and segments in Romans, as in any literary work, while identifiable, are not watertight compartments. They allow for and indeed presume a wide range of interactions externally as well as

internally. Identifying some of the main intra-panel connections is important for two reasons:

- (i) Firstly, because segmentation is a temporary phase in the ‘reading’ of any linguistic work, whether oral or written. It is only a stage in the process towards interpretation of the whole. It serves no cause without the next phase, which is that of reconstruction. The pieces of the jigsaw must not only fit together. They must function as part of a greater universe to tell a story!
- (ii) Secondly if, as this dissertation proposes, the kernel of Paul’s message in Romans is expressed in the seventh segment (Rom 9-11), where a triadic arrangement of panels proclaims that God’s Righteousness is not compromised by the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s saving plan, and where God’s mercy meets God’s Righteousness, it follows that the rest of Romans must cohere with this or, at the very least, must not invalidate it.

### **Organic cohesiveness: The Triad (Rom 9-11) and the rest of Romans**

God’s great plan of salvation – ‘promised long ago through the prophets in the Scriptures’ is announced in the Prologue (1:1-2). It involves a call to ‘Jews first but Greeks as well’ (1:16) to the ‘obedience of faith’ (ὕπακοήν πίστεως) – a phrase which, significantly, occurs at the beginning and at the

end of Romans (1:5 and 16:26)<sup>354</sup> The Gospel is the power of God, saving all who have faith. This faith reveals the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) to Gentile and Jew alike, because both are under the dominion of sin (1:18-3:20) and helpless to escape its power. God's Righteousness, formerly revealed through Torah, has now been revealed 'apart from the Law' (3:21). Abraham, because he believed God, is father of all believers, foretold to be 'father of many nations' with descendants 'as many as the stars' (4:18). God's graciousness (οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ) in opening a door to Gentiles has been prefigured in the story of Abraham, whose faith in God before circumcision makes him ancestor in faith to Jew and Gentile alike. This theme is re-introduced in 9:6-7: Not all who can boast of physical descent from Abraham (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ) are truly the children of Abraham. The 'children of the promise', true children of God (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ), are not confined to those descended from Jacob (9:6-13).

## **Righteousness and Mercy**

Through Adam, head of the human race, sin entered the world (5:12).

Through Jesus Christ, the New Adam, grace outweighed the sin (5:16):

“Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (5:21). This is at the

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<sup>354</sup> Don Garlington notes the significance of this phrase in Romans. He writes, “Unique to the whole of pre-Christian Greek literature and to Paul himself, the phrase ὑπακοήν πίστεως, occurring in Romans 1:5 and 16:26, gives voice to the design of the apostle's missionary gospel.” See D. Galington, *The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans*. Westminster Theological Journal 52 (1990), p. 201). An indirect argument for the integrity of the 16-chapter MSS of Romans may well be provided in the dual positioning of ὑπακοήν πίστεως at beginning and end of the Letter (M.B.).

heart of Pauline soteriology in Romans. It is linked with the jealousy motif in Deuteronomy 32, which is ante-text to Rom 9-11.<sup>355</sup> It works as a demonstration of the principle that God works in mysterious ways to bring about the salvation of those whom God chooses. God will even take the circuitous route of working through human obstinacy and disobedience to bring people to the obedience of faith (ὕπακοήν πίστεως). In so doing God reveals the other side of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. It is called mercy or compassion, ἔλεος θεοῦ. This is dispensed to those ‘to whom God wants to reveal the riches of his glory’ (9:23), those to whom God ‘wants to show mercy’ - the people ‘God had prepared for this glory long ago’ (9:24). This message has been anticipated: “God makes all things work together for good...for those called according to his purpose” (8:28). In all of this the jealousy motif of Deuteronomy 32 becomes an interpretive key. It is central to the soteriology of Romans, as it is to the integrity of Rom 9-11.<sup>356</sup>

## **Righteousness, Mercy and Hope**

A strong and final reminder of the organic nature of Paul’s teaching in Romans comes in the third Block (Chapters 12-16). The hortatory section

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<sup>355</sup> “By bringing the theme of Israel ‘provoked to jealousy’ Paul gives the first indication of a resolution to the problem of Israel’s failure to believe. The unveiling of that resolution awaits the climax of Paul’s exposition in Chapter 11 (11:11, 14, 26). James D.G. Dunn, *Theology of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Eerdmans, 1998), 517.

<sup>356</sup> See Appendix II.

begins with a plea: “Think of God’s mercy (οἰκτιρῶν τοῦ θεοῦ) my brothers and worship him...” (12:1). Towards the end of the Letter, immediately before the Epilogue, mercy is mentioned once again, this time in relation to hope (15:9-10) According to Paul, the reason for Christ ‘service of the circumcision’ (διάκονον περιτομῆς) – in other words his assuming of human nature as a Jew (2:29) - was “so that God could carry out the promises made to the Patriarchs” and that Gentiles would ‘give glory to God for his mercy’(τὰ δὲ ἔθνη ὑπὲρ ἐλέους δοξάσαι τὸν θεόν, 15:9). Once again, in this penultimate dyad in Romans, Gentile and Jew are linked in the divine purposes. The salvation of each is due to an act of God’s mercy. Truly throughout Romans, as in the Hebrew hendiadys and the psalmist’s poetry, “Justice and mercy have met” (Ps 85:10-12).

The message has been heralded in 3:24: Christ is the new ‘mercy-seat’ (ἰλαστήριον) - the revelation of the Righteousness of God in the new aeon. Chapters 9-11 highlight the role of mercy in the restoration of ‘all Israel’ (11:25) and ‘all humankind’ (11:32). Finally, in 15:8-12 as the Letter winds to a close, the message is reiterated: God’s Mercy (loving kindness) is the reverse side of God’s Righteousness. This gives reason for hope: “In him the Gentiles will put their hope” (15:12, citing Isaiah 11:1, 10). Paul’s prayer in 15:13 ‘that the Holy Spirit will remove all bounds to hope’ is linked with God’s mercy revealed through Israel’s history (15:8) and God’s mercy revealed in Christian living (15:1). Rightly therefore, in my view, J. R. Daniel Kirk assumes that Paul’s thesis in Romans is expressed in Rom 15:7-13. He writes:

“Increasingly Romans 15:7-13 is being recognized for its highly significant role in the letter as the summation and conclusion of the letter’s theological and paranetic sections...Indeed the catena of Old Testament references in Chapter 15, with its repetitive witness to Gentile inclusion in the praise of God, explains why Paul can claim in 1:5 that the obedience of the Gentiles can be said to come about ‘for the sake of his name’.”<sup>357</sup>

This is another way of saying that the *peroratio* in Romans (15:7-13) recapitulates the message of the *exordium* (1:1-7): The Good News that Paul preaches to the Gentiles has been foretold long ago in the Hebrew Scriptures.

### **Reading Romans organically**

In summary, the literary structure of Romans, as outlined in this study, confirms the unity and organic cohesiveness of Paul’s message in the Letter as a whole. The first block of three dyads (Rom 1-4) proclaims God’s merciful and just plan to bring Gentile and Jew to ‘the obedience of faith’ (ὕπακοήν πίστεως). The topic is introduced in the Prologue (1:1-15) and in Paul’s statement of intent (1:16-17). It is announced in dialogue form as the answer to the human dilemma: Gentile and Jew under sin’s dominion (1:18-32; 2:1-3:20). Salvation comes through faith ‘apart from the Law’ (3:21-31; 4:1-25).

The second block consists of three dyads and a triad. The three dyads deal with the faith which justifies in Christ (5:1-11). It reveals God’s

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<sup>357</sup> J. R Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 49-51.

righteousness. It delivers from Adam's legacy of sin and death (5:12-21). It opens a way to life in the Spirit, release from slavery (6:1-23; 7:1-25) and gives assurance of future glory (8:1-13; 8:24-39).

The beginning of the seventh segment marks a departure from dialogical mode in favour of a three-way approach. This is structurally and literally the climax in Romans. For Christians in Rome, only decades removed from their Jewish moorings, the burning questions which have been simmering since the first dyad (especially 3:1-8), are addressed and answered. They are essentially questions about God: Is God trustworthy? Has God been unfaithful to promises once made to Israel? Has the Covenant been revoked? Are the Jews not still God's chosen people? If so, have they not reason to be jealous if the Gentiles are now – in gratuitous manner, outside the Covenant - among the elect? Does it not follow from this that God is unjust? And, crucially, is there a *Sonderweg* for those Jews who are refusing to accept Paul's gospel but are still observant of God's Law given by Moses? In all of this, it appears that God forgotten God's chosen people. So whither, God's chosen of old?

These are the questions raised in the seventh segment of Romans and they are given due climactic prominence in the structure of the Letter. They are organically continuous with what has gone before, and would make little sense apart from previous arguments. They appear again, though in different guise, in the hortatory dyads (Block 3: Segments 8-10). Disputes about food laws, holydays, worship and relationships are fought along Gentile-Jewish lines (12:1-21; 13: 8-14). Paul's focus on 'the weak' and 'the strong' (14:1-



15:13) ends in what seems like an unwarranted leap into the realm of God's plan for the world, as promised to the Patriarchs: "Christ became servant of the circumcised so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercy" (15:8-9), followed by a catena of scriptural references, including Deuteronomy 32, the text of which is foundational, not only in the seventh segment, but in Romans as a whole. Richard B. Hays wisely states that "Deuteronomy 32 is Romans *in nuce*."<sup>358</sup>

### **Further Confirmatory Internal Dialogical Features**

Apart from the major dyadic/dialogical features represented in nine of the ten segments studied, there are other dialogical features, confirmative of the overall structure, which are worth noting. Among these are the dialogical patterns discernible within some panels. Four of these are worthy of special mention:

- (i) Four mini-dramas in the second panel of the second dyad (2:1-3:20)
- (ii) The Adam-Christ typology in the second panel of the fourth dyad (4:1-25)
- (iii) Christ-rule *versus* Imperial rule in the second panel of the seventh dyad (13:1-7)
- (iv) Dramatic Speech-in-Character in the fifth dyad (7:7-25)

As literary features, they serve as 'mirror-dyads' reinforcing the overall dialogical structure of Romans, just as overtures in a musical composition

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<sup>358</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), 164.

draw attention to the leading themes. The first, represented by the panel 2:1-3:20, is set over and against 1:18-32, where the Gentile world is shown to be under sin's dominion, subject to the wrath/judgement of God. This is counter-balanced by four mini-dialogues (2:1-11; 12-24; 25-29; 3:1-8) each illustrating an aspect of Jewish complacency, shown to be just as reprehensible as Gentile idolatry and therefore equally under sin's dominion.

This is a clever literary device which emphasises the 'how much more' frequently used by Paul in comparisons. Jewish 'hardened hearts' may be in greater need of redemption than Gentile 'darkened hearts', and four debates, all set in law-courts, confirm it! Holding a mirror up to the Law, circumcision, Jewish superiority and external observance - by bringing them (figuratively) to trial in court- has the effect of strengthening the overall argument that Jews, as well as Gentiles, are in need of salvation. God's righteousness must be upheld in the face of human infidelity (3:7-8). This internal mini-dialogue is at the service of the overall dialogical structure and the thrust of Paul's message in Romans. See Tables 10 and 11.

The second example of internal dialogical features confirming material from a larger dialogue is found in the Adam-Christ typology of 5:12-21. The larger dialogue is between the realm of grace (5:1-11) and the realm of Sin (5:12-21). But the realm of Sin is complex. It has extended to the whole human race, through Adam, head of the human race. "Adam prefigured the One to come" (5:15), who is Christ, the new Adam, head of the new human race. Through a series of dyadic pairings (sin/grace, disobedience/obedience, judgement/acquittal) the message of the larger

dialogue is reinforced: God's grace 'outweighs' the power of Sin. See Tables 14 and 15.

A third example of internal dialogue confirming and reinforcing the larger dialogue is provided in the much-disputed text of 13:1-7. In our schema it corresponds with the second panel in the eighth segment, which is the first in Block 3 - the hortatory section of Romans. The appeal is for love in action, with the expectation that Christians will behave differently from those who do not profess to live by faith. In everyday life this calls for humility, prayer, perseverance, generosity, hospitality and forgiveness (12:1-21). The second panel (13:1-7) addresses the question of the Christian's relationship to civil authority, presumably Roman imperial authority - a Pauline variant on the question addressed to Jesus about paying tax to Caesar (Mt 22:17-18). In a word, Paul asks for love in the form of respect "since all authority comes from God" (13:2). In paying taxes and tolls, in respecting those who govern, in fulfilling their civic duties, Christians are indeed fulfilling the love-command, not out of fear of being punished, but "for conscience' sake" (13:5). Civic rule is linked with the rule of God in this mirror-panel. This has the effect of elevating the contested verses (13:1-7) to a faith-plane where they become continuous with "the debt of mutual love" (13:8-14) owed by Christians, thereby situating Panel 2 in complementary conversation with its counterpart Panel 1 in the dyad (12:1- 13:14).

The fourth example offered here of mirror-dyads at work in the service of the overall schema is that of Rom 7:7-25, which divides as a Speech-in-Character dialogue, 7:7-14 and 7:15-25. For some scholars, for

example, S. K. Stowers and Alain Gignac, the second half of the dialogue extends to 8:4.<sup>359</sup> Panel 1 deals with the complex relationship between the Law and Sin, while panel 2 addresses the question of human sinfulness. Echoes of the Adam-Christ typology of 5:12-21 permeate both panels: Sin is personified; it is pervasive; it takes human beings captive; it is in league with Death. Subtle change of person from first person singular (7:7-13) to first person plural (7:14) mark this dialogue as a speech-in-character stage-drama where a narrator intervenes at key intervals. See Table 17.

## **Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

This study of Romans as literature has validated the thesis that one underlying and pervasive literary structure emerges from a detailed study of the Greek text. This structure provides a key to a satisfactory reading of the Letter. This reading of Romans takes account of the total message - the Gospel of the Righteousness of God revealed through faith, not works - (Block 1), the Righteousness of God revealed in Christ and in the realm of Christ (Block 2) and the Righteousness of God revealed in the realm of the everyday life of Christians (Block 3). The message that God is both righteous and merciful – that horizons collapse on δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and ἔλεος θεοῦ in a prefigured and pre-announced divine plan of salvation – this is Paul’s Good News for Christians in Rome.

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<sup>359</sup> Gignac, Alain, op cit., 130-131.

The structure of Romans, described here as comprising ten segments in a sequence of 3+4+3, has been shown to ‘speak’ that message and to argue for its acceptance by all. Each segment, apart from the discordant seventh, ‘speaks’ Paul’s argumentation in dyadic/dialogical panels. The seventh segment, corresponding with the high point of Romans, manifests a change of pattern, in favour of a triadic arrangement. This ‘speaks’, with added emphasis, the message proclaimed in the other nine segments, while emphasising the climactic role of Rom 9-11 in the Letter as a whole.

## **Final remarks**

There are reasons for thinking that the work involved in this dissertation has been like scraping at the tip of an iceberg! It has been tedious at times, with little to show by way of progress. Risks have been taken, though none without benefit! One thing is certain: A lot remains to be done. If, as Robert Alter claims, “all biblical narrative is in some way dialogical”<sup>360</sup> there is a volume of work to be done on the constant background dialogue in Romans between Paul and certain scriptural texts/figures, for example, Genesis 15, Exodus 32, Deuteronomy 30-32, Psalm 69, Abraham, Sarah, Rebecca, personified Righteousness, Sin and the Law. The role of Lament, especially of Psalm 69, in Paul’s Christology in Romans is another line of research closely allied to the present study, as is Paul’s reading of Isaiah 27, 29 and 40 in relation to the sole occurrence of the Remnant motif in the New

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<sup>360</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1981), 65.

Testament. Another promising vein could be opened up by attempting to answer the question: Why does the only explicit reference in the New Testament to the Book of Kings (1Kgs19:18) occur in Romans? Besides, there are certainly many avenues worth exploring around the possible contributions of literary/linguistic studies to other valid readings of Romans. These, among others, are pressing questions that deserve scholarly attention.

If the present study invites research along any or all of these lines it will have been worthwhile.

**Table 25: Romans at a Glance (3 Blocks, comprising 9 dyads+ 1 Triad)**

|  |  |  |    |
|--|--|--|----|
| Prologue 1 (1:1-7) Prescript: Greeting.<br><br>The Gospel of God in his son Jesus: faith for all nations   | Prologue 2: <i>Proemium</i> (1:8-15). Thanksgiving.<br><br>Thanks to God/Jesus for your faith proclaimed in the whole earth. Focus shifts to Paul and hearers.               | DYAD                                   | 1  |
| Justification by faith (1:16-17).<br><br>Gentiles under sin's dominion (1:18-32)   | Jews also under sin's dominion (2:1-3:18)<br><br>Justification not by works of the Law (3:18-20)   | DYAD                                   | 2  |
| God's righteousness revealed through faith (3:21-31).<br><br>(1) The role of Jesus' sacrifice (3: 21-26)<br><br>(2) So, no boasting! (3:27-31)   | God's righteousness revealed through Abraham's faith (4:1-25).<br><br>(2)Abraham had nothing to boast about (4:1-12)<br><br>(1)The role of Jesus' resurrection (4:13-25)     | DYAD                                   | 3  |
| The realm of Christ (5:1-11)   | The realm of Christ surpasses that of Adam (5:12-21)   | DYAD                                   | 4  |
| Freedom and Sin (6:1-23).<br><br>Union with Christ's death gives freedom from sin (in Baptism a form of death unites (6:1-11).<br><br>Issues around sin, especially slavery (6:12-23). | Freedom and the Law (7:1-25)Union with Christ's death gives separation from the Law (in marriage, death separates) (7:1-6).Issues around the Law, including slavery (7:7-25) | DYAD                                   | 5  |
| The Spirit gives life (8:1-13)   | The Spirit-based life leads to glory (8:14-39)   | DYAD                                   | 6  |
| Israel? Is God still faithful, just? (9:1-29)  | Israel stumbled (9:30-10:21)<br><br><b>TRIAD</b>   | God's mercy: Israel restored (11:1-36) | 7  |
| Exhortation: Be different from the world (12:1-8). LOVE (12:9-13). Do not repay evil with evil (12:14-21).   | Exhortation: Respect civil authority (13:1-7). LOVE (13:8-10). Live in the light (13:11-14).   | DYAD                                   | 8  |
| Exhortation: Do not judge. FAITH accepts the weak (14:1-12).   | Exhortation: Acceptance – with patience and encouragement – engenders HOPE. Do not scandalise (15:13).   | DYAD                                   | 9  |
| Epilogue 1(15:14-33): Reprise of <i>Proemium</i> (Cf. 1:8-15). Back to focus on Paul. Difficulties (15:22-33)  | Epilogue 2 (16:1-27): Postscripts & commendations. Focus moves to the church(es). (Romans 16)  | DYAD                                   | 10 |

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## APPENDIX I

### Paul's Letter to the Romans: Twenty Sample Structural Divisions

Barrett, Barth, Bruce, Byrne, Cranfield, Dunn, Fitzmyer, Harrington, Jewett, Johnson, Käsemann, King, Lagrange, Longenecker, Moo, Morgan, Murray, Stuhlmacher, Tobin, Witherington III, Wright.

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**Commentaries. London: Black, 1975 (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)**

1. The Address (1:1-7)
2. Paul and Rome (1:8-15)
3. The Gospel (1:16-17)
4. Judgement and the Gentile (1:18-32)
5. Judgement and the Critic (2:1-11)
6. Conscience (2:12-16)
7. Judgement and the Jew (2:17-29)
8. The Advantage of the Jew (3:1-8)
9. All have sinned (3:9-20)
10. The Righteousness of God (3:21-31)
11. Abraham justified by faith (4:1-12)
12. Faith and Promise (4:13-25)
13. Justification and Salvation (5:1-11)
14. Adam and Christ (5:12-21)
15. Free from Sin (5:1-14)
16. In Bondage to Righteousness (5:15-23)
17. Free from the Law (7:1-6)
18. The Law and Sin (7:7-25)
19. Life in the Spirit (8:1-11)
20. The Hope of Glory (8:12-30)
21. Assurance (8:31-39)
22. The Unbelief of Israel (9:1-5)
23. God's elective purpose (9:6-13)
24. God's Sovereignty (9:14-29)
25. Why Israel Stumbled (9:30-33)
26. The Righteousness of Men and the Righteousness of God (10:1-13)
27. Israel's Unbelief inexcusable (10:14-21)
28. The Remnant (11:1-10)
29. The Unfolding of God's Plan (11:11-24)
30. God's Plan complete (11:25-32)
31. The Praise of God (11:33-36)
32. The Ground of Christian Ethics (12:1-2)
33. The Christian Offering (12:3-21)

34. Authorities (13:1-7)
35. The Law of Love (13:8-10)
36. The Strong and the Weak (14:1-12)
37. Walking in Love (14: 13-23)
38. Unity in Love (15:1-13)
39. Paul's Plans and God's Purpose (15:14-33)
40. Personal Greetings (16:1-23)
41. The Doxology (16:24-27)

**Barth, Karl. *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*. Richmond Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960.**

1. The Apostolic Office and the Gospel (1:1-17)
2. The Gospel as God's Condemnation of Man (1:18-3:20)
3. The Gospel as the Divine Justification of those who believe (3:21-4:25)
4. The Gospel as Man's Reconciliation with God (5:1-21)
5. The Gospel as Man's Sanctification (6:1-23)
6. The Gospel as Man's Liberation (7:1-25)
7. The Gospel as the Establishment of God's Law (8:1-39)
8. The Gospel among the Jews (9:1-11:36)
9. The Gospel among the Christians (12:1-15:13)
10. The Apostle and the Church (15:14-16:27)

**Bruce, F.F. *Romans*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. General Editor, Leon Morris. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985. 5<sup>th</sup> ed.**

Prologue (1:1-15).

(i) Salutation 1:1-7. (ii) Introduction 1:8-15.

A. The Gospel According to Paul (1:16-11:36)

(i) Theme: The Righteousness of God revealed (1:16-17)

(ii) Sin and Retribution: the Universal need diagnosed (1:18-3:20)

(iii) The Way of Righteousness: the Universal need met (3:21-5:21)

- (iv) The way of Holiness (6:1-8:39)
- (v) Human Unbelief and Divine Grace (9:1-11:36)

B. The Christian Way of Life (12:1-15:13)

- (i) The Living Sacrifice (12:1-2)
- (ii) The common life of Christians (12:3-8)
- (iii) The Law of Christ (12:9-21)
- (iv) The Christian and the State (13:1-7)
- (v) Love and Duty (13:8-10)
- (vi) Christian Life in days of crisis (13:11-14)
- (vii) Christian liberty and Christian charity (14:1-15:6)
- (viii) Christ and the Gentiles (15:7-13)

Epilogue (15:14-16:27).

**Byrne, Brendan SJ. *Romans. Sacra Pagina. General Editor, Daniel J. Harrington SJ. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996.***

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. The Inclusive Saving Power of the Gospel (1:18-11:36)
  - A. The Inclusion of the Gentiles on the basis of Righteousness by Faith (1:18-4:25)
  - B. The Sure Hope of Salvation Springing from Righteousness by Faith (5:1-8:39)
  - C. The Inclusion of Israel (9:1-11:36)
3. Summons to live according to the Gospel (12:1-15:13)
4. Conclusion of the Letter (15:14-16:24 or 27)

**Cranfield, C.E.B. *Romans. ICC. 2 Volumes. International Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004.***

1. Superscription, Address and Salutation (1:1-7)

2. Paul and the Roman Church (1:8-16a)
3. The Theme of the Epistle stated (1:16b-17)
4. The Revelation of the Righteousness which is from God by faith alone (1:18-4:25)
5. The Life promised to those who are righteous by faith (5:1-8:39):
  - A life characterised by peace with God (5:1-21)
  - A life characterised by sanctification (6:1-23)
  - A life characterised by freedom (7:1-25)
  - A life characterised by the Indwelling of God's Spirit (8:1-39)
6. The Unbelief of Men and the Faithfulness of God (9:1-11)
7. The Obedience to which those who are righteous by faith are called (12:1-15:13)
8. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

**Dunn, James D. G. *Romans*. WBC. Number 38. 2 Volumes. Dallas TX: Word Books, 1982.**

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. The Wrath of God on Man's Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
3. The Righteousness of God – to Man's Faith (3:21-5:21)
4. The Outworking of the Gospel in Relation to the Individual and to the Election of Grace (6:1-11-36)
5. The Outworking of the Gospel for the Redefined People of God in Everyday Terms (12:1-15:13)
6. Conclusion (15:14 -16:27)

**Fitzmyer, Joseph A. SJ. *The Letter to the Romans. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB No. 33. New York: Doubleday, 1992.**

Introduction (1:1-15)

1. Doctrinal Section: God's Gospel of Jesus Christ Our Lord (1:16-11:36)

- A. Through the Gospel the Uprightness of God is revealed as justifying people of faith (1:16 - 4:25)
  - B. The Love of God further assures Salvation to those justified by faith (5:1-8:39)
  - C. This Justification and Salvation Through Faith do not contradict God's Promises to Israel of Old (9:1-11:36)
2. Hortatory Section: The Demands of Upright Life in Christ (12:1-15:13)
    - A. Spirit-guided Christian Life must be Worship paid to God (12:1-13:14)
    - B. The Duty of Love owed by the Strong in the community to the Weak (14:1-15:13)
  3. Paul's Plans, Coming Task and Request for Prayers (15:14-33)
  4. Conclusion: Letter of Commendation for Phoebe and Greetings to Roman Christians (16:1-16:23)
  5. Doxology (16:25-27)

**Jewett, Robert. *Romans. A Commentary. Hermeneia Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.***

The *Exordium* (Introduction): 1:1-12.

- I. The *Narratio* (Statement of Facts): The Background of Paul's Missionary Project. 1:13-15.
- II. The *Propositio* (Thesis, basic contention): 1:16-17.
- III. The *Probatio* (Proof): 4 proofs of the thesis and its implications for the Roman Congregations. 1:18-15:13.
  - (a) The First Proof: The Gospel expresses the impartial Righteousness of God by overturning claims of cultural superiority and by rightwising Jews and Greeks through grace alone (1:18-4:25)
  - (b) The Second Proof: Life in Christ as a new System of Honor that replaces the quest for status through conformity to the Law (5:1-8:39)
  - (c) The Third Proof: The Triumph of Divine Righteousness in the Gospel's Mission to Israel and the Gentiles (9:1-11:36)
  - (d) The Fourth Proof: Living together according to the Gospel so as to sustain the Hope of Global Transformation (12:1-15:13)



- IV. The *Peroratio* (Conclusion). An Appeal for Cooperation in Missionary Activities in Jerusalem, Rome and Spain (15:14-16:24).

Two Interpolations (Church's Campaign against Heretics, 16:17-20) and Supersessionist Doxology, 16:25-27.

**Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Reading Romans. A Literary and Theological Commentary*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2001.**

1. The good News of God's Righteousness (1:17)
2. Faithless Humanity and the Power of Sin (1:18-3:20)
3. God's Fairness revealed in Jesus' Faith (3:21-31)
4. How Faith works: The Example of Abraham (4:1-25)
5. God's Gift in Christ Jesus (5:1-21)
6. Answering Objections: Grace, Sin and Law (6:1-7:25)
7. Life in the Spirit (8:1-39)
8. God's Plan for the Salvation of Jew and Gentile (9:1-11:36)
9. The Transformation of Moral Consciousness (12:1-13:14)
10. Righteousness in the Christian Community (14:1-15:13)
11. Paul's Plan and Appeal (15:14-16:27)

**Käsemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (from 4<sup>th</sup> German Edition of *An Die Römer*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980.**

1. Introduction (1:17).
  - (a) Prescript (1:1-7)
  - (b) Proemium (1:8-15)
  - (c) Theme (1:16-17)
2. The Need for the Revelation of the Righteousness of God (1:18-3:20)
3. The Righteousness of God as the Righteousness of Faith (3:21-4:25)

4. The Righteousness of God as a Reality of Eschatological Freedom (5:1-8:39)
5. The Righteousness of God and the Problem of Israel (9:1-11:36)
6. The Righteousness of God in Daily Christian Life (12:1-15:13)
7. Conclusion (15:14-33)
8. Appendix : A Letter of Recommendation (16:1-27)

**King, Nicholas. *Romans to Corinthians. Study Guide Series. New Testament.*  
Buxhall, Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew, 2006.**

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. The Human Plight and God's Response (1:18-4:25)
3. Reasons for Hope (5:1-8:39)
4. What about the Jews? (9:1-11:36)
5. Bits and Pieces (12:1-16:27)

**Lagrange, M.-J. *Épître aux Romains. Troisième Édition. Ed. J. Gabalda. Paris:*  
*Librairie Lecoffre, 1922.***

En Chapitre. 1-16.

**Longenecker, Richard N. *Introducing Romans. Critical Issues in Paul's Most  
Famous Letter. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2011.***

1. The Opening Sections (1:1-7 and 1: 8-12)
2. The Body Sections
  - A. Brief Introduction to Paul's Protreptic Message (1:13-15)
  - B. Body Middle
    - (i) Righteousness, Faithfulness and Faith (1:16-4:25)
    - (ii) Peace, Reconciliation and 'Life in Christ' (5:1-8:39)

- (iii) The Christian Gospel vis-à-vis God's Promises to Israel (9:1-11:36)
- (iv) Exhortations, general and Specific (12:1-15:13)

D. Body Closing

- (i) An Apostolic Parousia (15:14-32)
- (ii) Concluding Section (15:33-16:27)

**Murray, John. *Epistle to the Romans. The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes. 2 Volumes. NICNT Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997.***

1. Salutation (1:1-7)
2. Introduction (1:8-15)
3. Theme (1:16-17)
4. Universality of Sin and Condemnation (1:18-3:20)
5. The Righteousness of God (3:21-31)
6. Corroboration from the Old Testament (4:1-25)
7. Fruits of Justification (5:1-11)
8. The Analogy (5:12-21)
9. The Sanctifying Effects (6:1-23)
10. Death to the Law (7:1-6)
11. Transitional Experience (7:7-13)
12. The Contradiction in the Believer (7:14-25)
13. Life in the Spirit (8:1-39)
14. The Unbelief of Israel (9:1-5)
15. The Vindication of God's Righteousness (9: 6-33)
16. The Righteousness of Faith (10: 1-21)
17. The Restoration of Israel (11:1-36)
18. The Christian Way of Life (12:1-15:13)

19. Paul's Ministry, Policy and Plans (15:14-33)

20. Greetings and Closing Doxology (16:1-27)

**Moo, Douglas. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NIC. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996.**

1. The Letter Opening (1:1-17)
2. The Heart of the Gospel: Justification by Faith (1:18-4:25)
3. The Assurance provided by the Gospel: Hope of Salvation (5:1-8:39)
4. Defense of the Gospel: The Problem of Israel (9:1-11:36)
5. The transforming Power of the Gospel: Christian Conduct (12:1-15:13)
6. The letter Closing (15:14-16:27)

**Morgan, Robert. *Romans*. New Testament Guides. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.**

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. God's Righteousness from faith – not from works of the Law (1:18-4:25 or 5:21)
3. Christian Experience – Freedom from Sin, the Law; Life in the Spirit (5:1 or 6:1-8:39)
4. Israel's Unbelief and Salvation (9:1-11:36)
5. Moral Admonitions (12:1-15:13)
6. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

**Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Commentary.* Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.**

1. The introduction to the Epistle (1:1-17)
2. Part One: The Righteousness of God for Jews and Gentiles (1:18-8:39)
3. Part Two: The Righteousness of God for Israel (9:1-11:36)
4. Part Three: The Testimony of the Righteousness of God in the Life of the Community (12:1-15:13)
5. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

**Tobin, Thomas H. *Paul's Rhetoric in its Contexts. The Argument of Romans.* Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004.**

Proposition (1:1-17)

1. Diatribe (1:18-11:36)
  - (a) Expository (1:18-32; 2:1-3:20; 3:21-26; 5:1-21; 8:1-30)
  - (b) Argumentative (2:1-3:20; 3:27-4:25; 6:1-7:25; 8:31-11:36)
2. Exhortation (12:1-15:7)
3. Conclusion: (15:8-13)

Witherington III, Ben, with D. Hyatt. *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2004.

1. Epistolary prescript and Greetings (1:1-7)
2. *Exordium* and *Narratio* (1:8-15)
3. *Propositio* (1:16-17)
4. Argument One, Part One: The Unbearable Likeness (1:18-32)
5. Argument One, Part Two: Critique of a Judgemental Gentile Hypocrite (2:1-16)
6. Argument Two: Censoring a Censorious Jewish Teacher (2:17-3:20)

7. Recapitulation and Expansion of *Propositio*: The manifestation of the Righteousness of God apart from the Law (3:21-31)
8. Argument Three: Abraham as Forefather of all the ‘Righteous’ by faith (4:1-25)
9. Argument Four: The Results of Rectification (5:1-11)
10. Argument Five: From First Adam to Last Adam: A Comparison (5: 12-21)
11. Argument Six: Shall Sin, Death, the Law continue now that Christ has come? (6:1-7:25)
  - Part One: Shall we go on sinning so that race may increase? (6:1-14)
  - Part Two: Slaves to Righteousness (6:15-7:6)
  - Part Three: Retelling Adam’s Tale (7:7-13)
  - Part Four: Adam’s Lost Race (7:14-25)
12. Argument Seven: Life in the spirit; That was then, This is Now (8:1-17)
13. Argument Eight: Life in Christ in Glory (8:18-39)
14. Argument Nine God’s Justice and Israel’s Future (9:1-11:36)
15. Argument Ten: Living Sacrifices and Loving Service (12:1-21)
16. Argument Eleven: Taxing Situations and the Debt of Love (13:1-14)
17. Argument Twelve: The Weak and the Strong and What goes Wrong (14:1-15:13)
18. *Peroratio* I: The Knowledge and Apostle to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
19. Good News heading West. Travel Plans, Apostolic Parousia, *Peroratio* II.
20. A Letter of Recommendation and Reconciliation (16:1-27)

**Wright, N.T. *The Letter to the Romans. Interpreter’s Bible. Volume X.***

**Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.**

1. The Faithfulness of God (1:1-4:25)
2. God’s People in Christ as the True Humanity (5:1-8:39)
3. God’s Promises and God’s Faithfulness (9:1-11:36)

4. God's Call to Worship, Holiness and Unity (12:1-16:27)

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Mercy proclaimed: The role of Deuteronomy 32 and the Jealousy Motif in Paul's Soteriology, as presented in Romans 9-11**

#### **“Provoked to jealousy” (Rom 10:19; 11:11, 14) – Incentive or Insult? A fresh look at Paul's approach to salvation for Jew and Gentile in Romans 9-11**

##### **Introduction**

What does Paul really say, or appear to say, about jealousy in Romans 9-11? Could he really be asserting that God has some truck with the green-eyed monster in a way that benefits people? After all, were we not led to believe that jealousy (call it envy or covetousness if you will) is one of the seven deadly sins? Surely God and his apostle Paul should be steering us clear of that, rather than drawing attention to it, lauding it in a manner that is quite confusing, and glorifying it by weaving it into the saving purposes of God? These and similar questions lead us into a surprisingly rich theological mine, involving not only Chapters 9-11 but the whole of Paul's Letter to the Romans.

##### **The 'jealousy texts' in Romans 9-11**

There are three distinct but complementary references to jealousy (ζήλος) in Romans 9-11. They occur in close proximity to one another in the section dealing with the place of Israel in God's great plan of salvation, as Paul understands it. The first occurs in 10:9, within a context where Paul is searching for answers to the question: Why is it that his fellow-Jews, privileged people of the covenant, have failed to recognise in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah foretold in their own sacred scriptures? Firstly he deals with an implied objection that they have not heard the message



(10:18) and concludes that they have no excuse, because, in the words of Psalm 19:4, ‘the message has reached the ends of the earth.’ A second question follows: Perhaps they heard but did not understand? The NRSV translation reads:

“Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, ‘**I will make you jealous** of those who are not a nation (ἐγὼ παραζηλώσω ὑμᾶς ἐπ’ οὐκ ἔθνη); with a foolish nation **I will make you angry**’ (ἐπ’ ἔθνη ἀσυνέτω παροργιῶ ὑμᾶς )”

Here Paul is presuming that his audience will be familiar with Deuteronomy 32, especially verses 20-21, and that they will make the relevant connection between promise and fulfilment. Past and future are linked through the promise, “I will make you jealous...” In that text (Deut 32: 20-21) God is portrayed as provoking an idolatrous nation to jealousy and anger. Moses’ Song in Deuteronomy 32:20-21 reads:

“I will hide my face from them. I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children in whom there is no faithfulness. They **made me jealous** with what is no god, **provoked** me with their idols. So I will **make them jealous** (παραζηλώσω) with what is no people, **provoke** them with a foolish nation...”

In the text of Deuteronomy there is dual jealousy. A ‘perverse generation’ is portrayed as provoking God to jealousy. God, in turn, will provoke this perverse generation to become jealous of Gentile neighbours. They will become desirous of possessing what these Gentiles now enjoy. Paul invokes Isaiah 65:1-2 to support his

contention that Scripture has foretold the present impasse: Gentiles have been the recipients of what Israel has missed:

“I have been found by those who did not seek me,  
and I have revealed myself to those who did not consult me.” (Rom 10:20)

Two further questions follow as a logical consequence: Paul asks, “Is it possible that God has rejected Israel, God’s own chosen people?” (11:1). He hastens to assure his auditors that this is not so, because not all of Israel has failed. A remnant has been faithful, as the story of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:10, 14) illustrates. The second question (referring to those Jews not of the remnant) is the occasion for the reintroduction of the jealousy motif:

So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as **to make Israel jealous** (11:11).

Λέγω οὖν, μὴ ἔπταισαν ἵνα πέσωσιν; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ τῷ αὐτῶν  
παραπτώματι ἢ σωτηρία τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ **παραζηλώσαι** αὐτούς.

The NJB translation of 11:11 reads: “Have the Jews fallen forever, or have they just stumbled?” This seems a better translation in the context of Paul’s reference to ‘forever’ in the previous verse (11:10) to LXX Psalm 68:22ff, “May their table become a trap for them...May their backs be bent forever.” The link-word is ‘forever’, and so Israel’s misstep is not ‘forever’. It is but a temporary phase in the outworking of God’s plan. The functioning of the jealousy motif in 11:11b, as in 10:19, is time-related. The ‘stumbling’ of part of Israel has been the occasion of the

Gentiles' acceptance of the news of salvation, but this is only a step towards the eventual inclusion of Israel, because it (Israel) will be 'provoked to jealousy'.

One may rightly ask: Why should Israel be jealous of Gentiles? The answer is not given directly by Paul, but it may be deduced from the context: Israel will be 'provoked to jealousy' by the extension of Israel's covenantal status to Gentiles. The privileged position of Israel (as exclusive recipients of Torah and covenants) has been usurped by the heathen nations, and jealousy is the expected Jewish response. The third and final occurrence of the jealousy motif (11:14) is linked in a personal and emotionally charged manner to Paul's own ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. The link with Moses in Exodus 32 is inescapable. Just as Moses is willing to be 'blotted out' of the book of the Lord, for the sake of his people (Exodus 32:32), so Paul has protested (9:3) his willingness to be 'cursed' (ἀνάθεμα) and 'cut off' from Christ for the sake of his own people, his own flesh (μου τὴν σάρκα). A similarly charged emotional outburst accompanies his reference to jealousy in 11:14. Paul's ministry as apostle to the Gentiles is described in terms of provoking his own people (Israel) to jealousy, so that some of them may be saved. From this it would seem that Paul views his apostolic ministry among Gentiles

- (i) As reflective of that of that of Moses in Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 32 (9:3; 11:11)
- (ii) As allied with God's initiative of 'provoking to jealousy' in those whose hearts have been 'hardened' (11:11)
- (iii) As subservient to a greater purpose, namely, the salvation of Israel (11:14).

The text of 11:14 reads:

εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ σώσω τινὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν

“Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous and thus save some of them.”

This is an extraordinary statement about Paul and his apostleship. It occurs only in Romans. It is also a pointer to the significance of the jealousy motif in God’s salvific plan for all humankind as understood by Paul.

### **A brief analysis of παραζηλώσω and cognates in Rom 10:19; 11:11,14**

Traditionally, ζήλος has been translated as ‘jealousy’ or ‘zeal’, and παραζηλώσω has most often been translated as ‘to provoke to jealousy’. Some contemporary scholars, including Robert Jewett, translate it in Romans 9-11 as ‘provoked to zeal’.<sup>1</sup> There are valid reasons for this, because ‘jealous’ and ‘zealous’ come from the same linguistic root.<sup>2</sup> Vincent Smiles asserts that “in Greek usage, ζήλος often has a neutral sense, its value being determined by its object, and it can denote both positive and negative human qualities...The LXX usage is quite different in that it is never neutral; it always denotes a certain fiery intensity in the emotions and/or actions of God or humans, which is generally viewed by the biblical writers as praiseworthy

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 644-645

<sup>2</sup> Old French, *gelos*; Greek, *zēlos*; Medieval Latin, *zélósus*; Late Latin, *zélus*. It has been variously translated in English as zeal, jealousy, envy, covetousness, ‘being wary of being supplanted’, ‘vigilant in guarding possessions’. Late Latin ,also ‘emulation’. Jewett cites Seeman in defining zeal/jealousy as ‘the concern for maintaining possession and control over that to which one claims to have honourable and exclusive access’, with stages including emotional ‘ignition’ against perceived threats and ‘retaliatory response’ in defense of injured honor. Furthermore ζήλος in a good sense, usually means zeal, ardour (Rom 10:12; 2 Cor 7:11; Phil 3:6); in a bad sense, jealousy, envy (Rom 13:13; Jas 3:14; Acts 5:17).

even when violent.”<sup>3</sup> However, Paul’s usage of ζήλος is varied, depending on his purposes in a given context. For example, in Rom 13:13 ζήλος is listed among the vices to be avoided by those who profess to live ‘in the light’. Paul is surely aware that ‘jealousy’ and ‘jealous love’ are attributed to the God of Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures (Deut 4:24; 32; Zech 1:14; 8:2; Nahum 1:2 and elsewhere), and he cites LXX Deuteronomy 32:21 in Rom 10:19, simply exchanging one word αὐτοὺς for ὑμᾶς. Fitzmyer points out that the Qumran documents also employ the phrase ‘to provoke to jealousy’, though in a different sense.<sup>4</sup>

However, in the context of Romans 9-11, it seems best to understand παραζηλώσω in the traditional sense of ‘to provoke to jealousy’ (envy/covetousness/emulation), because this rendering respects the complexity of Paul’s line of argument and also his manner of invoking a vast scriptural field of reference. Furthermore, as we shall see, it is in line with Paul’s soteriology as expressed in the whole of Romans.

### **A troublesome motif?**

The motif of jealousy in Romans 9-11 is troublesome on two scores: Firstly, the notion of ‘provoking to jealousy’ carries more negative than positive connotations in contemporary everyday usage in English (Who would want to be ‘provoked to

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<sup>3</sup> Vincent M. Smiles, “The Concept of ‘Zeal’ in Second Temple Judaism and Paul’s Critique of it in Romans 10:2” in *CBQ*, 64, 2 (2008), Footnote 3, 283.

<sup>4</sup> Fitzmyer, *Romans*, (AB New York: Doubleday, 1993), 600: “And making for themselves a high place on a lofty mountain to provoke Israel to jealousy” (4Q372 1:2) – possibly an allusion to the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim.

jealousy' as a birthday present or as an incentive towards a prize?); and secondly, Paul's deployment of it is convoluted and, at times, puzzling.

The jealousy motif in Romans 9-11 has been treated by commentators with varying degrees of respect. For some scholars it has been cast in the mould of an awkward and embarrassing attempt by Paul to find some answer in Scripture for that theological question which underlies the whole of Romans: Why is it that God's chosen people have failed to recognise in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah foretold in their own sacred writings? For example, E.P. Sanders writes, "Paul's solution to the problem posed by Israel's unfaith is to be seen as a somewhat desperate expedient. Does he really think that jealousy will succeed where Peter failed?"<sup>5</sup> Heikki Räisänen refers to Paul's invoking of Deuteronomy 32:21 as the unlikely result of a desperate trawl through Scripture.<sup>6</sup> Terence Donaldson acknowledges that Paul's purpose is clear, but he argues that "the route he traces out to reach it is virtually unnavigable."<sup>7</sup> Others, like Robert Jewett, have exercised damage limitation on behalf of Paul by translating the Greek παραζηλώσω (Rom 10:19; 11:14) as 'to make zealous' rather than 'to make jealous', which dilutes the problem somewhat, but does not take account of the complexity of Paul's theological meanderings! After all, God provoking to zeal is a little more acceptable to modern ears than provoking God to

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<sup>5</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 198.

<sup>6</sup> Heikki Räisänen, "Paul, God and Israel: Romans 9-11 in Recent Research" in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (ed., Jacob Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 187.

<sup>7</sup> Terence Donaldson, "Riches for the Gentiles (Romans 11:12): Israel's rejection and Paul's Gentile Mission," *JBL* 112 (1993)89.

jealousy! Some commentators treat the jealousy motif cursorily, with a passing reference to its origin in Deut 32:21,<sup>8</sup> while others, a growing majority, deem it worthy of serious consideration as central to Romans 9-11.<sup>9</sup>

It can be said that interest in the jealousy motif in Romans is a relatively modern phenomenon. The reasons for this are possibly related to the history of the interpretation of Romans. Since Luther's proposal that the doctrine of justification by faith is to be understood as the central theme of the Letter, scholarly focus, of necessity, centred on Romans 1-8, and to a lesser degree on the hortatory section, 12-15. Chapters 9-11 were often regarded as 'a foreign body' in the Letter, having little or no connection with what followed or what went before. Theories of interpolation abounded, as scholars sought to explain, or explain away the 'seams' at the end of chapters 8 and 11. When, in the mid- twentieth century, Lutheran readings of Romans were challenged first by Stendahl,<sup>10</sup> then by E.P. Sanders,<sup>11</sup> and later by

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<sup>8</sup> Neither Fitzmyer, Pilch nor Talbert in their commentaries on Romans refer to the jealousy motif in Romans 9-11.

<sup>9</sup> Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11* (WUNT2/63; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); Murray Baker, "Paul and the Salvation of Israel: Paul's Ministry, the Motif of Jealousy, and Israel's Yes" in *CBQ* Vol 67/3(2005), 469-484; John G. Gager, *Reinventing Paul* (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), 101-149; James W. Aageson, "Typology, Correspondence, and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11" in *JSNT* 31 (1987), 51-72.

<sup>10</sup> The Lecture delivered by Krister Stendahl in 1961 entitled, "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West" is generally taken to herald the New Perspective on Paul. *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), by the same author, represents a further development of his thesis that

New Perspectivists led by James D.G. Dunn,<sup>12</sup> N.T. Wright<sup>13</sup> and others, attention turned to Chapters 9-11 and to the place of these chapters within the overall scheme of Romans. Post-holocaust reflection on Jewish-Christian relations certainly contributed also to the change of focus.

The approach taken in this Paper is that the jealousy motif is pivotal not only to Paul's theological argument in Romans 9-11 but also to his soteriology in the whole of the Letter. Furthermore, it is entwined in a vital manner with Paul's mission strategy as he understands it, and foundational for an understanding of God's universal plan of salvation for all humankind – both Jew and Gentile – as that plan is presented in Romans.

### **A Starting Point: Paul's Dilemma in Romans 9-11**

Paul's dilemma in Romans 9-11 is threefold:

1. Firstly, he fails to understand why his own fellow-Jews, given their special calling and covenantal relationship with God, have largely failed to recognise, in Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah promised in their own sacred scriptures.

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Luther and Western biblical scholarship generally have misinterpreted Paul by transferring to him a Western 'plagued conscience' which required rectifying, or 'making right'.

<sup>11</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977)

<sup>12</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Romans*. 2 Vols. Word Bible Commentary 38 (Dallas: Word, 1988)

<sup>13</sup> N.T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul" in *Pauline Theology. Volume III: Romans*. Ed. Hay & Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995)



2. Secondly, he has to answer a series of objections from an imaginary or real interlocutor: Does it not follow that God has broken faith with Israel, since it is apparent that Gentiles have now become God's people through faith in Christ 'apart from the Law' (3:21)? Has Israel's special place in the divine scheme been usurped? In other words, has God's covenant with Israel been revoked? If so, then does it not follow that God is untrustworthy, and therefore Paul's lengthy upholding of God's righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) in the first 8 chapters of Romans is nullified?
3. Thirdly, since Paul as apostle is responsible for the status of Gentiles among the redeemed, has he not thereby contributed to the predicament of his fellow-Jews, who 'stumbled over the stumbling-stone' (9:32), while the Gentiles seem to have been victorious in the race, even though they were not even seeking to win? Is Paul not somehow the author of Israel's misstep and of his own mental anguish (9:2)? And is he not, by his successful mission among Gentiles, somehow to blame for the failure of his fellow-Jews to grasp their moment of opportunity?

### **The Jealousy Motif and Paul's dilemma**

The jealousy motif is intimately and organically linked with this threefold problem and with Paul's midrashic exploration of it in Romans 9-11. While it may justly be argued that Paul does not satisfactorily answer his own questions in logical sequence, his exploration of the jealousy motif touches into the great biblical themes of election, covenant, fidelity, grace and mercy, thereby setting the scene for a resolution. By means of the jealousy motif, he is able to lift his threefold problem on to another plane, to view it through another lens and to set

it against the larger backdrop of that mysterious divine plan which encompasses the salvation of all humankind. The jealousy motif is employed by Paul to enunciate a soteriological principle: Israel has stumbled and, because of that stumbling, salvation has come to the Gentiles (9:22-23). By the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, Israel will be ‘provoked to jealousy’ and will long for that which is rightly Israel’s prerogative but is now possessed by others outside the covenant. By means of the jealousy motif Paul redeploys the text of Moses’ speech in Deuteronomy 32 to construct a distinctive view of salvation history.<sup>14</sup> In doing so, he portrays God working through jealousy to reach the Jews by a circuitous route. In this way he endows the failure of Israel with positive value and purpose, while demonstrating that God’s salvific purposes will not and cannot be thwarted. Of Paul’s use of Deut 32:21 in Romans James Aageson writes:

“The argument in 11:11-15 is perhaps one of the most conspicuous examples in Romans 9-11 of the way a scriptural verse has functioned as a tool in the development of a theological statement...It suggests that Paul in Romans 9-11 is not simply presenting a written statement of his theology, but is in some measure developing his theology as the discussion progresses.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Richard B. Hays , *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989) writes, “Deuteronomy 32 contains Romans *in nuce*... In dealing with Israel’s disobedience the Song of Moses (Deut 32), read as a prophetic prefiguration of God’s dealings with Israel through the gospel, becomes in Paul’s hands a hermeneutical key of equal importance with the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah...”(p.164)

<sup>15</sup> James W. Aageson, “*Scripture and Structure in the Development of the Argument in Romans 9-11*” in *CBQ* 48, No.2 (1986), 280.

While Richard Bell argues that “Paul’s *Heilsgeschichte* was similar to that of the Song of Deut 32:1-43 and of Deuteronomy as a whole,”<sup>16</sup> there are dissimilarities too. Paul’s theology of salvation in Romans, especially in Romans 9-11, may be said to be a reconstruction of Deuteronomy 32. This prompts Richard B. Hays to state that “Deuteronomy 32 is Romans *in nuce*”<sup>17</sup>

In a word, the jealousy motif in Romans 9-11 provides a precious if rather ominous hermeneutical key to Paul’s soteriology in the entire Letter.

### **Paul’s ‘solution’ to his threefold dilemma in Romans 9-11**

1. The driving question behind this section of Romans is the fate of unbelieving Israel. Paul agonises over the incomprehensible blindness of his fellow-Jews (9:1-3; 10:1-3; 11:11-12) and trawls the scriptures for some plausible explanation. As God’s elect, gifted with sonship, glory, covenants, the Law, the promises, the patriarchs and the Messiah (9:4-5) do they have any excuse? In diatribal fashion, through an imaginary interlocutor, Paul tests two possible excuses: Perhaps they (unbelieving Jews) have not heard the message? (10:18). Paul’s answer lies in Psalm 19:4, which Paul adapts for his purposes, in keeping with early Christian custom: They have heard, because ‘the message has reached the ends of the earth’.<sup>18</sup> A second excuse is

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<sup>16</sup> Bell, *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>17</sup> Hays, *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>18</sup> “Allowing for the hyperbole involved in Paul’s use of P19:5, it is evident that this passage has been applied to the work of the early Christian apostles”. See James W. Aageson, “*Typology, Correspondence and the Application of Scripture in Romans 9-11*” in *JSNT* 31, 60.

proffered: Perhaps they heard but did not understand? (10:19). Paul has already invoked Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in 10:6 and already given a preview of the answer: Israel did not need to go to the ends of the earth for the word of salvation. That word is within easy reach. Now he returns to Deuteronomy, this time to 32:21, and cites Moses: “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation...” Here the jealousy motif ‘works’ for Paul as a lever to raise the topic of Israel’s salvation into the divine realm. God has foretold the blindness of Israel long ago and foreseen a solution. Israel will be ‘provoked to jealousy’ on seeing the Gentiles apparently winning the race. Israel will then through jealousy lay claim to its covenantal status.

2. Does it not follow that God has broken faith with Israel? Has the Covenant been revoked? And, if so, how can God be trustworthy? Is there injustice (ἀδικία) in God (9:6-18)? Paul’s answer involves another excursion into the Hebrew Scriptures. Firstly, he distinguishes between Israel of the promise and Israel of physical descent (τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς). Not all of the seed (σπέρμα) of Abraham are truly children of the promise, but only those of the line of Isaac and Jacob, as foretold in Gen 18:10; 21:12; 25:23. God is not unjust (9:14) because God is free to have mercy on whom God wills, as God’s word to Moses in Exodus 33:19 proclaims: Ἐλέησω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω. If God’s purposes have even been served through the ‘hardening’ of Pharaoh’s heart (because, through the Exodus, God’s power and glory have been revealed, Exodus 9:16), surely the ‘hardening’ of part of Israel can also serve God’s larger purposes! The ‘stumbling’ of Israel means riches for the nations (11:12).

3. Rom 11:13-14 (NRSV) reads, “Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous and thus save some of them.” The ministry of Paul as apostle to the Gentiles is aligned with the purposes of God in Deuteronomy 32. It will serve to ‘provoke to jealousy’ those who have temporarily ‘stumbled’. The ‘blindness’ and ‘hardening’ of part of Israel has been the occasion of the reconciliation of the Gentile world to Christ (11:14). Therefore, when jealousy leads this stubborn and ‘stumbling’ section of Israel into desiring the blessings of the Gentile world, namely faith in Christ, the result will be truly a resurrection from the dead (11:15). When the mission to the Gentiles is complete, then ‘all Israel’ (Israel of the promise, true children of Abraham, 9:14-16), ‘root and branch’ (11:17-21) will be saved (11:26).<sup>19</sup> Jealousy will have played its part in furthering God’s mysterious plan, just as blindness (11:25), deafness (10:18), anger (10:20), inattentiveness (11:8), ‘hardening’ (9:18), ‘stumbling’ (11:11) and disobedience (11:32) on the part of some have occasioned God’s showing of mercy to all humankind:

συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς πάντας εἰς ἀπείθειαν, ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλέησῃ (11:32).

This is Paul’s trump card: God’s righteousness (δικαιοσύνη θεου), so profoundly and meticulously presented in 8-11, cannot be separated from God’s mercy (ἐλεος θεοῦ) now portrayed in 9-11. According to Luke T.

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<sup>19</sup> Several interpretations of the phrase ‘all Israel’ are possible, given that Paul has already stated in 9:27 and 11:6, that ‘a remnant will be saved’. For more on this, see Charles H. Talbert, *Romans* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, 2002), 264-265.

Johnson, “This is Paul’s most perfect expression of his dialectical sense of history.”<sup>20</sup> The present dilemma has been foretold and re-enacted in the past. God can show mercy and compassion now as in former days, even if it means temporarily “imprisoning some in disobedience” (11:32). “The events that appear to be against Scripture, turn out to be, when read from a different angle, a revelation of the true intention of Scripture.”<sup>21</sup> This message runs like a thread through Paul’s midrashic exploration of as many as twenty-seven scriptural texts in Romans 9-11. It is anticipated as early as 9:14-16:

“What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”<sup>22</sup>

It reaches conclusion in 11:31-32, where disobedience and mercy are linked in a chiasmic embrace: Just as the disobedience of Israel has meant mercy for Gentiles in the past, so those who are disobedient now can also expect mercy, because God has ‘imprisoned’ (‘locked into’ or ‘confined’; Gk., συνέκλεισεν) all in disobedience, only to show mercy to all.

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<sup>20</sup> Johnson, *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>22</sup> There is little difference in meaning between the Greek *ἔλεος* and *οικτιρμος*. See Strong’s Concordance, entry under *ἔλεος*. The Greek god *ἔλεος* was associated with healing, with the pouring of oil (the root meaning of the word in ancient Greek). The word *οικτιρμος* (Gk root, ‘bowels of compassion’) also carries the meaning of ‘covenant loyalty’. See Kittel, Friedrich & Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1964), entry under ‘mercy’.

## **The Jealousy Motif as hermeneutical key to Paul's Soteriology in Romans**

The subtle weaving of the jealousy motif into Paul's line of argument in Romans 9-11 is allied with the revelation of the complementary divine attributes of justice (or righteousness) and mercy. This is not without echoes and reverberations throughout the Letter. God's great plan of salvation – 'promised long ago through the prophets in the Scriptures' is announced in the Prologue (1:1-2). It involves a call to 'Jews first but Greeks as well' (1:16) to the 'obedience of faith', (ὕπακοήν πίστεως). The Gospel is the power of God, saving all who have faith. This faith reveals the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ) to Gentile and Jew alike, because both, apart from Christ, are under the dominion of sin (1:18-3:20). God's righteousness, formerly revealed through Torah, has now been revealed 'apart from the Law' (3:21). Abraham, because he believed God, is father of all believers, foretold to be 'father of many nations' with descendants 'as many as the stars' (4:18). God's graciousness in opening a door to Gentiles has been foretold by the prophets. This theme is re-introduced in 9:6-7: Not all who can boast of physical descent from Abraham (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ) are truly the children of Abraham - children of the promise and children of God (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ).

Through Adam sin entered the world (5:12). Through Jesus Christ, grace outweighed the sin (5:16): "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:21). This is at the heart of Pauline soteriology. "By bringing the theme of Israel 'provoked to jealousy' Paul gives the first indication of a resolution to the problem of Israel's failure to believe. The unveiling of that resolution awaits the climax of

Paul's exposition in Chapter 11 (11:11, 14, 26)"<sup>23</sup>The jealousy motif in 9-11 works as a demonstration of the principle that God works in mysterious ways to effect the salvation of those God chooses. God will even take the circuitous route of working through human obstinacy and disobedience to bring people to the obedience of faith (ὕπακοήν πίστεως). In so doing God reveals the other side of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. It is called mercy or compassion. It is dispensed to those 'to whom God wants to reveal the riches of his glory' (9:23), those to whom God 'wants to show mercy' - the people 'God had prepared for this glory long ago' (9:24). In 8:28 this message is anticipated: "God makes all things work together for good...for those called according to his purpose".

A strong and final reminder of the organic nature of Paul's soteriology in Romans comes towards the end of the Letter, immediately before the Epilogue, where mercy is mentioned once again, this time in relation to hope. According to Paul, the reason for Christ's service 'of the circumcision' (διάκονον περιτομῆς) was so that God could carry out the promises made to the patriarchs, and that Gentiles would 'give glory to God for his mercy' (15:9). Once again, Gentile and Jew are linked in the divine purposes. The salvation of each is due to an act of God's mercy. Truly in Romans, as in the Hebrew hendiadys and the psalmist's poetry, "Justice and mercy have met" (Ps 85:10-12). God's loving kindness is the reverse side of God's righteousness. The jealousy motif in 9-11 is portrayed as instrumental in diminishing the distance between them, in collapsing the horizons which made them seem incompatible.

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<sup>23</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Theology of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Eerdmans, 1998), 517.



Little wonder that Paul ends this section of Romans with a hymn to God's mercy and wisdom (11:33-36)!

## **Conclusion**

It may seem that the jealousy motif is a rather insignificant, if puzzling ingredient in Paul's line of argument in Romans 9-11. This brief study has shown it to be pivotal in that line of argument and in Paul's theology of salvation in Romans. Occupying, as it does, only three short verses (10:19; 11:11, 14), it cannot lay claim to be the only hermeneutical key to Paul's soteriology in that Letter, but it is certainly an important one that deserves further attention. It touches into the great biblical themes of election, grace, justice and mercy, and it brings into sharp relief the vexed question (for Paul) of the salvation of a section of his own people, Israel.<sup>24</sup> This is really a question about God, and a question about God's righteousness, which Paul has elaborated so meticulously in Romans 1-8. God is the chief actor in the drama, and God has a plan more mysterious and pervasive than humans can guess for the salvation of all humankind. Jealousy is not outside the scope of that plan. Neither is 'hardening', 'stumbling', disobedience and obstinacy! Where sin and grace are on the scales of Justice, grace will outweigh in the cause of Mercy. The jealousy motif provides a unique insight into Paul's own understanding of his ministry to Gentile and Jew, and into his perceived alignment with the divine plan in that twofold

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<sup>24</sup> There are eleven references to Israel (Ἰσραήλ) in Romans. The term Ἰουδαίος occurs in 9:24 and 10:12, whereas elsewhere in Romans it is used to refer to the people of Israel. James Aageson points out that "The different contexts in which Paul uses the terms Ἰσραήλ and Ἰουδαίος reinforces the assertion that Ἰσραήλ is a theological concept with social and historical implications." Aageson, *Ibid.*, 68, Note 17.

ministry. As a rather ambivalent motif (with positive and negative associations) it can hold in theological tension perennial questions around divine election, promise and call in Romans, as well as Paul's efforts (some seemingly contorted) to clarify the relations between death and sin, freedom and law, grace and glory. It allows Paul, as a Jew, to straddle all divides – between ethnic Israel and the Israel of God, believing Israel and 'hardened' Israel, remnant Israel and 'all Israel' - and to reveal a God whose plan for Gentile and Jew is so expansive that it baffles human understanding. God is not only the God of Jacob but also the God of Esau and Ishmael and of the seeming reject.<sup>25</sup> God's plan for the salvation of humankind is mind-boggling because it is both infinitely just and infinitely merciful. The jealousy motif in Romans 9-11 opens a window on that mysterious plan.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "The God of Esau is known to be the God of Jacob. There is no road to the knowledge of God which does not run along the precipitous edge of this contradiction." (Karl Barth).

<sup>26</sup> The material in this Appendix is original work, first presented by me at the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, King's College, London, July 4-8, 2011. It has not been published nor presented publicly by any other means, before or since then.

