EXPOSITION OF ROMANS
B 342

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Main Things I Learned About Biblical Research

I graduated in 1995 with a 4.0 G.P.A., the John F. Walvoord Award in Eschatology, and a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Dallas Theological Seminary. My dissertation title was “The Johannine Concept of the Overcomer.” The main works God has helped me get published since graduation include six journal articles in Bibliotheca Sacra\(^1\) and two periodical articles in Proclaim.\(^2\) I have also signed a contract with Kregel Publications to publish a 19 volumes set entitled Kregel Q & A Commentary on the New Testament. Below are things that I have learned about biblical research.

**Motive of Biblical Research**

The motive of our study sets the tone, guides the process, and determines the outcome of our study. So it is important for us to enter the post-graduate program with a worthy motive—a consuming aspiration to study for the interest of His cause instead of the interest of our own cause.

At the beginning of my program, we were told that all teaching positions in the United States were taken, and that we should look for teaching opportunities overseas upon graduation. Some students were disappointed as a result. During the course of my studies, I often heard fellow students express their desire to do anything they could to just get the diploma and to get out of school. I even knew some classmates who sacrificed the quality of their study in order to fulfill that desire. These reflect some unworthy motives behind the study that we should not have.

Biblical research is not primarily for a diploma or a better job opportunity. Rather, it is for a greater usefulness and higher service to God. Indeed, God is the wisest Manager. He does not grant an opportunity simply on the basis of a diploma. Only those who have an intense desire to study for God, and have become more useful to Him through patient study will be granted an opportunity and be used by Him in a greater way. And only research that results in a greater usefulness to God will be truly meaningful.

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Presuppositions of Biblical Research

1. Biblical research for a doctorate presupposes an intellectual capacity to do doctoral works, a sound methodology of study, a keen knowledge of major bibliographies, an ability to interact with Hebrew, Greek, German, French and Latin literature, as well as an access to a library facility which actively participates in an effective inter-library loan system.

2. Biblical research does not deal only with secondary sources or synthesize existing knowledge. Rather, it deals with primary sources and seeks to make a unique contribution to scholarship.

3. Biblical research does not merely take place in one’s private study, but also requires an academic environment, as well as the guidance and critique of scholars with expertise in one’s field of study.

An awareness of these presuppositions reminds us to take the required courses seriously, and to work hard with foreign languages, learn research strategies, make friends with the reference librarian, get acquainted with bibliographic resources and computerized data-bases, know how to expedite and simplify bibliographic research, think critically, logically and creatively, become familiar with form and style for the dissertation, upgrade our writing ability to a dissertation level, interact with one’s classmates, and pay close attention to the comments of mentors.

The better we prepare ourselves for biblical research at the outset, the fewer obstacles we shall encounter in the process of research, and a better dissertation will result at the end.

Aims of Biblical Research

1. One aim of biblical research is to discover, select and discuss relevant subjects that require further investigation, scholarly communication and publication.

2. Another aim of biblical research is to introduce elements of authenticity by incorporating original findings and insights into the content of our works.

3. Still another aim of biblical research is to defend the inerrant Word of God and to sharpen our mental, writing, and oral skills.

4. The ultimate aim of biblical research is to help others see not only the intended meaning, but also the beauty, glory, honor, riches, importance, greatness, and relevancy of God’s Word. This is so that God’s Word can be respected, treasured and observed by God’s people and in turn, God’s people can know God more deeply through His Word.

A realization of these aims prevents us from wasting time on topics and data that are irrelevant, abstract and speculative. It leads us to focus our attention on research
projects and factors that honor God’s Word, contribute to current biblical scholarship and have edificational values.

Humility and Biblical Research

Arrogance is a sign of unhealthy scholarship. Healthy scholarship always leads to humility. In the process of our research we will discover how much we do not know. We will also discover that God’s Word is profound, and beyond our ability to fully comprehend and communicate. These discoveries, along with the fact that God resists the proud, keep us humble and cause us to constantly seek God’s help for our study.

Prayer and Biblical Research

Prayer is recognition that we need God and depend on God. It is a means through which we obtain heavenly resources to accomplish anything for God’s glory, such as biblical research.

Throughout my doctoral program, I spent at least two hours daily talking to God behind a closed door. I interceded for my friends and relatives, confessed any sin that hindered my relationship with God, shared with Him the difficulties I faced, expressed my desire to glorify Him through study, acknowledged that without Him I could do nothing, asked Him for His comforting assurance, and thanked Him each time when He answered my prayer. I also governed my life in the fear of God, refraining my eyes, thought and heart from entertaining things that were inconsistent with His holiness.

God is faithful and gracious. He honors those who honor Him. He never failed me, but always counseled, guided and helped me. Many problems were resolved, burdens lifted up, pressure removed, and insights gained, and I became more productive, as a result of prayers.

Diligence and Biblical Research

He who pursues biblical research must be diligent for at least four reasons: 1) the Lord for whom he studies deserves his best; 2) the truth he investigates has infinite value; 3) nothing good comes easily; 4) the nature of doctoral work requires it.

For these reasons, I spent seven and a half years in the doctoral program, analyzing every book of the Bible, thinking through many problem passages in the Scriptures, and working tirelessly on critiques and research papers. I often studied until the last minute, until very late at night, until the birds are singing in the morning (or through the night, until morning arrived). The desire to handle God’s Word more adequately

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3After completing my oral examination in December 17 1993, I went back to my dorm to thank God for the result. When I returned to the campus to submit my research project, Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost and his secretary already had gone home for the Christmas break. (They went home earlier that day.) I did not know what to do except to ask God for help. God answered my prayer by sending Dr. Pentecost back to his office. He walked into Stearns Hall the moment I finished my prayer, said Amen, and opened my eyes. I asked Dr. Pentecost what made him come back. He said he just felt led to do that.
urged me to press on. The increase of the knowledge of God's Word cheered me up. I also felt grateful that I could get credits for studying the Scriptures.

Hard work done for God's sake pays off. Those who study diligently finish well with their final exams, get their dissertations accepted, and become more competent for His services.

Subject Approval and Biblical Research

Where are the research subjects? They are not in us or in the books, but in the biblical text. We have to find them, appropriate them, and make them our own.

What subject proposals will normally gain approval? A subject proposal that will gain approval contains two main elements: 1) A viewpoint (thesis) we try to prove. 2) An explanation of how this will be an original contribution to knowledge.

Thus in choosing a subject, it is helpful for us to ask the following questions:

a. Is there a deficiency in existing journal literature, theses, and dissertations on the subject?

b. Is there any tendency toward generality, brevity, ambiguity in phrasology, fuzziness, and inconsistency in books, commentaries, periodicals, and sermons on the subject?

c. Is there any possible wrong emphasis about certain related doctrines?

d. Are there views about the subject that do not seem to account adequately for the biblical testimony?

e. Will my research be able to present an alternative to the wrong ways of understanding the subject?

f. Will my research provide adequate answers to problems in the literature about the subject?

g. Will the size of my research be small enough to handle but large enough to meet the dissertation requirements?

h. Will my research uphold the Scripture, glorify God, and edify future readers?

If our answers to these questions are positive, then the subject under consideration is a good one. The remaining task is to gain subject approval from the supervisor, the library consultant, and the doctoral studies committee, as well as to plan our research strategy.
Writing the dissertation is a bear of a task. We must work hard on the subject—think and rethink, read and reread, write and rewrite, criticize ourselves and interact with others—employing new insights from historical, cultural, literary, lexical, grammatical, and contextual factors to unlock textual clues, determine the intended meaning of biblical authors, and eliminate wrong interpretations of Scriptures. Meanwhile we must be prepared to meet the expectations of our readers, comply with their requirements, be opened to their suggestions, and respond respectfully to their criticisms. The task of research is not yet done until we pass the oral defense and gain approval of our work.

Summary

Biblical research, then, requires a right motive, an adequate preparation, some definite aims, a humble heart, a habit of prayer and holy lifestyle, a diligent spirit, a worthy subject, and a tireless effort to discuss, refine and complete the subject. These are things that I have learned about biblical research.

Yes, the way to greater usefulness is long, filled with jolts and humps, and the difficulties in finding some materials are insurmountable. Yet nothing is too difficult for God or impossible with Him. Those who walk closely with God and constantly avail themselves of His resource will find help in time of need, experience His sufficiency, and come out of the research victoriously.

The completion of our research is an achievement, but it is not an end of the trip. Instead, it is the first step of a thousand miles, the beginning of a new journey. Now that we have a greater responsibility to contribute to His church, defend His faith and bear much fruit for His glory, we must handle it with great care.
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE
ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

Romans is the longest of Paul’s epistles with _____ words. This epistle, by popular consent, is the greatest of Paul’s writings. William Tyndale and Martin Luther referred to it as the “most excellent part” and “the chief book of the New Testament.” F. Godet described it as “the Cathedral of the Christian faith.” Griffith Thomas said, “It is a theological education in itself.” B. H. Carroll stated that “It is the most fundamental, vital, logical, profound, and systematic discussion of the whole plan of salvation in all the literature of the world.”

Some well-known passages in Romans are 1:16; 3:10; 3:23; 4:3; 5:1; 5:8; 6:23; 7:24-25; 8:1; 8:28; 10:9; 12:1; 12:2; 12:21; and some basic Christian doctrines in the epistle include:

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>The title of this epistle comes from its original recipients, the members of the church in Rome.</td>
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**Authorship**

The author identifies himself as Paul (1:1) and there are details in the letter verifying this. The writer is of the tribe of Benjamin (11:1; cf. Phil. 3:5), and refers to himself as an apostle to the Gentiles (11:13; 15:16-19, a fact which agrees with Paul’s commission to be the spokesman of God to the Gentiles, cf. Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:16; 2:7-10; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 4:17).

Other details that support Paul's authorship are his relation to Priscilla and Aquila

In addition, the vocabulary, style, logic, and theological development of the book are consistent with Paul's earlier writings (e.g., Rom. 3:20-22 and Gal. 2:16; Rom. 12:1 and 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 15:25-28 and 2 Cor. 8--9).

Historical evidence is also strong for Pauline authorship. The witness of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Polycarp, Marcion, the Muratorian Canon, the old Latin and Syriac versions, etc., all ascribe the authorship to Paul. Even the modern critics accept the authorship of Paul for this epistle.

The problem arises not with the authorship but with the unity and destiny of the epistle. Some Latin manuscripts omit a portion of the book (5:1--16:24). The closing doxology (16:25-27) is placed at the end of chapter 14 in some manuscripts. These variations have led some critics to conclude that the last two chapters were not originally part of the epistle, or that Paul issued it in two editions.

However, most scholars believe that chapter 15 fits in logically with the rest of the epistle and therefore, should be considered part of the epistle. In fact, the few Latin texts, which omit a portion, are far outweighed by the major Greek manuscripts which include all of Romans and support the unity of the letter (cf. F. F. Bruce, Romans, 23-30).

The problem why some Latin manuscripts omit a portion of the book (15:1--16:24) is also explainable. Origen, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, declares that the heretic Marcion (A.D. 138-150) cut away all of Romans from 14:23 to the end. Followers of Marcion would produce copies that stop at this point.

There is more debate over chapter 16 because Paul greets by name 26 people in a church he has never visited. Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in 16:3-5, but Acts 18:18-19 declares that Paul left them in Ephesus. Epaenetus is mentioned in 16:5, where he is referred to as the first fruits of Asia. These factors have led some to conclude that chapter 16 was a separate letter, perhaps written to Ephesus, that was appended to this epistle.

But the factors do not demand this conclusion. It is true that Priscilla and Aquila were last seen settled in Ephesus (Acts 18:19, 26), but the couple had previously lived in Italy (Acts 18:2) and had left only because of an imperial decree. Their return to Rome when circumstances permitted is reasonable.

Further, the fact that Epaenetus was the first convert of Asia Minor does not prove that he lived there all of his life.

Finally, the list of greetings in chapter 16 is in harmony with Paul's style. In fact,
it is one of Paul's consistent practices that he did not send greetings by name to individuals in places where he personally had ministered (cf. 1 and 2 Cor.; 1 and 2 Thess.; Phil.; Eph., and Gal.). But in Romans and Colossians (another church Paul had never visited) he does greet persons by name. In these places where he had not been, Paul would include everyone he knew in order to establish rapport. Or if he made a selection, the purpose would be evident, so that no one would feel slighted. There is, therefore, no substantial ground for denying the unity of the book.

**Date and Place of Writing**

The date and place may be figured by a close comparison of the statements in Romans with statements in Acts so that a chain of circumstances is formed for the chronology of Paul's life. The epistles to the Corinthians also fit into the sequence. At the time he wrote to the Corinthians, Paul had not yet collected the offering from Macedonia and Achaia, but was planning to come to them immediately (1 Cor. 16:1-9; 2 Cor. 9:1-5). Paul then visited Macedonia and Achaia and stayed in Corinth for three months (Acts 20:1-3) before traveling to Jerusalem (Acts 20:7, 16). In Romans 15:22-33 Paul reveals that he is about to sail to Palestine, bringing with him the contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem. After that he hopes to be free to visit Rome, and afterwards Spain. These chronological notes point to the close of the third missionary journey and the last visit to Jerusalem about the spring of 57 A.D. from Corinth.

The setting of springtime is shown by the fact that navigation was possible and, though compelled to take the land route to Jerusalem through Macedonia, he arrived at the destination before the Passover (Acts 20:6). Romans 16:23 is evidence that he wrote from Corinth at this time. The reference to Gaius seems to place him in Corinth, possible as a guest of Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14). Romans 16:1 also suggests Corinth. Paul commends Phoebe of Cenchrea, and Cenchrea was the harbor of Corinth, seven miles away.

**Destination**

*The Recipients.* Paul wrote the epistle to “all who are in Rome” (1:7), which may indicate the whole Christian population of several churches (cf. 16:5, 10, 11, 14, 15) rather than one church. The church at Rome included both Jews and Gentiles. The presence of Jewish readers is seen by the apostle's frequent addresses to them throughout the epistle (2:1–3:8; 4:1, 12; 7:1; chs. 9-11; 15:9-12; 16:3-4), by his many allusions to the Old Testament and the history of the Jewish nation (3:31; 4:1; 6:1–7:6; chs. 9-11, etc.) as well as by the relationship of Aquila, Andronicus, Herodion and Junias to the city (Acts 18:2; Rom. 16:7, 11; cf. the evidence in F. F. Bruce, Romans, 13, that there was a Jewish community in Rome as early as the second century B.C.).

The majority of the readers, however, are Gentile converts. Paul numbers them among the Gentile church (1:5-6), includes them among the Gentiles to whom he is obligated to preach (1:13), and specifically addresses them as Gentiles (11:11-13, 17-31; 15:14-16). The fact that in chapter 16 over one-half of the names are either Greek or Roman also suggests the predominance of Gentile readers. Besides, Paul devotes much
of his argument in Romans to the relationship of Gentiles to the promises made to Israel.

*The Founding of a Church at Rome.* The founding of the church in Rome is uncertain. Several suggestions have been advanced as to its possible origin.

A. First is the view that Peter founded it. The Roman Catholic Church claims that Peter traveled and stayed in Rome for 25 years, and thus founded the church there. The problem is that Peter was in Jerusalem as late as A.D. 49 (Acts 15). It is also evident that Peter was not in Rome at the time of the epistle because Paul expressed no greeting to him, a grievous error if Peter indeed were there.

A comparison of statements in the early church fathers (Eusebius, *Hist. Ecces.*, 2:15) with the New Testament evidence (1 Pet. 5:13) further indicates that Peter did not reach Rome until around A.D. 63, several years after Romans was written.

In addition, there is nothing in the epistle, which indicates that Peter had anything to do with the establishment of the church in Rome. In fact, Paul could hardly have intended to establish the Romans by way of his presence (1:11) if Peter had founded the church, for it was his policy not to build upon another's foundation (15:20). In light of these evidence, the Roman Catholic view is to be rejected.

B. Next is the view that proselytes of Acts 2:10 went back and founded the church (cf. "visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes," *RSV*). This is a possibility. But there are still several objections against this view.

1. There was not sufficient time to study and learn enough to found a church. (Answer: Why not enough time? It was quite a while, 24 to 27 years, dating from A.D. 30 or 33—A.D. 57).

2. This view gives no explanation of Paul knowing many names of persons dwelling in Rome. (Answer: Paul could learn names in other ways.)

3. Whereas Luke describes the spread of the Gospel to Antioch by a spontaneous movement led by laymen, he says nothing of such a movement from Jerusalem to Rome.

C. Third is a view that converts of Paul moved to Rome and founded the church. Briefly, the argument for this view can be summarized as follows. Rome was to the world of that day as the heart is to the body, the center of vital circulation.

Also, never in previous history had there been such freedom of movement as was possible during the rise of the Roman Empire. Commerce, roads and travel pulled the world together as it had never been before. The common tie was the Greek language in

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*According to Ambrosiaster, a church father who lived in the fourth century, an apostle did not found the church in Rome. A group of Christians did (W. Sanday and A. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, xxv).*
commercial dealings. Many migrated to Rome from various parts of the vast empire. For example, Aquila and Priscilla went from Ephesus to Rome, then to Corinth before moving back to Ephesus. They traveled for business and economic purposes.

The suggestion is that when the converts of Paul had been trained and had traveled to Rome, they founded a church. In Acts 28 when Paul gave greetings to believers in Rome, though they had never seen him, they looked to him as their spiritual father. Also, the long list of names in Romans 16 indicates that many of Paul's acquaintances were now in Rome. Among his acquaintances are the "households" of Aristobulus and Narcissus and "the church" in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. As a whole, this view has the advantage of being consistent with Paul's policy of not building upon the foundation of another (15:20) and the fact that Paul never wrote to any church that was not part of his missionary outreach.

The City of Rome. The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C. on the Tiber river. When Paul wrote Romans, the population is estimated to have been between one and four million people. The quality of life in the city depended upon the status and wealth of an individual. Alongside the very wealthy, slaves toiled in manufacturing and trade. Those who were free citizens despised the degradation of manual labor. A large Jewish population resided in the city as a result of Pompey's taking of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. and his relocation of many Jews to Rome. In the early period of Nero's reign (A.D. 54-68) peace and prosperity characterized the city. The major religion was polytheism, but decaying confidence in it gave the Gospel a choice opportunity to bear fruit.

Occasion

The epistle appears to have been occasioned by Paul's interest in the church at Rome and his plan to visit it in the near future (15:23-24). Paul had finished his labors in the eastern provinces (15:23) and was returning to Jerusalem to deliver the gift collected in Macedonia and Achaia (15:25-26). He anticipated a journey west as far as Spain after this business was taken care of (15:24; Acts 19:21). Having heard of the impending visit of Phoebe to Rome, Paul decided to take the opportunity to communicate with the Romans, inform them of his plans and prepare them for his coming.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the letter is __________ (1:16-17). Paul does this by showing man's need of righteousness (1:18--3:20), God's provision in Christ (3:21-31), the role of faith in obtaining this righteousness (4:1--5:21) and the provision for a life of righteousness (6:1--8:39). He also explains the relationship of Gentiles to Jewish promises (chs. 9--11) and gives practical exhortations for individuals and the church in view of God's revealed righteousness (chs. 12--16).

The epistle seems to have several subordinate purposes: One of them is __________ (1:16-18; 16:17-20).
As indicated in the Book of Acts, Paul was constantly followed by false teachers and troublemakers who would surely attempt to interfere in Rome, given time. The apostle's thorough exposition of the Gospel would prevent doctrinal error from taking hold.

Another is _________. The common problems of all the early churches were dangers to the Roman church as well. These difficulties included internal conflicts, mainly between Jewish and Gentile believers. Paul gave this potential problem attention in chapters 14–15.

Still another is _________. Paul evidently hoped that Rome would become a base of operations and support for his pioneer missionary work in Spain and the western portions of the empire that he had not yet evangelized (15:22-24). His full exposition of the gospel in this letter would have provided a solid foundation for their participation in this mission.

Theme

Paul's theme is _________. (1:15-17; 3:10, 21-26; 5:12-21, etc.). This theme is developed through the entire epistle as is demonstrated in the synthetic chart below.

|----------------|--------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|

Distinctive Features of Romans

A. _____________________________

B. _____________________________

Presuppositions on which Paul’s Reasoning in Romans Rest

A. _____________________________
This is a very different view of history from what evolutionists and humanists take. Man has lost his scepter because he rebelled against God’s scepter.

Two other individuals were specially significant in history for Paul as we see in Romans: Abraham and Jesus Christ. God called Abraham to be a channel of blessing to the world. Christ is the greatest blessing. Through Him people and creation can experience restoration to God’s original intention for them.

Some of the Lessons of Romans

A. 

B. 

C. 

The Christian’s Threefold Enemy

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<th>Problem</th>
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<td>The world (1 John 2:15-17):</td>
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<td>Lust of the flesh</td>
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<td>Lust of the eyes</td>
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<td>Pride of life</td>
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<td>The flesh (Rom. 7:18-24)</td>
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<td>The devil (1 Pet. 5:8)</td>
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Geography of Rome (see map)

**ARGUMENT**

In the introduction to the epistle (1:1-17) Paul first establishes his apostolic authority and separation to the task of preaching the Gospel (1:1). The Gospel he preaches was promised in the Old Testament and revealed in Jesus Christ (1:2-4). Paul then expresses his desire to visit the Romans for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to
them (1:9-11, 15). He is not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation, available on a basis of faith to the Jews first and also to the Greek (1:16). The Gospel is powerful because in it a righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith (1:17).

Having set forth his theme, Paul continues straight into the need of righteousness as related to the Gospel (1:18-3:20). God has revealed His righteousness because there is a universal need that condemns all men before God. First, the gentile world is condemned (1:18-32). God's wrath is revealed against all men because all men have the knowledge of God in creation, but they have corrupted and perverted that knowledge. They have turned from Him and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. As a result men are given over to impure lusts, degrading passions and deprived minds (1:24-32).

The Jews are likewise condemned (2:1-3:8), for though they stand in judgment over others, they practice the same things (2:1). The principles of God's judgment (2:1-16) are according to truth (2:2-5) and according to works (2:6-16). On the one hand, God will render glory, honor and immortality to those who continue in well-doing. By contrast, God will render His rightful indignation and wrath upon those who are selfishly ambitious. Jews hold no favor over Gentiles before God when it comes to judgment, because there is no partiality with God (2:11). Since the Jews, who have the law, do the same things as the Gentiles, they lack the righteousness of God, also (2:17-29). Before God, what really counts is not the physical mark of circumcision, but the inner affirmation of the spirit (2:28-29).

The objection is then anticipated (3:1-8) about what advantage the Jew has if God judges Jews as He does Gentiles. The answer is that the Jews have the Scriptures with the divine promises entrusted them (3:2), and their unbelief does not annul God's faithfulness to His promises (3:3-4).

The conclusion of this section is that the whole world is condemned before God (3:9-20). This charge is supported from the Old Testament Scriptures which point to man's sinful character, speech, and deeds (3:1-18; cf. Ps. 5:9; 59:7-9; 140:3; Isa. 59:7-9). The Jews especially are guilty as those who had the revelation of the law (3:19-20), for the law could not bring justification as they might think, but only the knowledge of sin.

Having expressed the need for God's righteousness, Paul now explains how it is revealed apart from the law. He explains the imputation of righteousness through justification (3:21-5:21). First, he speaks of the nature of justification through faith (3:21-31). It is to all who believe in the work of Christ as a propitiation for sin (3:21-26) and not through keeping the law (3:27-31). God imputes His righteousness freely because this excludes boasting and allows Gentiles to be justified as well. Faith does not nullify the law, but actually establishes it (i.e. faith recognizes the law's intended purpose of exposing the need for righteousness).

The principle of imputing righteousness to man through faith apart from keeping
the law is not something new in God's economy. It is amply illustrated in the Old Testament, particularly in the life of Abraham (4:1-25). Abraham was justified apart from works (4:1-8) as proved by Genesis 15:6 (4:3). The nature of works and grace makes them mutually exclusive (4:4-5). David agrees with this conclusion as is seen in the quote from Psalm 32:1-2 (4:7-8).

Furthermore, Abraham was justified apart from circumcision (4:9-12) since he was declared righteous (14 years) before his circumcision (cf. Gen. 15:6; 17:10). In fact the rite of circumcision was only to be, for Abraham, a sign, a seal, or a token of the faith he already had (4:11). This shows that circumcision does not guarantee the blessings of all the Abrahamic promises, for Abraham is "the father of all those who believe" (4:11).

Abraham is the example for all who believe because he so received God's promise (4:13-25). The promise came to Abraham before the law and thus apart from the law. Therefore it is of faith according to God's grace, which allows Jews under the law, as well as men from all nations, to become children of Abraham. The example of Abraham's faith in God's promise is given for the benefit of those in the church age so they might also believe in Christ and receive the righteousness of God.

Having explained how God's righteousness is imputed, Paul lists the benefits of justification through faith (5:1-11). First, all who are justified enjoy peace with God (5:1). Not only this, they also exalt in the hope of God's glory (5:2). This hope enables the believers to rejoice in time of tribulation. Further, believers have a strong assurance of God's love by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the fact that Christ died for people when they were sinners (5:5-8). In addition, believers can be assured of being spared from the wrath of God at the time of the Lord's judgment (5:9-10). Paul's reasoning is that if God so loved sinners that Christ died for them, then how much more will He save them from wrath after they are justified.

Paul goes on to make a clarification of the universal provision of righteousness in Christ. To do this, he makes an analogy between the justification through faith and the imputation of sin in Adam (5:12-21). Sin was imputed through the one man, Adam, because he represented mankind. But Adam was a "type" of Christ, who also represented mankind. Christ's gift to man is the provision of righteousness resulting in life. Grace, then, is the reigning principle for those who have eternal life, just as sin reigns over men who are in death. Paul has shown that God has provided all mankind with righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Adam is the common father of Jew and Gentile alike, and correspondingly, Christ has provided God's righteousness to both Jew and Gentile apart from the Jewish law.

In the next section Paul speaks of the impartation of God's righteousness (6:1-8:39). He begins by noting the believer's new relationship to sin (6:1-23). The believer is to realize his death to the principle of sin (6:1-14). Because sin brought the provision of grace, the believer must not suppose that he can continue in it. Rather, the believer has identified with Christ in His death through the Spirit's baptism into Christ, and is freed from sin through this death. In like manner, the believer is identified with Christ in
resurrection life. He should then consider himself "dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:11) and no longer under the domain of sin. The believer, therefore, should also exhibit his death to the practice of sin (6:15-23) by voluntary submission to righteousness. In the domain of sin the deadness of Adam in manifested, but when the believer submits to God's righteousness, the life of Christ is manifested (6:23).

Next, Paul explains the believer's new relationship to the law (7:1-25). Just as the believer is dead to sin he is also dead to the law (7:1-6). The illustration from marriage shows how death breaks a contract and its obligation. The believer has died to the law in Christ and is now "married" to Him in new life. The law is then useless in the believer's new life in that it is not able to deliver from sin (7:7-25). This does not mean that the law is itself evil, for sin is exposed by the use of the law (7:7-13). However, once sin is exposed, the law cannot deliver from it (7:14-25). To illustrate this, Paul uses himself as an example. He confesses his defeat under the principle of the law because of indwelling sin and recognizes the struggle between his body of sin and the law of God. He realizes there is no victory in and of himself, but only through Jesus Christ.

The problem of struggle in the believer leads Paul to explain the believer's new relationship to the Spirit (8:1-39). The indwelling Spirit is the means of overpowering the evil flesh (8:1-11). The Spirit of life in Christ frees the believer from condemnation, sin and death. Since the law could never do this, God sent His Son to condemn sin and death and provided the power of the Spirit to fulfill the requirements of the law. There are two mindsets in life: the carnal, and that of the Spirit. Those who belong to Christ have the Spirit in them to give the power of life for righteousness.

The indwelling Spirit assures the believer of his sonship with God (8:12-17) which obligates him to live after the Spirit. Sonship also means believers are joint heirs with Christ, and as such they will suffer and be glorified with Christ. This future glory is also assured by the indwelling Spirit (8:18-30). It is the expectation of all creation, and is the believer's present hope according to the first fruits of the indwelling Spirit who also "makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (8:27). The will of God is for those He foreknew to be glorified. Paul summarizes the Spirit's assuring ministry by proclaiming the certainty of final victory (8:31-39). The believer is secure in the grace of God through the intercession of the Son at the right hand of God. God's love in Christ toward the believer is a power that cannot be severed by any physical or spiritual reality.

Now that Paul has declared the righteousness of God that is freely bestowed on all who believe apart from the law, both Jews and Gentiles, he anticipates some questions about the relationship of saved Gentiles to the covenant promises made to the Jews. It would be obvious to the Roman Christians that the Gospel has been bearing fruit among the Gentiles, as they themselves are proof. This would raise questions about whether God has then set aside the Jews, and what He intends to do with them in His future program. The charge is anticipated that God has reneged on His promises. Paul therefore sets out to vindicate the righteousness of God that has been revealed in the Gospel (9:1-11:36).

Paul first argues that Israel's past rejection was in the sovereign will of God (9:1-
29). He begins by expressing his grief at Israel's rejection and by reaffirming Israel's strategic place in God's program (9:1-5). Their rejection is consistent with God's promise (9:6-13), because the promise was made not to all the physical seed of Abraham, but to those of the promise. According to God's sovereign election, Isaac and Jacob were chosen to be heirs of the promise. Furthermore, Israel's rejection is consistent with God's justice (9:14-29), for the prerogative to show mercy belongs to God alone. It is therefore impertinent to question God's sovereign will. God has designed the rejection of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles to reveal the riches of His glory, even as the Old Testament prophets predicted.

Paul then addresses Israel's contemporary situation and explains their present rejection of the Gospel (9:30–10:21). The nation failed to achieve God's righteousness because it sought to establish its own righteousness by the works of the law rather than faith (9:30-33). Thus the nation refused to accept God's righteousness in Christ (10:1-13) though it was near in the Gospel. The assurance is that whoever believes in Christ will be saved, whether Jew or Gentile. In spite of the Gospel preached to them, Israel heard and rejected it in fulfillment of the prophets' expectation (10:14-21).

Israel's present unbelief, however, does not mean that God has totally rejected the nation. Paul demonstrates this fact as he goes on to speak of Israel's future restoration (11:1-36). That Israel's rejection is not complete is illustrated by Paul's own salvation, the example from Elijah's day, and the present remnant chosen according to God's grace (11:1-10). The purpose of Israel's fall is to bring salvation to Gentiles (11:11-24), and to provoke Israel to jealousy so that they might return to the Lord (11:11). Though the Gentiles are grafted into the promises to Abraham and presently enjoy a privileged position, there is no room for boasting, for that position is only maintained by belief. Israel, too, may be grafted in again if they believe.

In fact, the national rejection of Israel will come to an end. When God's purpose with the Gentiles is accomplished (11:25-32), Israel will be restored and again experience the blessing of God. At that time the covenants and the promise of God will be fulfilled. The future restoration of Israel is certain because the Scriptures promise it, God cannot recall His promises, and God intends to show mercy to all men (11:32). Having thus vindicated God's righteousness and demonstrated His faithfulness, Paul breaks out in a glorious doxology (11:33-36). In it, he speaks of "the depth of His riches" and singles out His wisdom and knowledge.

Now Paul turns to more practical instruction, which applies the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel to the Christian life (12:1–15:13). The response of the believer to God's grace is to be manifested in all relationships. Toward God, the believer's response should be a total consecration (12:1-2). He is to present himself to God as a living sacrifice and not only that, he is to be transformed by the renewing of his mind. The result is that he will know the perfect will of God. Toward the church (12:13-16), the believer is to exercise his spiritual gift to the benefit of the body and to demonstrate love toward others. His love is to be genuine, without hypocrisy. He is to contribute to the needs of the saints, to practice hospitality, to empathize with those who
weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Toward the world (12:17-21) the believer is to live at peace with all men without taking vengeance into his own hand.

The divine righteousness in the believer is also to be applied in his subjection to the civil authority, which has been instituted by God (13:1-14). The believer’s subjection to the state will be evident by his payment of taxes, his respect for those in authority over him and his love for fellow citizens (13:1-10). The incentive to do so is the nearness of salvation’s climax (13:11-14).

The final area to which Paul applies righteousness is the believer’s responsibilities to weaker brothers (14:1–15:13). Evidently, the Romans had a real problem involving areas of conscience such as eating and observing certain days (14:2-6). Paul exhorts them not to judge and offend one another in respect to these things (14:1-13). Rather, love should keep them from violating the conscience of a weaker brother (14:14-23). They should all follow Christ’s example in accepting and pleasing one another instead of pleasing themselves, for Christ accepted both Jews and Gentiles in order to manifest His salvation (15:1-13).

Paul concludes his epistle with some personal concerns (15:14–16:27). He explains that the purpose for his writing included a reminder of his divine mission of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles (15:14-21). He then informs the Romans of his plan to visit them on the way to Spain (15:22-23). Paul also informs the Romans that he is now on his way to Jerusalem with aids for the saints and therefore requests their prayer (15:24-33). His final greetings (16:1-24) contain a commendation of Phoebe, greetings to friends, a warning about divisive people, and greetings from his companions. He ends with a benediction which reflects the theme of his letter (16:25-27): The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the revelation of God to all nations. This reminds us of the thematic introductory verses 1:16-17 which declares the Gospel is the power and revelation of the righteousness of God.

OUTLINE

I. Introduction (1:1–17)
   A. Paul’s Greeting (1:1–7)
      1. Paul’s calling as an apostle (1:1)
      2. Paul’s message as an apostle (1:2–4)
         a. His message is promised in the Old Testament (1:2)
         b. His message is revealed in Jesus Christ (1:3–4)
      3. Paul’s mission as an apostle (1:5–6)
      4. Paul’s greeting (1:7)
   B. Paul’s Interest in the Church at Rome (1:8–15)
      1. His prayer for them (1:8–12)
         a. His thanks (1:8)
         b. His intercession (1:9–12)
      2. His purpose in visiting them (1:13)
      3. His perspectives which includes them (1:14)
4. His preparedness to come to Rome (1:15)

C. Paul’s Theme of God’s Righteousness in the Gospel (1:16–17)
   1. He is unashamed of the Gospel (1:16a)
   2. His explanation (1:16b–17)

II. The Need of God’s Righteousness: Condemnation (1:18–3:20)
   A. The Condemnation of Gentiles (1:18–32)
      1. There has been a revelation by God (1:18–20)
         a. His anger against sin (1:18)
         b. His attribute (1:19–20)
            (1) Eternal power (1:19–20a)
            (2) Godhood (1:20b)
      2. There has been a rejection by men (1:21–23)
      3. There are results in God and men (1:24–32)
         a. God gives them over to impure lusts (1:24–25)
         b. God gives them over to degrading passions (1:26–27)
         c. God gives them over to depraved minds (1:28–32)
   B. The Condemnation of the Jews (2:1–3:8)
      1. God’s pronouncement of guilt (2:1)
      2. God’s principles of judgment (2:2–16)
         a. It is according to truth (2:2–5)
         b. It is according to works (2:6–16)
      3. God’s condemnation of Jews (2:17–3:8)
         a. The Jews’ lack of righteousness (2:17–29)
            (1) In spite of possession of the law (2:17–24)
               (a) The Jews’ privileges (2:17–20)
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            (2) In spite of circumcision (2:25–29)
               (a) The value of circumcision (2:25–27)
               (b) The value of character (2:28–29)
         b. The anticipation of the Jews’ objection (3:1–8)
            (1) The question of the Jew’s advantage (3:1–4)
               (a) The problem of advantage (3:1–2)
               (b) The problem of annulment (3:3–4)
            (2) The question of God’s justice (3:5–8)
               (a) The first argument (3:5–6)
               (b) The second argument (3:7–8)
   C. The Condemnation of the Whole World (3:9–20)
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         a. The sinfulness of man’s character (3:10–12)
         b. The sinfulness of man’s speech (3:13–14)
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   A. The Nature of Justification through Faith (3:21–31)
      1. It is through faith in Christ’s work (3:21–26)
a. It is appropriated by faith (3:21–23)  
b. It is accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice (3:24–26)  

2. It excludes merit from keeping the law (3:27–31)  
   b. Established through the law (3:29–31)  

B. The Illustration of Justification through Faith (4:1–25)  
   1. Abraham was justified apart from works (4:1–8)  
      a. The question of Abraham’s justification (4:1–3)  
         (1) The question (4:1–2)  
         (2) The record (4:3)  
      b. The contrast of works and faith (4:4–5)  
      c. The confirmation of David’s testimony (4:6–8)  
   2. Abraham was justified apart from circumcision (4:9–12)  
      a. The question (4:9)  
      b. The chronology (4:10–11a)  
      c. The purpose (4:11b–12)  
   3. Abraham received God’s promise through faith (4:13–25)  
      a. The promise came apart from the law (4:13–15)  
      b. The promise came through faith (4:16–25)  
         (1) The explanation (4:16–17)  
         (2) The illustration (4:18–22)  
         (3) The application (4:23–25)  

C. The Benefits of Justification through Faith (5:1–11)  
   1. Peace with God (5:1)  
   2. Access into the grace of God (5:2a)  
   3. Hope (5:2b–4)  
      a. Hope of the glory of God (5:2b)  
      b. Hope in the tribulation (5:3–4)  
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      a. The Holy Spirit’s testimony (5:5)  
      b. The death of Christ (5:6–8)  
   5. Salvation from God’s wrath (5:9–11)  

D. The Analogy of Justification through Faith (5:12–21)  
   1. The two representative heads of mankind (5:12–14)  
      a. The headship of Adam (5:12–14a)  
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   2. The difference between Adam and Christ (5:15–21)  
      a. A difference of effect (5:15–18)  
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IV. The Impartation of God’s Righteousness: Sanctification (6:1–8:39)  
A. The Believer’s Relationship to Sin (6:1–23)  
   1. The believer’s death to the principle of sin (6:1–14)  
      a. The reality of it (6:1–10)  
         (1) The question of continuing in sin (6:1–2)  
         (2) The position with Christ (6:3–10)  
            (a) As signified through baptism (6:3–4)
(b) As applied to the believer (6:5–10)

b. The exhortations from it (6:11–14)
   (1) Exhortation (6:11–13)
      (a) The reckoning of it (6:11–12)
      (b) The presenting (6:13)
   (2) Explanation (6:14)

2. The believer’s death to the practice of sin (6:15–23)
   a. The reality of it (6:15–18)
      (1) The question of continuing in sin (6:15–16)
      (2) The position as slaves of righteousness (6:17–18)
   b. The realization of it (6:19–23)
      (1) The exhortation (6:19)
      (2) The explanation (6:20–23)

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   1. The believer’s death to the law (7:1–6)
      a. The principle of the law’s dominion (7:1)
      b. The illustration from marriage (7:2–3)
      c. The application to the believer (7:4–6)
   2. The explanation of the role of the law (7:7–25)
      a. The law exposes sin (7:7–13)
      b. The law cannot deliver from sin (7:14–25)
         (1) The confession of defeat by sin (7:14–17)
         (2) The confession of indwelling sin (7:18–20)
         (3) The confession of conflict and victory (7:21–25)
            (a) The agonizing despair (7:21–24)
            (b) The amazing deliverance (7:25)

C. The Believer’s Relationship to the Spirit (8:1–39)
   1. The Spirit’s power over sinful flesh (8:1–11)
      a. The freedom from condemnation (8:1–2)
      b. The provision for deliverance (8:3–4)
      c. The means of deliverance (8:5–11)
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         (2) The way of the flesh explained (8:7–8)
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   2. The Spirit’s assurance of sonship (8:12–17)
      a. The obligation to live after the Spirit (8:12–14)
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      a. The prospect of future glory (8:18)
      b. The assurance of future glory (8:19–30)
         (1) From creation’s expectation (8:19–22)
         (2) From the believer’s present hope (8:23–25)
         (3) From the Spirit’s intercession (8:26–27)
         (4) From God’s eternal purpose (8:28–30)
   4. The Spirit’s assurance of final victory (8:31–39)
      a. The security of God’s grace in Christ (8:31–34)
V. The Vindication of God’s Righteousness: Sovereignty (9:1–11:36)

A. Israel’s Past Rejection (9:1–29)
   1. Paul’s sorrow over Israel’s unbelief (9:1–5)
      a. The expression of his sorrow (9:1–3)
      b. The cause of his sorrow (9:4–5)
   2. God’s sovereignty in Israel’s unbelief (9:6–29)
      a. Israel’s rejection consistent with God’s promise (9:6–13)
         (1) Proof from Abraham’s children (9:6–9)
         (2) Proof from Isaac’s children (9:10–13)
            (a) The setting (9:10–11)
            (b) The statement (9:12–13)
      b. Israel’s rejection consistent with God’s justice (9:14–29)
         (1) Declaration of God’s sovereign will (9:14–18)
            (a) The charge (9:14)
            (b) The answer from the case of Moses (9:15–16)
            (c) The answer from the case of Pharaoh (9:17–18)
         (2) Exercise of God’s sovereign power (9:19–29)
            (a) The charge (9:19)
            (b) The answer from the illustration of a potter (9:20–23)
            (c) The prophecy about Jew and Gentile (9:24–29)

B. Israel’s Present Rejection of the Gospel (9:30–10:21)
   1. Israel’s failure to achieve righteousness (9:30–33)
   2. Israel’s refusal of God’s righteousness (10:1–13)
      a. Their rejection of righteousness through Christ (10:1–4)
      b. The comparison of two ways of righteousness (10:5–8)
         (1) Righteousness through the law (10:5)
         (2) Righteousness through faith (10:6–8)
      c. The realization of righteousness through faith (10:9–10)
      d. The assurance of righteousness through faith (10:11–13)
   3. Israel’s rejection of the gospel (10:14–21)
      a. The proclamation of the gospel to Israel (10:14–15)
      b. The response of Israel to the gospel (10:16–21)
         (1) They heard the gospel (10:16–18)
         (2) They rejected the gospel (10:19–21)

C. Israel’s Future Restoration (11:1–36)
   1. The partial extent of Israel’s rejection (11:1–10)
      a. The continuation of a program with Israel (11:1–6)
         (1) Proof from Paul himself (11:1)
         (2) Proof from the remnant in Elijah’s day (11:2–4)
         (3) Proof from the present remnant (11:5–6)
b. The contrast of the remnant with the nation (11:7–10)

2. The purpose in Israel’s rejection (11:11–24)
   a. Salvation to the Gentiles (11:1–16)
   b. Caution to the Gentiles (11:17–24)
      (1) Warning against pride (11:17–20)
      (2) Consequences of pride (11:21–22)
      (3) Probability of Israel’s restoration (11:23–24)

3. The promise of Israel’s restoration (11:25–32)
   a. The salvation of Israel (11:25–26a)
   b. The support for Israel’s future restoration (11:26b–32)
      (1) The Scriptures predicted it (11:26b–27)
      (2) The calling of God is irrevocable (11:28–29)
      (3) The purpose of God is to show mercy to all (11:30–32)
   c. The song of praise (11:33–36)


A. In Relation to God (12:1–2)
   1. Presentation (12:1)
   2. Transformation (12:2a)
   3. Realization (12:2b)

B. In Relation to the Body of Christ (12:3–16)
   1. The estimation of gifts (12:3–8)
      a. The exhortation for self-evaluation (12:3–5)
      b. The exercise of the different gifts (12:6–8)
   2. The expression of goodness (12:9–16)
      a. The demonstration of love (12:9–13)
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C. In Relation to the World (12:17–21)
   1. Live at peace with all men (12:17–18)
   2. Do not take revenge (12:19–21)

D. In Relation to the State (13:1–14)
   1. The obligation to the state (13:1–7)
      a. Subjection to authorities (13:1–5)
         (1) The exhortation to subjection (13:1a)
         (2) The explanation of subjection (13:1b–5)
            (a) Government’s author is God (13:1b–2)
            (b) Government’s aim is good (13:3–5)
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   2. The obligation to citizens of the state (13:8–10)
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   3. The motivation (13:11–14)
      a. By an awakening (13:11–12a)
      b. By an arming (13:12b–14)

E. In Relation to the Weak Brother (14:1–15:13)
   1. Do not judge the weak brother (14:1–13)
      a. The prohibition against judging (14:1–3)
b. The accountability of each believer to God (14:4–12)
   (1) The principle of individual accountability (14:4–8)
   (2) The motivation of Christ's judgment seat (14:9–12)

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2. Do not violate the weaker brother's conscience (14:14–23)
   a. The conviction about what is clean (14:14)
   b. The application of this conviction (14:15–21)
      (1) Its misuse (14:15–18)
      (2) Its proper use (14:19–21)
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3. Follow Christ's example in accepting one another (15:1–13)
   a. Christ's example of not pleasing Himself (15:1–6)
      (1) The exhortation (15:1–2)
      (2) The pattern (15:3–4)
      (3) The prayer (15:5–6)
   b. Christ's example of ministry to all (15:7–12)
      (1) The nature of His ministry (15:7–8)
      (2) The purpose of His ministry (15:9–12)
   c. Paul's prayer for their welfare (15:13)

VII. Conclusion (15:14–16:27)
   A. Paul's Purpose in Writing (15:14–21)
      1. His confidence in the Romans (15:14)
      2. His mission to the Gentiles (15:15–21)
   B. Paul's Plans to Visit Rome (15:22–33)
      1. His desire to see the Romans (15:22–23)
      2. His anticipated journey to Spain (15:24)
      3. His anticipated journey to Jerusalem (15:25–27)
      4. His anticipated journey to Rome (15:28–29)
      5. His request for the Romans' prayer (15:30–33)
   C. Paul's Personal Greetings (16:1–27)
      1. His commendation of Phoebe (16:1–2)
      2. His greetings to friends at Rome (16:3–16)
      3. His warning about divisive people (16:17–20)
         a. The nature of the warning (16:17–18)
         b. The need for the warning (16:19–20)
      4. His greetings on behalf of his companions (16:21–24)
      5. His benediction (16:25–27)