



The Drama of Redemption: From New Creation to Consummation

A Theology of Paul's Letter to the Romans

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I. What is a Concise Summary of the Gospel of Paul's Epistle to the Romans?

The perfectly righteous God (Father) declares unrighteous sinners righteous in Christ (Son), upholding His own righteousness, and teaching justified sinners how to live righteously in reliance upon His Holy Spirit whether Jew or Gentile.

II. Theological Outline of Paul's Epistle to the Romans

Knowledge of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

1. The Gospel of Grace (Rom. 1:1-17)- Grace in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ is the Foundation of our Faith.
2. The Wrath of God (Rom. 1:18-32)- Because of the ingratitude, unbelief, and sinfulness of mankind, the wrath of God is being revealed against ungodliness and unrighteousness.
3. The Law of God (Rom. 2)- God is revealed in creation and conscience and has especially revealed His Holy Law so that all creatures might know his righteous requirements and live by them.

Knowledge of Self and Need of a Savior

4. The Depravity and Sinfulness of Man (Rom. 3:1-20)- All mankind has sinned against God and fall short of His glory. Both Jew and Gentiles are "under sin" (Rom. 3:9).

Justification by Faith Alone and Reconciliation

5. Justification by Faith (Rom. 3:21-4:25)- Salvation is the same in both covenants: God declares sinners righteous by faith alone in Christ alone because of His grace alone whether in the time of the promise (Old Testament) or in the time of fulfillment (New Testament; cf. Rom. 16:25-27).

6. Reconciliation, Life, and Peace with God in the Son (5:1-21)- God has brought reconciliation, life, and peace for ungodly sinners through the Person and Work of the Second Adam.

Repentance and the Forgiveness of Sins (Justification and Sanctification)

7. Dying to Sin, Living unto God in Christ (6:1-23)- Believers are united to Jesus Christ and have died and been raised with Him. The Christian life is one in which we are to die daily unto sin, and live as those raised with Christ Jesus to a new life.
8. Struggling Against Sin, Seeking Righteousness Alone in Christ (7:1-25)- The true Christian life is one of constant and agonizing struggle against sin though in Christ we already possess the victory by the Spirit.
9. Living by the Power of the Holy Spirit, Pt. 1 (Rom. 8)- The righteous requirements of the Law have been met by Jesus Christ and imputed to believers, and now believers live in dependence upon the Holy Spirit by faith (as Christ did in His estate of humiliation).
10. Living by the Power of the Holy Spirit, Pt. 2 (Rom. 8)- Sonship is a great privilege of our salvation in Christ. This is realized increasingly throughout our lives in prayer, hope, and confidence in Christ's victory.

God's Electing Mercies: Predestination and Promise

11. God's Sovereign Election (Rom. 9)- God possesses free will to love and choose whom He will.
12. True Israel (Rom. 10-11, various verses)- True and Faithful Believing Israel will be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Christian Life:

Denial of Self, Carrying the Cross, and Following Jesus

13. Living Sacrificially in the Church and before the World (Rom. 12)- True believers are to deny themselves and live lovingly sacrificial in the church and before the world.
14. Living Submissively in the Church and before the World (Rom. 13)- True believers are to deny themselves and live humbly submissive in the church and before the world.
15. Living Joyfully in the Church and before the World (Rom. 14-16, various verses)- True believers are to deny themselves and live joyfully until the return of Jesus Christ.

III. Concise, Logical-Thematic Outline of Romans

- Man can be right with God! -Herald/Proclamation of the Gospel (Rom. 1:1-17)
- Man is NOT right with God! -The Pronouncement of Wrath of God against Sinners (Rom. 1:18-3:20)
- Man can be declared right with God *by God through faith in Christ alone whether Jew or Gentile!* -Justification by Faith Alone (Rom. 3:21-5:21)
- Man can increasingly grow in righteousness in Christ in reliance upon His Spirit - Sanctification by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 6:1-8:39, 12:1-16:27)
- God has a special place in redemptive history for both Jews and Gentiles – God’s electing mercy and faithfulness to His covenant promises in Christ (Rom. 9-11).

IV. Introductory Matters Concerning Paul’s Epistle to the Romans

- **Date of Romans:** ca. 57-59 AD
- **Location:** from Corinth on Paul’s third missionary journey (Romans 15-16; cf. Acts 18-20). Letter written by an amanuensis named Tertius (Rom. 16:22).
- **Backstory of Roman Church:** Jews and God-fearing Gentiles from Rome experience the Gospel of Jesus at Pentecost (Acts 2:10- “visitors from Rome”). They return to Rome, the “Eternal City” with the hope of the “Eternal Gospel”. God in His good providence plants and establishes a congregation of saints whose faith is celebrated throughout the world (Rom. 1:6-15).

This congregation at Rome undergoes drastic changes in 49 AD. Emperor Claudius issues a decree for all Jews to be exiled out of city. For the next few years, the congregation grows by God’s grace, and is made up predominantly of Gentiles. After Claudius’ death, many Jews return to Rome, and return to the congregation. The once predominantly Jewish congregation is now predominantly Gentile. There is a change in circumstances that both must reckon with and seek to become one family in Christ (Rom. 15:5-7). The Gospel brings unity! Both Jew and Gentile are God’s living sacrifice in Christ (Rom. 12:1-8; 15:16).

Gentiles are boasting of their important privileges in redemptive-history (Rom. 11:18-24- “*Do not become proud, but fear*”), perhaps erring in a kind of “replacement theology” that overemphasizes the discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments, overlooking the importance of the Jews in God’s plan (Rom. 3:1-2, 9:1-6). The Jews seem to be seeking to live the Christian life with particular Jewish convictions that are overemphasizing more of the continuity of the Old and New Testaments, overlooking the importance of the Gentiles in God’s plan. This results into two factions: Those at Rome “weak in faith” and those “strong in faith” (Rom. 14:1-15:7).

Paul writes to assure Jews and Gentiles at Rome that they both hold a special place in redemptive history. He emphasizes these things to bring unity in the church by the Spirit:

- Jews and Gentiles are both under sin and in need of grace. Jews are “under sin” through the revelation of the law; Gentiles are “under sin” through creation and conscience, though not under law in the same way as Jews (Rom. 1:18-3:20).
 - Jews and Gentile are both justified by faith alone in Christ alone (Rom. 3:21-5:1).
 - Jews and Gentiles are to be one holy sacrifice unto the LORD in their identity, worship, and service of YHWH (Rom. 12; 15:16).
 - Jews have a particular privilege or redemptive historical priority and blessing that all Gentiles should recognize and respect: “*First to the Jew, then to the Gentile...*” (Rom. 1:17, 2:9; 3:1ff; 9:1-6). Gentile Nations are part of God’s overall plan in the Old Testament to be part of Israel (Rom. 1:7, 9:25-26, 10:14-21), to be grafted in because of God’s electing mercies in Christ. But there should be no boasting, only gratitude for God’s grace.
- Four Important Reasons for Paul’s writing Romans: [Four Major Theological Components of **ALL** of the Apostle Paul’s letters/epistles.

1. **The Gospel:** To lay out in detail and clarity the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the further in-reach and growth of the church of Rome, and the out-reach for missions. Because it is the “power of God unto salvation for all who believe, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16).

^{ESV} Romans 1:16-17: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

2. **Obedience of Faith:** Paul emphasizes at the beginning and the end of Romans that God brings about through the redemption of Christ the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5, 16:26; cf. 6:17; 10:16- “*But they have not all obeyed the gospel*”). This obedience is one given in regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is manifested when believers take hold of God’s gift of righteousness in Christ. It is also manifested when believers in Christ produce fruit for the glory of God in reliance upon the Spirit. It is an active obedience in union with Christ from the beginning to the end.
3. **Jewish/Gentile Relations-Unity:** Addressing some challenges to the unity of congregation between Jews and Gentiles-Paul stresses the unity that the Gospel of God in Christ brings to His church by His Spirit (Rom. 14:1-15:13). Both Jews and Gentiles are important players in God’s redemptive drama (Rom. 9-11).

^{ESV} Romans 15:5-7: May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

4. **Missions:** Introduction of himself as an apostolic servant of the Gospel with an eye toward establishing Rome as a bridge/home-base of operations for mission to Spain:

^{ESV} Romans 15:18-24: For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience- by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God- so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; ²⁰ and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, ²¹ but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." ²² This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, ²⁴ I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

^{ESV} Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Praying for you, dear students, as you continue along the lifelong journey of studying God's word for the glory of the Father, through the intercessory meditation of the Savior-Son, Lord Jesus, by His most precious Spirit.

Love in Jesus, I am your pastor, teacher, and friend,

Pastor Biggs

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