

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

For reply: Email: truthfortoday@aol.com

Broadcast Date: 3 February 2019

No.: T1079

Speaker: Mr. Ernie Brown

The Epistle to the Romans: Outline of the Epistle to the Romans

There is much excellent material in the Epistle to the Romans. It can be used in either personal witness to the Christian gospel or formal public preaching. Nevertheless, the letter is not so much the preaching of the gospel to the unsaved sinner as the teaching of the gospel to the Christian believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. It gives us the very foundation of Christian teaching.

We begin today a series of talks. They demonstrate the way in which the Apostle Paul outlines, in the sixteen chapters of Romans, what we need to know about God Himself; also what we need to know about ourselves. That will enable us to be assured that we are right in our personal relationship with God. They will also sustain us in right relationship with our fellow men and women.

In this, our first talk, we are looking at the layout of the letter as a whole and the way the teaching develops. Romans is the most orderly of all the New Testament letters. It is certainly in the right place. It comes straight after the record of the early years of the Christian church recorded in the Book of Acts.

As a start, I am going to give you three words; well known, much used words amongst Christians. They summarise the layout of The Epistle to the Romans. Generally speaking,

- Romans 1:1-8:39 give us the **Doctrine** of Christianity.
- Romans 9:1-11:36 outline important **Dispensational** truth concerning the nation of Israel.
- Romans 12:1-16:27 remind us of the **Duties** of those, Jew or Gentile, who have already become Christians.

The three words are:

- Doctrine;
- Dispensation;
- Duty.

First of all, then, in Romans 1:1-8:39, **Doctrine**. We Christians owe it to God to learn and apply the teaching that He has given us. He has made it plain, in Scripture, Who He is, what He is, what He has done, what He is doing now and what He will do. As creatures, we owe it to Him, our Creator, to accept the blessing He has made available to us, so that we might enjoy it.

Romans 12:1-16:27 instruct us in the way the Christian, whose sins are forgiven, and is on his or her way to heaven, should live and act while he or she waits for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In between, questions arise. What about the nation of Israel? What about God's promises to them? Has God changed His mind? In the end, how will they fit into God's final plans? These questions are answered in Romans 9:1-11:36.

How does it all fit in? Let me say it again:

- Romans 1:1-8:39, **Doctrine**, teaching, particularly about and of Christianity.
- Romans 9:1-11:36 are a slight diversion. How does the Nation of Israel fit in with God's final plan? This is a **Dispensational** matter; then
- Romans 12:1-16:27 assert how Christians must act now as God's present representatives, here upon earth at the present time? This is a practical matter of **Duty**.

So:

Word number 1 - Christian **Doctrine**.

Word number 2 - **Dispensational** truth concerning Israel for our instruction and their reassurance.

Word number 3 - **Duties** of living Christians.

Romans 1:1-8:39 give us Christian Doctrine

The First Book in the Bible is The Book of Genesis, that is, The Book of Beginnings. How does it begin? *"In the beginning God..."* (Genesis 1:1). It begins with God. We should not be surprised that in the New Testament Book of fundamental teaching, that is Romans, Paul is guided to begin in the same way. He begins with God. We are going to begin our series on the details of The Book of Romans next week in exactly the same way that the writer does, with comments on the nine direct references to attributes of God in his opening remarks in Romans 1:1-32.

- Romans 1:1: The **Gospel** of God.
- Romans 1:4: The **Son** of God (God's gospel **concerns** His Son).
- Romans 1:10: The **Will** of God
- Romans 1:16: The **Power** of God
- Romans 1:17: The **Righteousness** of God
- Romans 1:18: The **Wrath** of God
- Romans 1:23: The **Glory** of God
- Romans 1:25: The **Truth** of God
- Romans 1:32: The **Judgment** of God

The importance of understanding something about the attributes of God before we have to stand before Him in judgment is vital. Then, having got God in right perspective, what about mankind generally?

Romans 1:19-3:20

How many fundamental types of people were there then, in Rome, and also the rest of the world, at that time?

1. Primitive Pagans;
2. Religious Jews; and
3. Sophisticated Gentiles. (e.g. Greeks and Romans).

Where are we told about them?

- Romans 1:19-32: The primitive pagans.
- Romans 2:1-16: The sophisticated Gentiles/Greeks/Romans.
- Romans 2:17-3:8: The religious Jews.
- Romans 3:9-20: All three groups (representative also of the whole world as it is now) are declared guilty before God.

Romans 3 then takes us into the realm of The Good News of the Gospel; God dealing with our sins in such a manner that also brings us into eternal blessing.

- Romans 3:21: *"But now: the righteousness of God without the law is manifested";*
- Romans 3:26: *"[God is] just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus";*
- Romans 3:21-4:25: The wonderful truth that Justification is righteously available to all.

From Romans 3:21-5:11 the Apostle deals with the subject of our sins, and individual guilt met by the value to God of the blood of Christ. *"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"* (Romans 4:25). We who have trusted Christ as our Saviour have been delivered from the judgment we deserve because of our sins.

From Romans 5:12, the mood changes. The question considered is not the sins we have committed. They have been dealt with once and for all in the sight of God. They will never again be raised with those who have trusted the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. The question considered from Romans 5:12 is that of sin itself, as such, and our deliverance from allowing it to express itself through us.

Romans 5:1-8:39 deal with our sinful nature inherited from Adam, and the joy of living the Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The truth is conveyed in a way that encourages us to remember it.

- Romans 5:21 presents the concept of two races or heads, Adam and Christ;
- Romans 6:1-23 presents the contrast between two masters, sin and righteousness;
- Romans 7:1-25 presents two husbands illustrating the effect of two natures, the old nature inherited from Adam and the new nature implanted and empowered by the Holy Spirit; and

- Romans 8:1-39 presents two powers or principles of living (self and the Holy Spirit).

We should also note the contrast between Romans 7 and Romans 8 as an encouragement to live the Christian life to the full in a very positive way: Romans 7 has 51 references to I, me, my, mine or myself. But, there are no references at all to The Holy Spirit. Romans 8 has 19 references to The Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:35-39 absolute security is assured. No wonder there are problems in Romans 7 but victory in Romans 8!

After Romans 8:1-39, the mood changes considerably.

Romans 9:1-11:36 give us an exposition and application of Dispensational Truth to make clear the national position of Israel.

Romans 9:1-11:36 give us an outline of the past, present and future dealings of God with His earthly people Israel. They show how the early promises to Israel will undoubtedly be fulfilled. God has not forgotten His earthly people. He has always been totally righteous and consistent in His dealings with them. Then, when the time is right, His dealings with Israel will resume and all the appropriate prophecies detailed in Scripture will be fulfilled.

Really, Romans 9:1-11:36 need to be read against the background of The Feasts of the LORD detailed in Leviticus 23. They give an outline of how the nation of Israel will eventually be brought into blessing. The first four feasts have been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian church was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost as narrated in Acts 2. The nation of Israel as such is presently "in the sidings," as we would say, but after the Rapture takes place as indicated in John 14:3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the LORD'S dealings with and for Israel will resume.

Romans 9 gives us the fulfilment of and answer to The Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25). After the Rapture, there will be a political and nationalistic uprising in the nation of Israel, even more intense than that of 1948, when they were granted modern international recognition. In some, there will be a spiritual awakening. There will be those who bear a true witness to the God of Israel. The leader of the by-then revived Roman Empire will make a contract with the nation of Israel. He will repudiate and break that contract, and a time of terrible tribulation will begin for God's earthly people. When the opposition, and tribulation, are at their most horrific, when the nation of Israel is surrounded by their enemies, and on the very point of total extermination, total relief will be provided by the appearance of a Personal Deliverer, their long-awaited Messiah, Christ Himself.

Romans 10:1-21 outlines the fact that we can live now in the enjoyment of the victories accomplished by Christ in His death and resurrection. After the Rapture, events shall lead on to the fulfilment of, and answer to, The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:26-32). The subsequent Appearance of Messiah in power and great glory will bring about national repentance. The nation will take upon its lips the language of Isaiah 53.

Romans 11:1-36 highlights the fulfilment of and answer to The Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-43). When Messiah has personally put down the enemies of God and Israel, God will dwell amongst His people, and a time of peace, plenty and prosperity will be ushered in. It will last for a thousand years.

Note this. Since the Day of Pentecost, when the Christian church was inaugurated, and until the Rapture of dead and living Christians takes place, it is open to both Jews and Gentiles (whosoever will) to trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and Lord and thus become fully fledged Christians, and members of the Christian church.

Romans 12:1-16:27 assert our duty - the practical answer incumbent on the Christian, in the light of all he or she has been taught in the Epistle.

Romans 12:1-14:23

In reading Romans 12:1-14:23, I personally find it helpful to study them alongside what I consider to be a parallel if relatively short statement of Scripture in Titus 2:12 which says: "*we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*" That is a grand heading and summing up of what we read of in detail in Romans 12:1-14:23. There is a similar portion in Micah 6:8.

Particularly Romans 12:3 says: "*I say ... to every man ... among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*" I consider that the exhortation "*we should live soberly*" given in Titus 2:12 can be taken for an excellent heading for Romans 12 as a whole.

Similarly, the exhortation given in Titus 2:12 also says, "*live ... righteously.*" This is a more than adequate heading and pointer to the fundamental message of Romans 13. In particular, Romans 13:7-8 say, "*Render therefore to all their*

dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything.” And, again in Romans 13:13, “*Let us walk honestly.*”

Likewise, Titus 2:12 says, “*live godly.*” This is a fine summing up of the message in Romans 14, highlighted in Romans 14: 8. “*Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.*”

Summing up Romans 12:1-14:23, the Scriptures are explicit. Titus, as well as the Romans, was taught by the Apostle Paul in Titus 2:12:

- How to live **soberly**: (in oneself) is amplified in Romans chapter 12 (especially Romans 12:3);
- How to live **righteously**: (towards others) is amplified in Romans chapter 13 (especially Romans 13:7-8); and
- How to live **godly**: (towards God) is amplified in Romans chapter 14 (especially Romans 14:8).

Romans 15 gives us the spirit in which the duties are to be carried out. Conditions and attitudes which are essential if we are to meet our commitment to be practical Christians, fulfilling our **Duties**.

- **Romans 15:4-5** The God of **patience** will lead us on to **hope**;
- **Romans 15:13** The God of **hope** will lead us on to **peace**; and
- **Romans 15:33** True **peace** will then be enjoyed in the presence of the **God of peace**.

The message of Romans 16 is “Christianity works”. As faithful Christians, we are to fulfil our **Duties**.

The practical result of having a proper sense and understanding of the truth and principles of the Epistle to the Romans is illustrated in the meanings of the names and characters of many, if not all, of the 35 Christians listed in Romans 16. Let us apply to ourselves the practical challenge: If I had been living in Rome at the time, would my name have been considered to be worthy of inclusion by such a servant of the Lord as the Apostle Paul?

Doxologies

One more thing. You know, since I first realised that I was going to have the privilege of talking to you this morning and giving you an outline of the Epistle to the Romans, I have been thinking about the three “D”s I have been presenting to you. They are vital if we are to live balanced Christian lives, well pleasing to God.

However, the more I have thought about it, and prayed about it, the more I have come to the conclusion that I cannot conclude my talk without drawing your attention to a fourth concept, condensed into another word, also beginning with the letter “D”. That word is “**Doxologies**”.

As Paul was led to write the Epistle, every now and again, four times in fact, the more he found himself breaking away from the detail and bursting out in spontaneous praise and exultation to the God behind it all. Indeed, the last talk in this series is scheduled to be a consideration of the four **Doxologies** included in the text.

Let us make sure that being aware of the effect of the teaching upon Paul himself, we are ready and willing to allow the same teaching to have the same effect upon us. We must indeed live and serve God practically in a way that is appropriate to the way in which He has blessed us so abundantly. But that must not be the end of our response. It is an immense privilege to live on earth in a way that glorifies God. But, alongside that, there is the present opportunity to participate in response to God Himself, illustrated and emphasised in the Doxologies recorded in Romans 1:25, Romans 9:5, Romans 11:33-36 and Romans 16:25-27.

These doxologies are a subtle reminder. They affirm the privilege and opportunity of responding in offering our spiritual response to Him now, and throughout eternity. That would be alongside the practical response now, in this life, that is affirmed in the Scriptures we have considered. Praise the Lord for that.

Our God is a holy God and a spiritual God. Our response to Him must also have a spiritual component. God must be given what He is due. Let us make sure that we take every opportunity to respond to Him in spontaneous praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving for His wonderful love to us. Amen.

Please Note:

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.