

Romans 1:16-32

God's Delineation between the Just and the Unjust

Righteousness and Faith v. 1:16-17

These two verses by St. Paul are a sort of **Thesis Statement**, indicating that the rest of the thoughts contained in Romans are governed by this controlling matrix.

John 6:68, Acts 3:26, Heb. 2:11. Shame is for outsiders. Christ makes us *insiders*. This is the freedom of service that sons enjoy and slaves partake in. Remember how Paul introduces himself.

Matthew 15:27 – The Jews are invited to the feast first – Matthew 22 | The Apostles considered Paul the missionary to the Gentiles, which is interesting considering that he was the foremost OT scholar of the early Church, the most rooted in the TANAK (Torah v'Navi'im v'Ketuv'im: The Law, The Prophets, and the Writings) **Gal. 2:6-10**.

“In Classical Greek usage, the dominant idea of the *pistis* (faith) word group is that of “trustworthiness” or “being trusting.” In the Hellenistic era, the idea of “believing” applied in regard to one’s acceptance of the existence of the gods. In the OT, however, ‘faith is always man’s reaction to God’s primary action.’ The assortment of Hebrew words expressing the concept of faith and believing is complex...”¹

The Power of The Gospel

There is a theological point here to be grasped. Only the Gospel is the power of salvation. So, when we discuss things like the sacraments, we must understand that we’re talking about the application of the Gospel to the individual. Power and salvation correlate to the gospel and believing – these are the ingredients in the soup of life together with the trinity.

The confessions speak this way:

[43] Since justification is gained through the free promise, it follows that we cannot justify ourselves. Otherwise, why would there be a need to promise? Since the promise can only be received by faith, the Gospel (which is properly the promise of forgiveness of sins and of justification for Christ’s sake) proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ. The Law does not teach this, nor is this the righteousness of the Law. [44] For the Law demands our works and our perfection. But, for Christ’s sake, the Gospel freely offers reconciliation to us, who have been vanquished by sin and death. This is received not by works, but by faith alone. This faith does not bring to God confidence in one’s own merits, but only confidence in the promise, or the mercy promised in Christ. [45] This special faith (by which an individual believes that for Christ’s sake his sins are forgiven him, and that for Christ’s sake God is reconciled and sees us favorably) gains forgiveness of sins and justifies us. In repentance, namely, in terrors, this faith comforts and encourages hearts. It regenerates us

¹ Middendorf, *Romans*, 89; citation of A. Weiser, “the Old Testament Concept.”

and brings the Holy Spirit so that we may be able to fulfill God's Law: to love God, truly fear God, truly be confident that God hears prayer, and obey God in all afflictions. This faith puts to death concupiscence and the like. [46] So faith freely receives forgiveness of sins. It sets Christ, the Mediator and Atoning Sacrifice, against God's wrath. It does not present our merits or our love. This faith is the true knowledge of Christ and helps itself to the benefits of Christ. This faith regenerates hearts and comes before the fulfilling of the Law. [47] Not a syllable exists about this faith in the teaching of our adversaries. Therefore, we find equal fault with the adversaries because (a) they teach only the righteousness of the Law, and (b) they do not teach the righteousness of the Gospel, which proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ.²

Jew and Greek

Romans 2:9, 10; 3:9; 10:12; 3:29; 9:24. See also John 4:22 and Matthew 15:24. ***The Advantage to being a Jew is: Rom 3:1-2.***

Unrighteousness Punished v. 1:18-27

Consider the lives of those prior to the flood (Gen. 6) and remember that they lived during Adam's natural life. Consider also Acts 17:30. Paul indicates that man may make certain conclusions about God drawn simply from knowledge of the natural world. However, in the darkening of man's heart, God allowed their intellect also to fall. Recall the narrative of Pharaoh. **Ex. 9:12**, Gen. 5:1-5. **1 Pe. 1:22-25.**

There are some things that man cannot know apart from the Scriptures, such as:

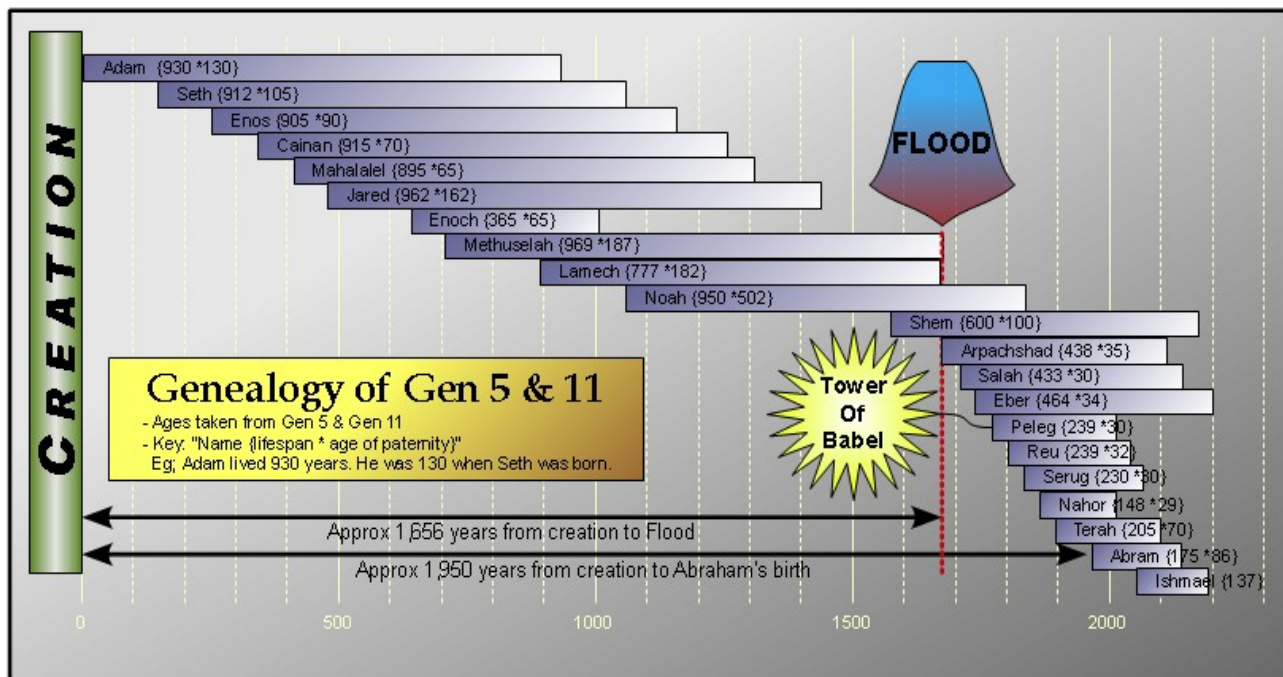
[10] 9. <The true judgment about predestination> must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel about Christ, in which it is clearly testified, "For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all [Romans 11:32]; not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" [2 Peter 3:9], and believe in the Lord Christ. (See also Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11, 18; 1 John 2:2).³

They exchange the creator for the creature similar to Eze 8:7-12. As we have discussed in the liturgy, what you **worship** becomes you. Deut. 4:15-24. So, in worship the creature, these "men" begin to short circuit and devolve into animals. People in this world literally withhold (κατέχω) the truth of God.

Eph. 4:18-19, 1 cor. 6:18. The use of man and woman, as God intended, is the proper sexual relationship between created man and created woman. Improper worship leads to all manner of degeneracy in the lives of men. Lev. 18:22; Eph. 5:12; 1 Thess. 1:9.

² From "Article IV (II). Justification" in The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, Pocket Edition. © 2005, 2006 Concordia Publishing House.

³ From "XI. God's Eternal Foreknowledge and Election" in The Formula of Concord, Epitome, Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, Pocket Edition. © 2005, 2006 Concordia Publishing House.



The men who abandoned piety and righteousness become ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει – “burned up in their own feverish desire” for the bodies of other men. I will let Middendorf speak for me: “With this phrase, Paul speaks of unrestrained consuming desire for other males as contrary to God’s will. He then goes on to describe the physical activity which results in language that becomes even more graphic: “males accomplishing the shameful deed [τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι] in males.” the verbal picture makes the activity Paul is describing obvious.”⁴

Two such examples of this manner of behavior are: **Genesis 19** and **Judges 19**. Paul uses the words ἄρσενες and θηλείας which, while they are not unusual words, are not the typical words for man and woman (as, for example, in Eph. 5:22 αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ). Paul here is teaching us that such “people” who do these things are voiding themselves of their humanity and acting, not as *men and women*, but as *male and female animals*. **2 Cor. 13:5-7**; **Tit. 1:16** those who are “depraved” do not “pass the testing” which is what the word ἀδόκιμος means.

Wicked Fruit v. 1:28-32

The adjectives in this section of Romans apply to the life outside of Christ. Compare them to the fruit of the Spirit of our God: **Gal. 5:22-23**. When you try to consider hell, remember what kind of people are there and what kind of place it is:

and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ... and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. - **Mat 13:42, 50 ESV**

⁴ Middendorf, *Romans*, 135. Emphasis mine.

Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' - **Mat 22:13 ESV**

and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. - **Mat 24:51 ESV**

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. - **Luk 13:28 ESV**

Remember what Isaiah says about this place: **Is. 66:22-24**

Compare this to **1 Cor. 8:8-15** and **1 Peter 3:18-4:6**. Just as the new life of the Christian bears fruit some thirty, some sixty, some one-hundred fold, so the wicked-minded pagan encourage those who also love to practice wickedness.

Chiastic Structure to Romans 1

Paul is a Bondservant **A 1-2**

To the Revealed Christ who is the Son of God and Son of Man **B 3-5**

Grace is given to make us sons of God **C 6-8**

That same Grace exists in the dispensation of the Church **D 9-17**

Those outside the Church refuse grace **D' 18-25**

A Corruption of Mind is Given to the ungodly **C' 26-27**

the ungodly have exchanged the revealed God for a lie **B' 28**

the ungodly are slaves to passion **A' 29-32**

Paul's Rhetoric:

The verses 1:29-32 are arranged rhetorically, here is an example of how the apostle used rhetoric:

Evil traits divided into four groups:

1. ἀδικία πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία (-ia nouns)
2. φθόνου φόνου (similar sounding pause)
3. ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας ψιθυριστάς (adjectival nouns)
4. ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας (alpha privative adjectives)