

The Way

According to Paul

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Dedication

These readings are presented to the fellowships which make up part of the church in the following cities, towns, and villages which I have had the joy of serving and meeting face to face, often repeatedly over a number of years. There are others, unknown to me personally, in these locations, whom I greet in Jesus Name - it would be remiss of me to write for some of the church in that town, and not understand that such readings were also for the rest as well.

In **Australia**: in the *States of Victoria*: Melbourne, Bendigo, Benloch, Echuca, Leopold, Albury, Geelong, Warrnambool, Rosebud and Mt. Eliza.

Tasmania: Wayatinah, Stanley, Launceston, Crabtree and Hobart.

New South Wales: Terrey Hills, French's Forest, Ourimbah, Casino, Byron Bay and Lismore.

South Australia: Meningie, Raukkan and Port Adelaide.

Australia Capital Territory: and *Western Australia*: Perth and its many suburbs where Jan and I live, Karratha, Geraldton, Roebourne, Carnarvon, Wyalkatchem, Waroona, Mandurah, Bunbury, Donnybrook, Pemberton, Denmark, Torbay, Albany, King River, Mt. Barker, Kendenup, Kojonup, Boddington, Hyden, Pingelly, Augusta, Pinjarra, Kalgoorlie, Carnarvon, Esperance, Williams, Gidgegannup, Rocky Gully, Bridgetown, Toodyay, Northam, Harvey and Mukinbudin.

South Africa: in the towns of Johannesburg and Pietermaritzberg.

United Kingdom: who live in the towns of Hull, Market Wheaton, and Bristol.

Italy: who live in Alba and Torino.

India: the towns and villages of, Bangalore, Bhilai, Dalli Rajara and Poona.

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Prologue

The early Christians found that their gospel led them into a new way of life. They shared so many things that were common to their inner experience. They knew things about God and their relation to Him as Father, Son and Spirit.

The tabernacle in the wilderness, had its holy places where only the priests might enter. These Christians found that an access to God had been opened to them, through the humanity of the Lord Jesus, their ascended High-Priest over the house of God. This access was a “new and living way...to draw near to God “with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” [Hebrews 10.19-22 ESV]. Their inner person was now intimate with God; they were each a dwelling place for Him.

When they came together, knowing that the same Holy Spirit had entered each of them, they found they shared the same perceptions. They had a new drive for the love and service to God for his love for them had drawn them into his life. They shared personally, and together, as a body, in the life of God. They stood before Him and

before each other as accepted and approved in Christ Jesus.

This changed everything. Beforehand, they had considered their ethnic origin and ways into which their forefathers had committed them to be barriers to one another. They now knew those barriers were removed through the death of Jesus and inwardly, they registered this truth in their life together. Others, not knowing such changes noted their love for each other.

Like Israel, who as a people had come out of Egypt into a shared life in the wilderness with God so long ago, each Christian had personally experienced an exodus - a road out of slavery into a close and exclusive relationship with the Father and the Son, by the Spirit. And they were committed now, to 'the Way'. They saw life as a communal journey together with God.

Paul came to know this 'Way' through his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus, while he was on a mission. He had letters of authority from the high priest in Jerusalem written to the synagogues in Damascus,

"...so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" [Acts 9.2 ESV].

Later, when arrested in Jerusalem he testified that

"...I persecuted this Way to the death...[Acts 22.4 ESV].

Later still, in Caesarea, referring to the Jews from Jerusalem who had accused him, found in Felix, the governor a person with

"a rather accurate knowledge of the Way" [Acts 24.22 ESV].

Paul had been saying,

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way,

which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the prophets, having a hope in God, which these men accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward with God and man. [Acts 24.14-16 ESV].

In Philippi, Paul and Silas were harassed by a fortune-telling slave girl possessed by a spirit. She followed them and kept on saying,

"These men are servants of the most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation" [Acts 16.17 ESV].

Paul's annoyance was not about what she said, for it was, in fact, true. But that such a true statement was coming from a demonic source and he did not want that truth to be attested or learned from that manipulative statement. Our Lord had, on the same grounds, rebuked demonic utterances [Luke 4.34-36,41; 8.28-29].

When Apollos came to Ephesus it was said of him that he 'had been instructed in the way of the Lord' [Acts 18.25].

"And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, the took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" [Acts 18. 25-26 ESV].

The readings we are about to take together in this letter to the Romans are a statement of Paul's, which he wrote to introduce the gospel and the the life that arose in persons when they trusted it is message. It is Paul's exposition of 'the Way'.

001 The layout

As we go along, I shall quote Paul's own word, or phrase, or even a full sentence, in single quotation marks and shall attempt briefly to explain what I understand him to mean.

[a] When I refer to other parts of this letter to the Romans I simply write the chapter and verse in brackets, usually at the end of the sentence: like this [1.1-7].

[b] When I am drawing on other letters of Paul or other parts of the New Testament, or the Old Testament, I put the book in front of the reference numbers: like this [Colossians 1.1-2].

Read Revelation 1.1-5

[c] When I want you to read some other sources, or from previous writing I have done and can be found on my website, <http://theframework.net.au> or another text of Scripture, then I put them ahead of the paragraph and make them flush right in smaller italic print, like I have done in this paragraph. It's good to read these before the paragraph itself.

[d] When you see a number, as above - "001 The layout"- attached to a heading, don't let it distract you, this is simply a reference to the material of that section.

If, later, I refer to 001.3 p.6, then that would be the third paragraph on that section and its page number in this series. As we go along, I can refer back to something said before. We can simply list the numbers of the paragraphs to build up some cumulative studies of a certain idea. It saves me saying it over and over again.

[e] I often refer to the Discipleship School material, done over many years. So in the text you might see

DS2013no1#40 This refers you to a Discipleship booklet published in 2013, number 1 in the series and paragraph 40. It will have a URL where that booklet can be downloaded as a pdf, or read online, such as <http://theframework.net.au/david-boan/wp-content/uploads/DS2013no1.pdf>

[f] Printing a hard copy of this pdf file can be done on any printer. However, if you select the "booklet printing" option, then you will be able to construct an A5 booklet which can then be individually stapled or laid together, one after the other.

002 The letter to Rome

We are about to read together God's good news for us, what Paul calls 'the gospel of God'[1.1]. This good news, comes in the words of Paul the 'apostle', an authorized messenger of Jesus. He expressed it in a letter which he sent from Corinth, around the Spring of 56AD, to the young Christian church assembled in Rome.

His letter was carried by Phoebe, a woman with the means to travel. She served the the church in Corinth's eastern port, Cenchreae [16.1-2]. Paul, at that time, had some business to complete in Jerusalem for the Macedonian churches; after that was done he intended to visit Rome. And so his letter goes before him to pave the way for his intended visit.

As it is for us who read, the Christians in Rome, were a mixed group who had been called by God. Some were of Jewish origin and others were not - they were 'Gentiles'. Such divisions mattered no longer to the early Christians. But in these early days, when the letter was written, there were still troubles in the Christian congregation about how they would integrate their living together. So he

addresses some of those issues, later in the letter.

003 We must be aware of Paul's other letters

It is always wise, when reading any author to take into account everything we can access of what he has written. In this way, we get an overview of his thinking and word-fall. Since we do have other letters of Paul, we can use them to compare and contrast with what we are reading in Romans.

004 What Paul writes is controlled by the occasion

Every letter of Paul has its own historical occasion which reflects the situation of the receivers. This controls the subject and content of the letter. Each letter reflects, the mission of the apostle and the circumstances of his team as well. This historical background often flavours the mood of the writer as well.

[1] The **Thessalonians**, were experiencing strong persecution in which Paul himself had shared. The Thessalonians were very excited about the immanent coming of the Lord. Both letters to them have a strong **eschatological** theme; dealing with the return of Christ and closely associated matters..

[2] The **Galatians** had been visited by false teachers after Paul had left them. The teaching emphasised the keeping of the Jewish law as paramount to the Christian life. A matter which destroyed their freedom in Christ. The Galatians, as Gentiles, needed to be reminded of the **foundations of their salvation**, the righteousness which was a matter of faith. They also needed to treasure their present experience of the **freedom in Christ** and their walking in/by the Spirit.

[3] The **Corinthians**, although they were rich in spiritual gifts, had become proud. Through comparing

their ministers, parties were developing among them; and the **local disordered church** was uncaring and despised others.

Paul writes his 1st letter to address this pride; he wants to return them to how the gospel found them and how the nature of the church as the body of Christ sets all ministries in order. He answers a list of questions of order which they put to him by letter, and he speaks of the nature of the resurrected body.

His 2nd letter to them makes a defence against his personal opponents who were denigrating his ministry as an apostle of Christ.

[4] To the **Romans**, one of the letters to a church to which he had never been, Paul's own circumstances are the occasion; he writes anticipating his journey to Spain via Rome. He introduces the **salvation of the gospel**, particularly against the general background of the world being under the present anger of God. He deals with the mutual self-boasting of Jews and heathens alike, the antagonism between grace and a righteousness which is laid hold by faith. Later he speaks to the various issues of living by faith among the Jewish and Gentile Christians there.

[5] To the **Colossians**, who were listening to useless, fleshy methods for living the Christian life, Paul writes from his imprisonment in Rome a very **Christ-centred letter**, speaking of the Lord's pre-existence, his exclusive mediatorship for us, and his glory.

[6] To the **Ephesians**, also from prison, he writes another **Christ-centred** letter, speaking of the exaltation of Christ above all things and persons. He wants the whole church, as the bride of Christ to yield to Christ as their Head, knowing the cost of his rescue and cleansing of

her. The Ephesians must understand that they are '**in Christ**' and need to walk according to that faith, standing strong against the methods of the devil.

[7] From prison also, to the **Philippians**, along with his favoured co-workers in his office, he writes a **pastoral** letter, based on who Christ is. He wants them to walk according to Christ's temperament and mind and so become complete in Him. His own circumstances prompt him to ask for their prayers.

[8] **Philemon** is personal pastoral letter, addressing the reception of Onesimus in Colossae and the care of God's children.

[9] **1st Timothy** and **Titus**, speak of the apostolic work and the pastoral church order to be inculcated and promoted. **2nd Timothy** speaks of his pastoral conduct and call.

005 Parallel texts - similar ideas in different places

Because Paul was dealing with the same subject matter of the gospel in many places, we often see that he expressed the same ideas in different ways under different circumstances. The use of parallel texts helps us to put such ideas side-by-side, so that we can find help to understand the place where we are currently reading in Romans.

006 Paul special jargon, his shorthand expressions

Paul's own way of saying things. Paul can speak of 'my gospel'. He doesn't mean that he made the gospel up, a matter he is quick to deny in our first reading; but he does have a distinctive word-fall, which is his own short-hand way of saying things. We shall study these expressions. So don't be surprised if we go to other parts of this letter to the Romans and his other letters as well to see how he uses

an expression in those places. Then we can compare that word-fall with what we are presently reading.

007 Translation

What I have presented at each of the 40 readings, is my own translation of the Greek text. I have done this for a number of reasons.

[1] Many of my readers, who have heard me teach and explain the Scriptures will be aware that I often translate freely as I read. This was, when we did it together, always a safe procedure. It had the advantage of stressing what the Greek text seemed to me to require, while everyone had, in their hands or on their phones, other published translations. Many of these have the sureness of being the work of a large number of scholars, which served as a correction to my own work as people listened to me. In this way we benefited without being unduly lead astray by my own weaknesses.

[2] It allows me, when I come to the exposition of a section, to emphasise and, at the same time, to present a translation which I consider will bear the meaning I am writing about. In this way, the readers have my reasoning before them, both in translation and exposition.

[3] It presents a ready text already on the page for the reader. This makes the act of focussing upon the section easier. At the same time I would be the first to say that you should compare and contrast what I present in translation with the ASV, NIV, and the ESV, to name three modern published translations.

[4] It helps me publish in that it avoids considering the many copyright requirements that accompany these widely published commercial ventures.

