

SOTERIOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY IN ROMANS

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What type of discourse¹ is Paul's epistle to the Romans? The grand presentation of justification by faith that occupies chaps. 1–5 is not simply exposition but is clearly meant to be persuasive. Chapters 9–11 resemble exposition, but even here Paul is trying not merely to work through a problem. He urges onto Gentile believers the right attitude toward unbelieving Jews. Above all, this section contains elements that lead us to classify it as a predictive discourse. Further sections of the book are clearly hortatory. While persuasive discourse tries to influence our beliefs and values, and while expository discourse is a kind of problem solving, hortatory discourse sets out to modify conduct.² Working our way through the various discourse types that are embraced in Romans reveals the purpose and structure of the book, where the various discourse types systematically relate to each other and are not simply a *mélange*. Finally, it is tempting to compare our emergent analysis to narrative. At all events we approach this epistle not simply as an object of analysis but as a book meant to exercise a regulative and inspirational effect upon us.

I. THE OVERALL THRUST OF THE EPISTLE

In Romans, then, granting the presence of embedded discourses of varying types, certain questions come to the fore: What is the main line of development? And what is embedded? These in turn tie into other questions: What is the fundamental thrust and purpose of the book? What are the developmental sidelines? We believe that the primary purpose and thrust of the book are best seen in 15:14–16. Paul starts out the passage by affirming that he is convinced that the Roman church, the recipients of the letter, are “full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct each other.” Then comes an epistolary aorist, “I have written you,” in a clause stating that there are counterconsiderations that led him to write to them quite boldly on some points, reminding them again of the importance of these matters. This is followed by a causal construction, “because of the grace given to me by God,” which is immediately followed by a purpose construction,

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¹ R. E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse* (2d ed., 1996) 8–21.

² *Ibid.* 34–35.

“that I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.” But the vocabulary employed in v. 16 is metaphorical of priestly service in the temple: *leitourgon*, “temple service”; *hierourgounta*, “priestly duty” (of proclaiming the gospel of God); *prosphora*, “offering up” (of the Gentiles). This is strange and wonderful language in that in the old economy Gentiles were not to enter the temple, while here they are the very offering that Paul presents. But the verse does not stop here. Rather, it goes on to express the wish that the offering up of the Gentiles will be “acceptable” and “sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” Possibly here we find evidence that, whatever the range of topics and discourse types embraced in the “some points” about which Paul writes, the primary purpose is ethical: to make the Gentiles acceptable to God as a holy people.

This passage, which is probably a key to the whole epistle, presumably implies the preeminence of hortatory material over persuasive, expository and predictive elements. As the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul is deeply concerned that believers out of paganism and idol worship prove to be worthy of presentation to God as his people. We take, then, the discourse framework of Romans to be basically hortatory.

II. MARKING DEVELOPMENTAL HIGH POINTS (PEAKS)

A practical analytical concern comes to the fore, however. It centers around the high points of Romans, what we have considered to be peaks according to our framework of discourse analysis. Peaks involve surface-structure marking that is nonroutine for its discourse type. Peaks are distributed according to the template of the discourse type. They do not occur willy-nilly anywhere on a template but according to what we might call points of “natural prominence.”³

In narrative discourse the inciting incident, the climax, and the denouement are eligible for peak-marking in their corresponding pieces of surface structure. In persuasive and hortatory discourse the peak is often the culminating argument or exhortation. In exposition it is the most adequate and, in a sense, final explanation of the problem at hand. In the nonnarrative types the possibility of a subpeak comparable to the inciting incident in narrative must be entertained. This comes about when the problem or situation that provokes the discourse is especially well presented with appropriate surface-marking. Peaks may be primary (in reference to the text as a whole) or secondary (in an embedded discourse). At any rate, peak is in reference to a template, whatever its nature and whatever the level of embedding.

Structures that apparently reflect peak-marking are found in several places in Romans: (1) 3:21–31, which has, among other features, a rare concentration of prepositions in a run-on structure; (2) all of chap. 8, which has a lyric, almost hymnlike quality; (3) chap. 12 (especially vv. 9–21), which reflects a carefully constructed, partially chiasmic structure (vv. 9–13). To

³ Ibid. 38–50.

these we probably should add (4) 11:33–36, which is a doxology/benediction of considerable rhetorical power but which may belong to a different strand of the two interwoven discourses⁴ that (we will try to show) constitute the book. Semantically the first three structures constitute a progression of sorts corresponding to justification, life in the Spirit, and the Christian life. But all this is getting a bit ahead of ourselves. In the paragraphs below we discuss the first three peaks in reference to discourses and templates on which the embedded discourses that contain the peaks are built.

We ignore in the present analysis the introductory material in 1:1–17 and the concluding material found in 15:14 ff. and in chap. 16. Epistolary conventions are involved in these sections as well as Paul's desire and plans to visit Rome, thematic material, and the lengthy section of greetings to and from various individuals in chap. 16. The importance of 15:14 ff. for the theme of Romans has already been discussed. Scarcely less important is 1:17, where the revelation of the righteousness of God is announced "from faith to faith." Wallis⁵ and others make the point here that the thrust is that "the justified person lives out of God's faithfulness and his/her answering faith." The one casualty of our failure to consider the sections cited is the omission of reference to Paul's magnificent combined benediction and doxology in the last verses of the epistle (16:25–27).

1. *Peak 1: the righteousness of God revealed.* Romans 3:21–31 is the peak of a discourse that begins in 1:18 and probably runs through chap. 5 (all or part of the latter could prove, on alternative analysis, to be transitional). This is a persuasive discourse whose template and resultant segmentation are as follows: (1) Problem: Jew and Gentile are alike under sin with apparently no way out (1:18–3:20). (2) Solution: A righteousness of God is available by faith in Christ (3:21–31). (3) Validation of proposed solution: An argument is presented from the experience of Abraham, who is the father of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile (chap. 4); (4) Implications of proposed solution in a twofold argument: (a) Being justified, "how much more" can we not expect? (b) Adam, our former federal head and representative in sin, is compared with Christ, our new federal head and representative in securing us righteousness—a continuation of the "how much more" argument (chap. 5).

As already mentioned, peak-marking in 3:21–31 is seen in the dramatic way in which the passage begins ("But now"), which is like light at the end of a dark tunnel. Even more especially it is seen in the use of many prepositional phrases and noun phrases in the genitive or dative case in a run-on structure in vv. 21–26.

⁴ Cf. B. Terry's analysis of 1 Corinthians as consisting of two interwoven discourses (*A Discourse Analysis of First Corinthians*, Summer Institute of Linguistics/University of Texas at Arlington, Publication 120 [1995]).

⁵ W. B. Wallis, "The Translation of Romans 1:17—A Basic Motif in Paulinism," *JETS* 16/1 (Winter 1973) 17–23.

This remarkable, preposition-studded paragraph is a multidimensional presentation of the many relations that are involved in God's justifying us in Christ and the many spreading concerns it embraces. The paragraph is, in turn, followed by a vigorous paragraph of rhetorical question-and-answer structure (vv. 27–31). Here the complexity and vigor of the two paragraphs is iconic of redemption reality. The pileup of prepositions reminds us of Paul's prayer in Eph 3:15 in regard to our being able to grasp with all saints what is the width and length and depth and height of the love of Christ.

2. *Peak 2: chapter 8.* Romans 8 is the peak of an embedded hortatory discourse that embraces chaps. 6–8. In respect to the hortatory template, 6:1–7:6 is best regarded as the command element, 7:7–25 as the problem/situation, and chap. 8 as the reiterated command element with great prominence given to accompanying enablement and motivation structures. We have here a chiasm in which the problem/situation occurs medially instead of initially and prominence is given to the reiterated rather than to the central element. Here the classical pattern of chiasm is found rather than the typically Semitic pattern of chiasm in which the central element is semantically the key. Considerable rhetorical effectiveness is achieved, however, by juxtaposing 7:7–25 with chap. 8. Here the pit and the peak are brought into contrast. Furthermore 6:1 immediately springboards from the “how much more” material of chap. 5 by pointing out that as glorious as is our justification it is no excuse for license and antinomianism. For this reason, therefore, the material in chap. 6 naturally follows that found in chap. 5.

Chapter 6 is a hortatory discourse with two parallel command elements and a validation (illustration). The first command element runs from 6:1 to 6:14. Imperatives are found in vv. 11–13: “Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body. . . . Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, but rather offer yourselves to God . . . and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.” The argument of this passage revolves around the believer's death to sin by identification with Christ and his being raised up to righteousness. As C. E. B. Cranfield⁶ observes, we may distinguish four senses in which this is so and note that Paul moves freely from one to the other in 6:2 ff.: (1) the judicial sense, with Christ on the cross (justification); (2) the baptismal sense, in which the one baptized ratifies the decision of God on his behalf and God bestows his seal; (3) the moral sense, in which believers “are called and given the freedom to die daily and hourly to newness of life in obedience to God”; (4) the eschatological sense, our final and irreversible death to sin and being raised to God at the resurrection.

The second and parallel command element, which is found in 6:15–23, starts off in a manner similar to the first command element with a rhetorical question that is vigorously answered in the negative: “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means.” The argumentation is

⁶ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, 1985) 127.

similar to that found in the first command element. The only outright imperative is in v. 19b.

Validation of the command elements of chap. 6 is found in 7:1–6. We have here a parable that compares the believer's death to the law to dissolution of the marriage bond through the death of a husband and the consequent freedom of the wife to be married to another. The parable cannot be made to walk on all fours. Its central point is simply that our proxy death with Christ on the cross frees us to "belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God" (v. 4). Verses 5–6 lay the transitional groundwork for the sections that follow. Thus 7:7–25 is anticipated in v. 5, while chap. 8 is anticipated in v. 6. We find no clearly marked peak in any part of chap. 6 nor in 7:1–6.

Romans 7:7–25 presents the problem/situation that underlies all these exhortations—namely, that sin is a guerrilla force in the heart and life of the believer that can issue in sharp conflict and defeat. Cranfield⁷ outlines seven views that have been taken of this passage and opts for the seventh: "It presents the experience of Christians generally, including the very best and most mature." The chief difficulty with accepting Cranfield's view without qualification is the fact that both Romans 6, the preceding chapter, and Romans 8, the following chapter, seem to indicate something better.⁸ Without falling into perfectionism—which contradicts the facts of human experience—we can suggest that chap. 6 gives us a practical resource and formula for combatting sin in our lives while chap. 8 likewise indicates life on a higher plane by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is as if we were admonished to daily and momentarily pass from chap. 7 to chap. 8 by means of chap. 6. That we do not perfectly and permanently learn to live this way is a painful aspect of our condition in this world, but provision exists for us to get out of Romans 7 whenever and as often as we find ourselves there and as quickly as possible. We believe that a view such as this allows for the notes of both victory and defeat that conclude chap. 7. The victory note is found in 7:25, where the question "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" is simply answered: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." But the second half of v. 25 states baldly our defeat: "So then I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to sin." Perhaps the phrase "I myself" is of considerable importance here. This phrase and the absence of reference to the Holy Spirit contrasts with the recurring reference to the Spirit in chap. 8. Just as 7:5–6 anticipates the dark and bright scenarios that follow, so v. 25 anticipates the bright scenario of chap. 8 and at the same time refers back to the dark scenario sketched in the immediately preceding verses.

In contrast to all the material found in the two preceding chapters, chap. 8 takes off and sings. Perhaps it is as hard to analyze as a lyric poem.

⁷ Ibid. 156–157.

⁸ Cf. the view of J. O. Buswell, Jr., that this chapter says things that cannot rightly be said of the believer at all but rather of a man convicted of sin but not yet united to Christ in effectual calling (*Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963] 2.115–119).

As a continuation and reinforcement of 6:1–7:6 it appears to be hortatory. Implicitly it is a call to live according to the Spirit (v. 4) and to let our minds be set on that which the Spirit desires (vv. 5 and 6). But the closest to anything of an imperatival nature is found in 8:12 where we are told that “we are under obligation” not to the flesh to live after the flesh but the Spirit. Here as elsewhere in the chapter a command is implied by comparisons of undesirable and desirable outcomes of opposite courses of conduct, in this case death and life: “For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if in the Spirit you put to death the works of the flesh you will live.” We are then reminded that those led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Then Paul sets off at the phrase “sons of God” to write a passage on the Spirit being the Spirit of adoption. A similar type of exhortation by resort to conditional sentences that sketch desirable and undesirable outcomes also runs through vv. 5–7 earlier in the chapter.

But a great deal of the chapter has to do with enablement⁹ and motivation as parts of the hortatory template. Thus both 8:1–4 and 8:9–11 seem to sound the note of enablement. The former nucleates around v. 3: “For what the law could not do in that it was weakened through our sinful nature, God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful man and as a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in our sinful nature.” Verse 4 goes on to say that this is so “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” While our freedom from condemnation is entirely due to Christ’s work for us and his active and passive obedience chalked up to our account, this passage suggests something more: God’s offering himself in his Son as a sin offering condemned sin in our very natures so as to open the door to our living out the righteous demands of the moral law in our own lives. This is enablement of the highest degree and is the basis of our practical sanctification. Then after the implicitly command material relating to our living according to the mind of the Spirit (vv. 5–8) comes another enabling section in vv. 9–11. This passage revolves around the quickening work of the Holy Spirit within us. It emphasizes that certainly we who belong to Christ have the Spirit and therefore have this resource within us. Even if our bodies are defiled from the effects of sin and are in a sense dead now and will die in the future, the Spirit is alive in us and will someday quicken our dead bodies at the resurrection. Here the benefits of grace in our lives in this world are blended with the far horizon when our bodies will be fully redeemed. John Calvin, hardly a perfectionist, allows this quickening of the Spirit to refer to our life in this world,¹⁰ while Cranfield¹¹ takes it to be wholly eschatological. Why force a choice? If for Martin Heidegger being must be being unto death or we are not ready to live, certainly for the Christian being is being not simply unto death but unto glorification and confirmation in holiness. Eternal life begins here

⁹ Cf. M. Breeze, “Hortatory Discourse in Ephesians,” *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 4 (1992) 313–337.

¹⁰ J. Calvin, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947) 293.

¹¹ Cranfield, *Romans* 82.

below and flows on to its consummation above—and we must keep this in mind or we are not fit to live.

From here on in, after the implicit exhortation in v. 12 ff. the chapter is strongly motivational. And it is here that the passage takes off and sings. Thus the last part of v. 17—“If indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory”—springboards us into vv. 18–25. Our present sufferings, argues Paul, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. This is broadened to depict the whole creation subjected to frustration but waiting “in earnest expectation for the sons of God to be revealed” with a comment that just as the whole creation groans together so we also groan inwardly as we wait in hope (vv. 22–25). To this is appended a passage on the Spirit’s help in interpreting our prayers and presenting them to God (vv. 26–27). This in turn leads to a further joyous affirmation: “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” But the passage does not end here. It extends itself backward and forward through time so as to define those who love God as those whom God foreknew and predestined for conformity to his Son, then called, justified and glorified—speaking as if the latter were already accomplished, so certain is it.

The passage winds up with a vigorous series of rhetorical questions. The transitional question “What shall we say in response?” is followed by more substantive questions: “If God be for us, who can be against us?” “Who shall bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?” “Who is he that condemns?” “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” In every case the resoundingly negative answer is based on God’s sacrifice of himself in his Son. Even when the final rhetorical question is negatively answered, it is a “no” that is based on the fact that “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” In consequence, none of the terrible things mentioned in vv. 38–39 can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here indeed we have the highest motivation for living Spirit-filled lives. And here indeed we have an elevation of style and emotional intensity that, coming at the conclusion of this markedly lyrical chapter, not only marks the passage in question as peak in its own context but also elevates all of chap. 8 as peak in respect to chaps. 6–8.

3. *Peak 3: 12:9–21.* Romans 12:1–15:12 constitutes a discourse on living the Christian life. Imperatives, or surrogates for them, occur throughout the discourse. By comparison, in the previous two discourses command forms are either not found at all (1:18 through the end of chap. 5) or are somewhat less frequent (chaps. 6–8). This in itself might predispose us to make the last part of the book equivalent to its main hortatory thrust in keeping with the purpose as presented in 15:15–16. But we proceed with some caution here since the peak-marking employed in previous sections of the epistle indicates materials that evidently the author considered to be of great importance. Again, note here that the consideration of chaps. 9–11 is postponed until later in this paper.

The internal structure of 12:1–15:12 is hortatory throughout. As mentioned, either imperatives occur or other verb forms such as participles,

infinitives, and even verbless clauses that seem clearly to be surrogates for imperatives. But in that the structure we are about to examine in 12:9–21 exhibits a heightened degree of peak-marking, it seems advisable to consider it either to be central or at least part of the central section of this embedded discourse. This is not to deny that there is something masterful about Paul’s clarion call to present ourselves as living sacrifices in 12:1. This can be considered to be a prepeak section that anticipates the peak-marking to follow. And as a further complication, although 14:1–15:12 is a rather prosaically developed section, the passage may well reflect a primary concern of Paul in writing the epistle: to get believers of varying backgrounds and scruples to accept one another. But even this rather prosaically developed section culminates in a flourish of Scripture quotations regarding the acceptance of the Gentiles into the people of God (15:9–12). The benediction found in 15:13 presumably marks closure on some level. Possibly it closes the body of the epistle. Taking account of these and other factors, we avoid positing an unordered string of hortatory structures by postulating three main blocks of material that are related as follows:

Preparatory Exhortation (12:1–8)

general (vv. 1–2)

particular (vv. 3–8)

Central Exhortation (12:9–13:14)

theme (12:9–21 [developed in three paragraphs])

application (13:1–7)

theme:

exhortation (vv. 8–10)

motivation (vv. 11–14)

Resultant Exhortation (14:1–15:12)

The centrality of the second section is seen in its having a chiasmic structure with reiteration of the ethical demand for love on the believer, in the attachment of the motivation element in the reiteration (Christ is coming), and above all in the carefully crafted paragraphs found in the first statement of the theme in 12:9–21. Therefore it is to these paragraphs that we direct our attention below.

David Black has pointed out¹² that the series of apparently desultory exhortations in 12:9–13 turns out on careful inspection to be “a highly crafted and artistic piece of Greek prose.” “Let love be real” (a verbless clause) is taken as the theme, followed by a chiasmic development with use of assonance and rhyme as well as a careful balancing of words and phrases over against each other. No overt imperatives occur. Rather, the hortatory development is via participles. While the phonological and stylistic elegance of the Greek

¹² D. Black, “The Pauline Love Command: Structure, Style, and Ethics in Romans 12:9–21,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* (1969).

original cannot be translated into English, we try to give a bit of the roll and sonority of the original in the gloss that follows:

Let love be real:

- A. *hating* the evil,
clinging to the good.
- B. In brotherly love, devoted to each other;
in honor, preferring one another;
in (such) eagerness, never flagging.
- C. As to the spirit, fervor;
as to the Lord, servant.
- B'. In hope, rejoicing;
in trouble, enduring;
in prayer, persevering.
- A'. The needs of the saints *sharing*,
hospitality *practicing*.

Notice, as one of the several features that characterize the above, that the participles are preposed in A but are postposed in A'—thus wrapping the passage like an envelope.

There are two more structural paragraphs in this chapter: vv. 14–16, and vv. 17–21. While neither is as highly structured as that which precedes, they nevertheless bear evidence of a certain craftsmanship. Verses 14–16 continue the admonition to show brotherly love in various ways. The structure is linear rather than chiasmic. The imperatives of v. 14 are continued as infinitives in v. 15 and as participles in v. 16—but culminating in an imperative at the end of that verse:

- A. Bless those persecuting you,
bless and do not curse.
- B. Rejoice with those rejoicing,
weep with those weeping.
- C. Be harmoniously *disposed* toward each other—
not *disposed* toward the haughty, but getting on with the humble.
Do not be *conceited* about yourselves.

(The italicized words indicate here provenience from the same Greek root).

Finally, we find in vv. 17–21 a passage that shows a certain balance in that its opening clause “Do not repay evil for evil” is echoed in the concluding clause: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

These three paragraphs can be taken to be an embedded discourse on Christian love that, as we have suggested above, expounds the theme of the central exhortation. Application of the theme is seen in 13:1–7 (obedience to rulers), followed by reiteration of the theme in 13:8–14 (love as the fulfillment of the law) with strong motivation in vv. 11–14—an eloquent passage that employs the metaphor of the passing of the night, the near coming of the day, and hence our need to put aside the works of darkness. A final spate

of imperatives appears in vv. 12a–14. The NIV entitles this whole section “Love, for the Day Is Near,” our theme reiterated.

Finally, as postulated above, the resultant exhortation regarding accepting each other is given in 14:1–15:12. The form *proslambanesthe* (“accept”), which is key to this section, occurs in 14:1; 15:7 and brackets the passage except for the final flourish of verses regarding the acceptance of the Gentiles into the people of God.

Romans 15:8–12 must not, however, be dismissed too hastily. While the verses provide immediate motivation here for the exhortation to receive one another as Christ received us, they echo some of the discussion found toward the climax of chap. 11, which belongs to the intertwined discourse on eschatology. As such they can be considered to describe the earth in its time of millennial glory. Having awakened in his audience great reasons for the command to accept one another, Paul now with incredible delicacy employs citations that bring Israelite and Gentile together in an eschatological picture “to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.”

Romans 15:8–12 may therefore be dual in function: (1) As suggested above it is part of the last hortatory discourse, the resultant exhortation, found in 14:1–15:12. (2) On the other hand it may also function as part of the grand inclusio of the epistle referred to several times above.

In the flourish of citations, each distinguishes Jew from Gentile. Implied in each is the figure of the reigning Messiah ruling over the Gentiles. The first is from the great Davidic testimony (2 Sam 22:50; Ps 18:49): “Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.” The next is from Moses (Deut 32:43): “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” The third is from the center of the ancient Scriptures (Ps 117:1): “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.” The last citation, from Isaiah 11, is an explicit reference to the Messiah: “The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.” Thus will be fulfilled the prophecy of Rom 11:12: There will be a time of vastly greater blessing for the Gentiles, when the fullness of Israel comes, when the unbelieving eschatological community is converted. All this is packed into the grand inclusio and gives Paul the opening to explain his high-priestly function vis-à-vis the Gentiles as considered at the beginning of this paper. Not only that: He now has the impetus and leverage to seek the help of the Roman churches in his plan to reach Spain and the west, perhaps even thinking of Rome as a further advance base even as Antioch was in an early stage of mission history.

Meanwhile it is not out of place at this point to discuss the benediction of hope found in 15:13. The note of hope was earlier introduced at v. 4: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” The next verse is also a benediction of sorts: “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity . . . as you follow Christ Jesus.” Finally we arrive at v. 13, the grand benediction that closes out the body of the book: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace

as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

With their mood of fervent prayer and of hope vv. 5 and 13, notable for the use of optatives, frame and give weight to the whole climactic structure that lies between them.

III. SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF THE SOTERIOLOGICAL STRAND OF THE EPISTLE

We posit that Romans consists of two interwoven discourses, the one soteriological, the other eschatological. We have further posited above that there are three main sections that constitute the soteriological strand of the epistle: 1:18–5:21, the persuasive discourse on justification by faith; chaps. 6–8, the hortatory discourse regarding contending with sin as a guerrilla force in the life of the believer; and 12:1–15:12, the hortatory discourse letting love rule in all the relationships of our lives, especially in regard to brother getting on with brother. We now address the further question as to how these three sections go together and what functions they expound in the whole epistle. Longacre has used successfully the idea of a hortatory template in several previous publications.¹³ But is such a template applicable here, or do we need to reconsider the form of the hortatory template itself? Note that we have already expanded the hortatory template by adding enablement (following M. Breeze) and by suggesting that the command element could be subdivided into preparatory, central and resultant exhortations in regard to 12:1–15:12.

Possibly the three-part analysis applicable to 12:1–15:12 could be applied to the whole epistle: (1) preparatory exhortation (1:18–5:21), (2) central exhortation (chaps. 6–8), and (3) resultant exhortation (12:1–15:12). One problem in adopting such an analysis, however, is that it appears awkward to call the first main section an exhortation when we have already analyzed it as a persuasive discourse. But there is a subtle shift in the first section of the epistle in going from its first three points (problem, solution, evaluation) to the fourth point (implications), which is realized in chap. 5. That chapter begins with “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” That the reader enjoys justification is here taken for granted as a *fait accompli*. Nowhere does Paul urge on his readers: “Be justified.” The nearest thing that we have to a command form in the entire first block of the book is in the variant reading (on very good manuscript authority) *echōmen* instead of *echomen*—that is, a hortatory subjunctive instead of an indicative. But even this variant reading, which we might paraphrase as “Let us enjoy our peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” is not a command to be justified. Rather, it is an encouragement to enjoy the fruits of justification.

¹³ R. E. Longacre, “Exhortation and Mitigation in First John,” *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation* 9 (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1983); *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989) 120–121; “The Discourse Structure of an Appeals Letter,” *Discourse Description: Diverse Linguistic Analyses of a Fund-raising Text* (ed. W. Mann and S. Thompson; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1992) 109–130; *Grammar of Discourse* 34.

Clearly, the first main point of the epistle both puts forth an argument for justification by faith and assumes that the readers have not only agreed with and consented to the argument but have implemented it in their own lives. Thus concerns of persuasion grade into behavioral concerns of the sort commonly addressed in hortatory discourse. Somewhat analogous here is a story with a moral at its end. We make bold then to label the first section of the epistle a preparatory exhortation expounded by a (modified) persuasive discourse. Because of the impressive culmination of the middle section in chap. 8 we entitle chaps. 6–8 the central exhortation expounded by a hortatory discourse and the third section the resultant exhortation, likewise expounded by a hortatory discourse (12:1–15:12).

The understanding of the function of 1:18–5:21, the preparatory exhortation, is important to our appreciation of the whole letter. The subsequent sections of the epistle assume, just as it is assumed in 5:1, the reader's justification. The total response of the reader, which is indicated in the central section, assumes faith as basic in, for example, 6:6, 9, 17 as seen in the use of such expressions as "we know," "we believe," "you have obeyed from the heart." Similarly faith is assumed in reference to our mind-set and control in 8:5–9 and underlies the hope affirmed in 8:22–25 as well as the triumphant knowledge and conviction expressed at the end of the chapter. And in the third main section of the epistle faith is assumed as underlying the inculcated love and the discussion of those "weak in faith" and "strong in faith." Everywhere justification by faith is considered as basic to all that follows. We therefore do not play down the value of the first grand section by calling it preparatory. Rather, we make it the ground of all that follows. We might even alternatively consider that this first large section manifests enablement in the hortatory template.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND STRAND OF THE EPISTLE (ESCHATOLOGICAL)

The time has come to consider Romans 9–11, which we have bypassed in the preceding sections of this paper. These chapters, on first examination, appear to be somewhat apart from the main flow of the epistle. Nevertheless they discuss a problem—that of Jewish unbelief—that evidently was never far from Paul's mind in writing his soteriological and theological work. Allusions to this background problem occur here and there throughout the epistle and thus provide linkage of the three chapters in question to the rest of the epistle: 1:16 ("first for the Jew, then for the Gentile"); the general argument of 1:18–3:20, where both Gentile and Jew are seen to be equally shut up under condemnation; the revelation of "a righteousness from God . . . apart from law . . . through faith in Jesus Christ" (3:21–31); the study of Abraham as a case history (chap. 4); the aggravation of our sinful condition by the law (chap. 7); and the discussion of the weak and strong with some at least of the scruples due to Jewish influence, if not directly on the part of Jews. In view of this considerable background tension it is no surprise that such concerns come to the fore in three chapters of the book.

The background tension referred to above can probably be explained as centering around two related questions: (1) What will happen to Israel in view of the fact that the bulk of the nation has rejected Jesus as their Messiah? (2) If the gospel is so wonderful, why have so many of the Jews of Paul's day rejected it? As Paul deals in effect with these questions he takes occasion to further banish the specter of works-salvation, to assert the sovereignty of God in election and reprobation, and to predict the salvation of the unbelieving majority of Israel in the end time.

We are further prepared for chaps. 9–11 in the introduction to the body of the epistle where the quotation from Hab 2:4 (“The righteous will live by faith”) suggests from the broader context that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14). With this eschatological nuance at the beginning of the body of the epistle agrees well the final flourish of Scripture quotations at the close of the body of the work in Rom 15:9–12. All this adds up in fact to a grand *inclusio* that lexically brackets the whole body of the epistle.

What is, then, the structural place of chaps. 9–11 in the epistle as a whole? Is it an aside, albeit a necessary aside, from the main argument of the whole? As an aside, we could consider that these three chapters serve to discharge a background tension that accumulates in the course of the epistle. Nevertheless the chapters are embraced in the grand *inclusio* suggested above just as surely as are the chapters that contain the so-called main argument. What then? Rather than calling the three chapters an embedded discourse—since they do not expound a point in the main sequence of the soteriological argumentation—we have chosen to consider that they constitute an intertwined discourse. The *inclusio* constituted by 1:16; 15:8–12 can have a double function—that is, in reference to the larger discourse and in reference to this further, intertwined discourse. We have considered, then, that the larger discourse of Romans is soteriological while the smaller discourse is eschatological.

As to internal structure, the eschatological notes in the second half of chap. 11 are prominent enough to justify our calling the whole three chapters a predictive discourse with the following internal structure:

- A. Problem of Jewish unbelief (9:1–5)
 - B. Partial solution (9:6–29): (s)election, and even those not chosen are in God's plan
- A'. Problem restated as an opposition between advocates of works-righteousness and advocates of salvation by faith (9:30–10:21)
- C. Prophecy adumbrated (11:1–16)
 - 1. since God has not rejected his people (11:1–10)
 - 2. since they have not stumbled beyond recovery (11:11–12)
 - 3. there will be an end-time renewal (11:13–16)
- D. Hortatory aside to Gentile believers (11:17–24)
- C'. Prophecy plainly announced (11:25–32)
- E. Doxology (constituting the peak of these three chapters; 11:33–36).

In positing the above structure we assume a double chiasmus. The first involves Paul's brief but anguished statement of the problem of Jewish unbelief. Its center involves a tentative and partial solution revolving around God's (s)election throughout history of his true people while bypassing others. The suggestion is that the same process holds today. But then the problem is restated: The Gentiles not following after righteousness have found it as a righteousness from God by faith, while the Jews seeking to establish their own righteousness have not found it.

The second chiasmus addresses the broader question of the unbelieving bulk of the nation. Here Paul is emphatic that God is not through with them (v. 12 is especially crucial) and predicts their eventual conversion. The prophecy is first adumbrated. Then after a hortatory aside to Gentile believers it is restated in force: In the end time, when the Redeemer returns to Zion (and the first resurrection takes place), all Israel living on earth at that time will be saved.

It is the unbelieving mass of Israel with which Paul deals in chaps. 9–11. They are always viewed, however, as related to but in tension with the elect remnant. In the central image of the Abrahamic olive tree, alongside the wild olive branches there are natural branches that have not been broken off. Some natural branches have been broken off because of unbelief. But Israel has always had a believing remnant that is always the bearer of blessing even when the majority stumbles.

It will help to clarify our view by focusing attention on the salvation of the unbelieving majority of Israel.¹⁴ Early in chap. 11 Paul reaffirms the principle of an elect remnant. At v. 7 he introduces the theme of hardening to characterize the unbelieving majority. The division of Israel into the elect and the hardened is reiterated at v. 25: "A hardening in part has happened to Israel." The verb is used at v. 7, the noun at v. 25. The ones who stumbled (v. 11) are the hardened ones of vv. 7–10. It is the eschatological salvation of the hardened who live in the end time that is now in view. It has often been noted that their salvation is certain, as in Isa 27:6–9; 59:15–21; Jer 31:31–34. It is the way to this wonderful end that is mysterious and on which Paul is now focusing.

Picking up the theme of the provocation of Israel by the Gentiles (Deut 32:21), Paul quotes from Moses in Rom 10:19: "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation, I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." Then in 11:11 he states this theme again: "Salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious."

Romans 11:12 now becomes pivotal for Paul's whole plan as intimated in the grand inclusio of 1:16; 15:12. To anticipate, we believe that here there are four stages in Paul's prophetic view—not three, as Cranfield has said:¹⁵ "First the unbelief of the greater part of Israel . . . then the completion of the coming in of the Gentiles, and finally the salvation of 'all Israel.'" The sal-

¹⁴ W. B. Wallis, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11" (Portland: Theological Research Exchange Network, 1955).

¹⁵ Cranfield, *Romans* 572.

vation of the unbelieving majority is not an end in itself. It comes in order that much greater blessing, “the much greater riches,” may come to the Gentiles. This is the fourth stage of development in Paul’s perspective.

To continue the analysis, the salvation of the unbelieving mass—Cranfield’s third stage—is itself motivated by the resurrection. This is crucial. J. O. Buswell, Jr., writes: “The phrase ‘fulness of the Gentiles’ refers to the completion of the church as constituted for this present age, or in other words, the rapture of the true church.”¹⁶ This is why the doctrine of a first resurrection is decisive. The expression Paul uses in 11:25, “until the fullness of the Gentiles enters in,” is rightly viewed as Gentiles entering the kingdom. Many assume that “entering in” describes conversion. Such cross references as Mark 9:47, however, clearly point to an eschatological horizon: “It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where ‘their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’” This requires that the resurrection be in view for entrance into the kingdom.

Paul has also the first resurrection in view in Rom 11:15. To paraphrase him: If unbelieving Israel’s rejection of the Messiah was caused by the cross (“reconciliation for the world”; cf. 1 Cor 1:23), what will cause their acceptance of the Messiah but life from the dead—that is, the corresponding eschatological miracle of the resurrection of believing Gentiles and the elect remnant of Israel? It is a resurrection “out from among the dead” (*ek nekron*). The clear implication is that not all rise at that time.

The force of the *gar* (“for”) construction as Paul begins v. 15 sums up one train of thought running through vv. 11–14. It is the theme of provoking Israel to jealousy, but with Israel’s violent opposition. Furthermore there is another aspect of the Gentile provocation of Israel, an eschatological one. Whereas in v. 12a the result of Israel’s transgression and loss is the present worldwide proclamation to the Gentiles, Jewish resistance continuing, now in v. 15b (corresponding to v. 12b) Paul brings to light the cause of Israel’s acceptance and salvation.

The resulting program would thus supplement Cranfield’s proposal. The completion of the coming in of the Gentiles is the resurrection of the righteous, the believers of all ages. This is the climax of Paul’s theme of the provocation of unbelieving Israel by the Gentiles. The entering in of the Gentile contingent in the rapture, plus the elect Jewish remnant, is the final provocation to bring about the conversion of the Israelites remaining on earth after the first resurrection. This has sometimes been characterized as a mass conversion. It is the beginning of the fulfillment of the beautiful promise of Isa 27:6: “In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.”

To repeat, the salvation of Israel is not viewed as an end in itself. In terms of Cranfield’s proposal it is a third step, motivated by the eschatological provocation to jealousy resulting from the resurrection of the righteous, including both the Gentile contingent and the elect Jewish remnant.

¹⁶ Buswell, *Systematic Theology* 2.516.

Paul rounds off the exposition of Israel's salvation with the exquisitely crafted doxology of Rom 11:33–35. The key words—riches, wisdom, knowledge—are first stated and echoed in reverse order: know, counselor, give/repay. The words “How unsearchable. . . . How beyond tracing out!” form the key, the hinge of the chiasmus. Why this amazing doxology here? The salvation of Israel is surely an eschatological high point here, similar to that concerning the redemption of the body in chap. 8. But the grandeur of chap. 8 stops short of doxology. Only after Paul has displayed the depth of God's mercy to Israel can he make the appeal at 12:1–2 to the total mercies of God, powerfully motivating the commitment called for in such a passage: “Therefore I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies a living sacrifice.”

V. ROMANS ON A NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

In the above sections we have analyzed Romans as a discourse with two strands, the main strand of which is hortatory with an embedded persuasive discourse and the second of which is predictive with an embedded hortatory aside. The one strand is soteriological, the other is eschatological. Looking back over the analysis, however, we find a curious analogy to narrative structure.¹⁷ Taking the three peaks in the main strand of the book (the soteriological one), we note that the peaks correspond to justification, sanctification (living in the Spirit), and implementing the law of love. It is similar to a narrative structure with the inciting incident, climax and denouement. The second strand of the discourse (the eschatological one) is similar to a subplot or foil against which the main structure develops. In this day of emphasis on reader response, cannot the individual Christian see mirrored in the structure of Romans his own spiritual pilgrimage against the background of hope in God's eternal purposes? And is it not striking that Romans is situated in the NT canon after the gospels and before the remaining books? Occurring where it does, Romans provides us with our pilgrim guidebook before we plunge into what follows.

¹⁷ Cf. J. Farmer's analysis of a linguistic article as quasinarative (“The Discourse Analysis of a Piece of Transformational-generative Argumentation,” *Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest* 3/4 [1981] 166–280).