

The purpose of these supplementary notes are first to provide a summary of key points from the Moore College PTC Course Notes, and second to provide some extra information that may fill out your understanding of the subject in question.

Introduction

One of the most helpful and important things you can be doing as you study Romans is to get a handle on what the overall flow of the argument is in the book. As we study the Bible we must always be seeking to put each chapter in the context of the previous chapter/s. If we read a chapter without understanding the context we may not correctly understand what is being said.

Romans – the argument

(Summarise the argument of each section we have done so far into one sentence)

1:1-7

1:8-15

1:16-17

1:18-32

2:1-3:8

3:9-20

3:21-26

3:27-4:25

5:1-11

5:12-21

6:1-23

7:1-25 Believers are set free from Law as a condemning power through the death of Christ, but the Law remains holy and good, exposing man's sin which inevitably brings death.

Chapter Key Words

(Think of one or two key words to help you remember each chapter)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Romans 7

Many commentators say that Romans 7 is probably the most disputed chapter in the whole of Romans. There are at least 6 explanations for how we ought to understand Romans 7, each of which focuses on 7:14-25. In this session we will examine the two most common and accepted explanations.

Advanced

James Dunn claims that Romans 7 is one of those key passages in Paul which offers us insight into his whole dimension and thought. He also claims that it is a pivotal passage in that our whole understanding of it will in large measure determine our understanding of Paul's theology as a whole. This is certainly true with respect to the *New Perspective* on Paul. Romans 7 has become a battle ground for Sanders, Dunn and Wright as they continue to press for an understanding of Romans as a critique of Israel's ethnocentric covenantalism. You can follow some of these arguments in the Romans commentaries written post 2000 (see D. Moo, NICNT).

Formal Structure

Read your Bible and your notes for each section and use these structural suggestions to help you get a grip on what Paul is saying and arguing in this chapter. Use the questions below to help you think about the chapter. Remember to look back at where he left off in chapter 6.

7:1-6 – Freedom from the Law

- v.1 Legal Principle
- v.2-3 Illustration from Marriage
- v.4-6 Application to believers.

Rom 8:1

Read 7:1-6, then 8:1-3. The argument flows almost perfectly but before Paul can make the connection he has to deal with two potential questions.

7:7-25 – Two questions about the Law and Sin

7:7-12

- | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| v.7a | false inference and denial |
| v.7b | thesis statement |
| v.7c-11 | explanation |
| v.12 | conclusion |

7:13-25

- | |
|-----------|
| v.13a |
| v. 13b |
| v. 14-25a |
| v.25b |

Investigating the Data

1. Where is the argument of Romans up to at the end of Chapter 6?

2. What is the point of 7:1-6?

3. What is the answer that Paul gives to the question in 7:7ff?

4. What is the answer that Paul gives to the question in 7:13ff?

Argument Structure

The chapter is essentially made up of three questions –

1. How have believers _____? (7:1-6)

As illustrated by the law of marriage regarding the death of a partner, believers have been set free from the law as a condemning power through our death with Christ and have been joined to the risen Lord for a life of fruitfulness to God.

2. Is the _____? (7:7-12)

No – The law is holy, just and good but sin deceptively used the Law as a base of operations in Paul's life and in turn, sin, not the Law, brought death to him.

3. Does the _____? (7:13-25)

The Law is spiritual but I am fleshly, constantly over powered by sin that brings death to me – a situation from which only Jesus Christ can deliver me.

Investigating the Data

Now the question remains: Paul has used the first person singular in all this section, but who is the 'I' of Romans 7? This is the controversial question.

Who is the 'I' in Romans 7

- Paul and Paul only?
- Paul representing Israel/Jews?
- Paul representing all humanity?
- Paul representing all Christians?

The notes follow the position of Cranfield, a well-respected evangelical Bible scholar whose arguments are persuasive.

"It seems most likely that Paul is not just speaking about his own experience here but is taking himself as representative, first of mankind generally (7:7-13) and then of Christians (7:14-25)."

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Unit 6 – The Christian and God's Law

Using this page, we will focus on Paul representing a Jewish perspective and Paul representing a Christian perspective (the two most likely) and investigate the data.

Using the following chart, work through Romans 7:7-25 and jot down all the verses that sound like it is Paul the Christian talking (record under 'Christian') and all the verses that sound like it is Paul the Jew talking (record under 'Jew/Israelite'). For those verses you are unclear about, put them in the middle. As you do this, remember the work you have done already on context and the answers to the above questions.

CHRISTIAN	UNCLEAR	JEW/ ISRAELITE

The notes have a very helpful graph on page 70 that will give you some guidance once you have done this exercise yourself. The key problem for the "Paul as a Jew" view is v.25b; why is it after v.24-25a? The key problem for the "Paul as a Christian" view is comparing 6:6 and 7:14; are we or are we not slaves to sin? If you get to this point and feel confused, do not worry. Go back to your notes and re-read. They explain a very credible view of Romans 7.

Why it matters?

When Christians Disagree

Systematic Theology –

- We have talked before about the place of the Law in the life of the believer and the purpose of the Law overall. Romans 7 opens up some of these issues for us again. Go back and consider your answers to the following two questions in light of your study of Romans 7.
 - What is the purpose of the Law?
 - What place does the Law have in the life of the believer?

Application:

- What does Romans 7 have to tell us about the spiritual state of those who do not trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Romans 7 exposes the sinfulness of sin. Are you still appalled by sins sinfulness? Have you made any compromises in your life with particular sins that need repenting of?

For next Week:

- Read Unit 7.
- Read Romans 8 (and further if you can!). Where else in the Bible do the themes in Romans 8 emerge?

References (for possible further reading)

Murray, J., 'Law, II. In the New Testament', in *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester: IVP; 2nd ed. 1982, 685-87.