

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Romans 1**Romans 1 - posted by BenWilliams (), on: 2007/9/24 17:33**

Hi all, I have returned, hopefully many of you who have viewed and responded to my posts have taken the time to do your research, because I have spent a number of months now researching many of the topics for which I recieved so much flak. I must say, that understanding hermeneutics, has strengthened many things I saaid, and helped me to understand a better way in which to present what I say. Anyhow, on to the subject matter.

What I want to discuss here is whether or not man has a will. Now to some, it may seem silly, or ridiculous to waste time on the subject, but there are those who would present the idea that man has a will, but is incapable of using it.

I do not intend to dispell every doubt of every person, but I do intend to make a few points that should be plainly obvious to anyone who reads the following text.

I will start in verse 16, as that is where Pauls greeting ends, and the subject of his letter to the Romans begins.

Romans 1:16-32

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

19because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do

o those things which are not proper,

29being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

30slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

32and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

At first glance, many will interpret this passage to mean that man is incapable of making a moral decision for righteousness of their own will. However if the text is examined more closely, this "interpretation" has holes in it. And remember, the word interpret means, "to make plain". If what you say the interpretation of a passage is, does not make it plain, and does not remain consistent, and in context with the whole of scripture, then you are in error.

So, let us examine again the passage we have just looked at.

Romans 1:16-32

16For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Paul's first statement is that the gospel provides the power of salvation for everyone who believes. both Jew, and Gentile. Of all the statements Paul could make, he makes this one, he opens the letter to the Romans by saying that salvation is for everyone. And that word everyone, in the Greek, means everyone.

17For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "**BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**"

He then goes on to say that the gospel contains the knowledge of the righteousness of God. And then quotes Habakkuk 2:4, saying that all who are justified and have life, have it because of faith.

18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Paul now says something interesting, he says that God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of what? Of man, who do what? Suppress the truth. How do they suppress the truth, with unrighteousness.

Therefore, Paul has designated who the wrath is poured out on, as those who suppress the truth, by doing unrighteously.

19because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

BECAUSE, Paul uses the word because, which means, the reason that the wrath of God is poured out on these men who suppress the truth is...

...Because the things that are known about God, are evident within them. That means that God placed knowledge of who he is inside of these men.

Let's stop right there, has anyone taken the time to notice two vital questions that must be asked at this point?

Why did God place within these men knowledge of Him?

What is the purpose behind giving these men knowledge of Him?

There are only two possible explanations, either God did it so that he would be justified in pouring out the wrath on them.

Or it was for the purpose of them knowing Him.

20For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Paul goes on to describe in further detail just how much about himself God revealed to these men. God placed within these men, within their mind you, knowledge of his invisible attributes, His eternal power, and the fact that He is God.

He then says that all these things were placed within these men, and they were what? CLEARLY SEEN, UNDERSTOOD, by these men, leaving them without excuse. Excuse for what?

Suppressing the truth with unrighteousness.

21For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Then Paul says something interesting, he says, for when they KNEW GOD. That word "knew" is the greek word "ginosko". You don't have to be a greek scholar to know that that is the word that is used for intimacy between a man and a woman.

Hold on now, that means that they not only knew God, but had relationship with Him. So then when they knew God, they did not honor him as God.

Then he says that they became futile in their speculations, what caused this, their lack of honor for God. And as a result, their hearts were darkened, because they did not honor God, and because they chose to suppress the truth, while carrying with them relational knowledge of God.

22Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Thinking they were wise in their speculations, not honoring God, they became fools.

23and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

And as a result of these things, rather than worship God, they turned to idolatry.

24Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

THEREFORE, "KNOWING WHAT ALL THIS MEANS SO FAR", that is the meaning of therefore.

God gave them over, wait a minute, the wrath of God was already upon these men, so allowing the men to sin further only works further judgement. It has no other purpose.

It is not God, making them so that they cannot choose to worship Him, it is God allowing these men to make their choice, and reap the consequences thereof.

25For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

FOR THIS REASON, that they did not worship God, and rather turned to idolatry.

27and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

They did not see fit to what? ACKNOWLEDGE GOD ANY LONGER.

Hang on a minute, for a person to be able to "not acknowledge God any longer" means that they had to acknowledge God at some point before they chose to no longer acknowledge Him.

And because of this, because they chose not to acknowledge God any longer, because they chose not to honor God, because they chose to suppress the truth with unrighteousness, God gave them over to a DEPRAVED, or REPROBATE mind, which means according to the greek, "adokimos" that it does not meet the test, or that it does not prove itself like it should.

Then Paul goes on in the following verses to describe the results of what their choice brings upon them when God gives them over.

29being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

30slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

32and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

In the last verse, Paul states that even with their depraved state, they know the ordinance of God, and that they understand and that they will be judged, they choose to continue in their wickedness.

In summary, there are a few things that are apparent by studying this passage:

God gave knowledge of himself to men so that they would worship Him.

Men knew God relationally,

Men chose to suppress the truth through unrighteousness.

Men chose not to honor God.

Men acknowledged God, and then chose to no longer acknowledge Him.

God's wrath abides upon all who suppress the truth.

God gave men over to their choice, to work further judgment in their bodies.

Men have a choice to acknowledge, honor, worship, and serve God, and if they choose not to, they will be given over to their lusts for judgment.

Lastly, I will most likely not respond to any argument that pulls one sentence out from what this says, and contradicts it. Every point must be refuted here, or you are wasting your time in even posting.

If this whole article cannot be refuted, then you need to check what it is that you believe.

Re: Romans 1 - posted by thomasm (), on: 2007/9/24 21:09

No argument here, at least not on choice.

Re: Romans 1 - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/9/25 1:05

Brother Ben,

You will find that Proverbs 1-2 explains Romans 1 in greater detail...

God Bless

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by Baohongen (), on: 2007/9/25 1:24

I am reminded of that passage in Acts 17 when Paul addresses those in Athens v26 and following:

"From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Both 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 express God's desire for the salvation of all. Paul goes so far as to suggest that God has determined when and where we should live in order that we might repent and turn to God. Certainly salvation is completely a work of God's grace, but men must respond to that grace by faith. To turn to him we must turn from sin and selfish living. "Repent and Believe" was the message Jesus preached (Mark 1:15).

I thought you did a great job with those passages. I am not sure what past discussions you were responding to, but I have long agreed with your basic conclusions about the gift of free will given to man.

Sometimes I don't understand the opposite argument, but I figure if Christians have been disagreeing over this for centuries, we ought to still be allowed to disagree while continuing to work together.

Because of these past discussions, I have become wary of systems that try to make sense of texts that seem to oppose one another. I assume there is benefit in them, but it seems that sometimes these systems explain away rather than enlighten troublesome scriptures. Personally I would rather not find comfort in the system than resort to neglecting the text's most obvious meaning. That leaves me with troublesome texts, but sometimes I learn so much from them.

I appreciate the discussion and hope I added to it. Blessings!

Re: - posted by BenWilliams (), on: 2007/9/28 15:13

Well, I do intend in a few days or a week to do a similar post on Romans two, referencing the context of Romans 1.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/10/1 1:25

Brother Ben wrote:

Quote:

-----Well, I do intend in a few days or a week to do a similar post on Romans two, referencing the context of Romans 1.

I agree with what you have written about your insights into Romans 1.

With the thoughts that you posted, how does it 'knit' together with the verse...

Ezekiel 18

23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord GOD, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?

Just a thought to ponder...

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by BenWilliams (), on: 2007/10/1 10:54

Rookie Wrote:

Quote:

-----With the thoughts that you posted, how does it "knit" together with the verse...

Ezekiel 18

23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?Ã” says the Lord GOD, Ã”and not that he should turn from his ways and live?

Hey rookie, I actually happen to have an article that I wrote on Ezekiel 18, as there appears to be much controversy over what that chapter means as well as Romans 1. If you are interested in seeing it, I believe the two tie in together quite well.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/10/2 2:01

Brother Ben wrote:

Quote:

-----If you are interested in seeing it, I believe the two tie in together quite well.

I am interested...

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by BenWilliams (), on: 2007/10/2 12:06

Hey Jeff,

you may have to bear with the tone of this article on Ezekiel a little bit, as it is part of a debate that I am having with a calvinist friend of mine. So much of the tone is centered towards proving the opposite position of calvinism.

Ezekiel 18:1-32

1The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

2What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

3As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

4Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Here God makes the statement "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." This is an obvious pronouncement of judgement upon a soul that is unrighteous.

5But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

6And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

7And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

8He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

9Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

And then God continues that statement with its reciprocating opposite. A pronouncement of life over a soul that is righteous. Not only does he make this pronouncement of life, but he also lays out a standard whereby the house of Israel may judge if they are righteous.

10If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

11And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

12Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

13Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

Then God says to the house of Israel that if a righteous man has an unrighteous son, that son will die in his iniquity, and his blood will be upon him.

14Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

Now I want to point out verse 14 specifically because it says a strange thing, it says that if a wicked man has a son, and that son sees his father's wickedness, and considers, here God says that the son can consider his father's wickedness, and not walk in it.

Now let me point out, that the only reason that this scripture gives that the son does not do wickedly, is that of the son considered the sin of his father.

Also, in reference to the word considering, that means that the son has the ability to see his father's sin, think about it and make a decision to follow in his father's steps of wickedness, or to forsake the wickedness of his father and walk in righteousness. We will see how God makes this clearer as He reiterates each portion of what He says in a reciprocating way.

15That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,

16Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

17That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

God now has listed again the standards by which he will be deemed righteous.

18As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

And then God pronounces judgment upon the father for his wickedness.

19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Remember now, God is making a point here that each man is responsible in terms of judgment for either his righteousness, or his wickedness.

20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

This is where God flatly states the prior point, so that it is plainly understood.

21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Now, God has been doing this throughout the entire chapter, as is his nature throughout the scriptures. But I wanted to point out this scripture specifically, as it carries the most potency towards the point.

God has made a conditional statement. If you study the scriptures, every time that God makes a conditional statement, it is without fail, dependant upon man to take an action. If God did not want the statement to be conditional, he is obviously wise enough to say what he says differently.

Here is where this conditional statement comes into play, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

When God used the word "if", He places the responsibility in man's court to fulfill the "if" that was spoken. Man can choose to, or not to. The consequences for either choice are always clearly outlined by God.

So God says "if" the wicked (man) "will turn" (the man's action) from his wickedness, "and" (another condition) he will surely live. (Be granted life by God for choosing righteousness)

22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

Then God goes on to state that the man's sins will not be mentioned, and the man's righteousness shall let him live.

23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Then God says that He has no desire for "the wicked" to die, but that all of them live.

Now, God who is without change, states that his will is that no wicked man perish in sin, but that they all live. Let's suppose as you said, that he is talking only about the house of Israel.

According to your philosophy, God saved every one of them, and they all together as a whole went into the kingdom of God. Yet we know by scripture, that Israel did not respond to Ezekiel. So what then?

Did the words which Ezekiel spoke that were God's words, which were the will of God fail?

Oh, I know, God knowing that none of them would respond had this whole discourse over their sin being their responsibility, and it being their responsibility to repent and be righteous was just for show. It meant nothing to the hearers, and it did not profit the messenger. Neither did the words of God profit God, as the people did not respond to them. So the words which God spoke were void, and the messenger spoke void words, and the people refused to hear these void words, unless of course they were already righteous, in which case they would have cause to accuse God of deceit.

24But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Now verse 24 states that a man can be righteous, and turn to wickedness, it does not say that he was never righteous, these are the words of God, and God says that a man can be righteous and turn to wickedness, and if he does, he will die in his sin.

25Yet ye say, The way of the LORD is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

God defends His justice against menial arguments of equality, that the righteousness should outweigh the wickedness.

26When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

He then restates in 27 and 28 from reciprocating views that both a wicked man, and a righteous man can turn from their way and follow the other, and He also states the consequences for either man's decision.

27Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

28Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

29Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the LORD is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

He again makes His defence of His own justice.

30Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Now He says to Israel that each individual will be judged for their individual sins, according to what they choose.

Then I would like you to note that He commands them to repent, and turn from their sin, (which they did not do).

31Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

32For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Lastly God again says that He desires no wicked man to die, but that all of them repent.

Now let's examine what we have seen here in light of what you believe, and the fact that Israel did not repent.

I. God's word is void.

II. God deceived Israel into believing that they could repent.

III. God lied and said that a righteous man can lose his righteousness.

IV. There was no point to anything that God said to Israel, as only He could perform that which He commanded them to perform.

V. God is a cruel God who commands Israel to repent, when they cannot.

VI. What was the point of Ezekiel ever speaking?

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/10/5 2:15

Brother Ben wrote:

Quote:
-----Now, God has been doing this throughout the entire chapter, as is his nature throughout the scriptures. But I wanted to point out this scripture specifically, as it carries the most potency towards the point.

God has made a conditional statement. If you study the scriptures, every time that God makes a conditional statement, it is without fail, dependant upon man to take an action. If God did not want the statement to be conditional, he is obviously wise enough to say what he says differently.

Here is where this conditional statement comes into play, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

When God used the word "if", He places the responsibility in man's court to fulfill the "if" that was spoken. Man can choose to, or not to. The consequences for either choice are always clearly outlined by God.

As you have pointed out throughout Scripture this precept...

Rom. 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—¹²not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For IF you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Quote:
-----²⁵Yet ye say, The way of the LORD is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

God defends His justice against menial arguments of equality, that the righteousness should outweigh the wickedness.

Job 34:12 Surely God will never do wickedly,
Nor will the Almighty pervert justice.

Job 34:17 Should one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn Him who is most just?

Job 36:6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked,
But gives justice to the oppressed.

Psa. 37:28 For the LORD loves justice,
And does not forsake His saints;
They are preserved forever,
But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

Quote:
-----³¹Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

³²For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Lastly God again says that He desires no wicked man to die, but that all of them repent.

Gen. 4:6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."
"

God never changes...Amen.

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by BenWilliams (), on: 2007/10/5 10:42

Thanks for the support, glad you enjoyed the articles.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/10/6 10:05

Brother Ben wrote:

Quote:

-----glad you enjoyed the articles.

Anytime one is willing to learn from the Scriptures it is a joy for me...

I only hope that others are allowing the Scriptures to personally teach them as you are honestly seeking to understand and gain in knowledge the ways of God...

God Bless

Continue on as a Berean not willing to submit to the mere teaching of men. The Scriptures will free you from being a man pleaser...

In Christ
Jeff