Appendix

An Outline of Romans

Any outline for Romans is to some extent arbitrary. In many places, Paul’s argumentation flows from one idea to another without an obvious break. In addition, when Paul wrote, it was not customary to give any visual clues concerning structure. Thus, in the first century there were no paragraphs, no punctuation, no small letters, and no space between words. In all probability the original copy of Romans consisted only of an endless stream of capital letters! The chapter and verse numbers, which we now take for granted, were added centuries after Paul’s death and are no more than a series of later conjectures as to where the text should be divided.

Any modern attempt to outline the text depends to a large extent on one’s understanding of what Paul’s overall purpose in writing the letter was.

As the reader now knows, I believe that Paul was trying to gain support from the entire Roman church by arguing that the gospel was for the Jews first and also for the Greeks.

The following outline attempts to respect the basic points in Paul’s argument as I understand it and gives one possible interpretation of where to split up the text into major and minor sections.
An Outline of Romans

I. Introduction to the letter: Paul plans to preach his gospel at Rome (1:1–15)
   A. Paul the writer of the letter introduces himself as someone who is qualified to preach at Rome (1:1–6).
      1. Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ and called to preach the gospel (1:1).
      2. According to that gospel Jesus Christ is the savior of the whole world (1:2–4).
         a. Jesus fulfills the hopes of the Jews, since he was foretold by the prophets and is a descendant of David (1:2–3).
         b. He is also Lord of the Gentiles since he has risen from the dead and reigns as Son of God (1:4).
      3. Consequently, Paul must preach the gospel to all peoples, including those at Rome (1:5–6).
   B. Paul greets his readers at Rome as people who are ready to hear the gospel (1:7).
      1. The Christians at Rome are beloved to God and are called to be holy (1:7a).
      2. Paul wishes them the grace and peace that come from Jesus (1:7b).
   C. Paul announces that he plans to come to Rome so that he and the Roman Christians can encourage one another (1:8–15).
      1. The faith of the Romans is famous (1:8).
      2. For a long time Paul has wanted to come to Rome so he and the Romans may strengthen one another (1:9–13).
      3. Paul has an obligation to preach the gospel to all peoples and, hence, is eager to do so also at Rome (1:14–15).

II. The theme of the letter: The gospel is for the Jews first and also for the Greeks because we can only become righteous and find life through faith (1:16–17).
III. Because salvation is through faith, the Gospel is also for the Greeks, and, consequently, the Jews should not despise them (1:18–8:39).

A. Apart from faith in Jesus, both the Jews and the Gentiles are lost (1:18–3:20).

1. Without Jesus, the Gentiles are utterly depraved and have no excuse for their sins (1:18–1:32).
   a. The Gentiles refused to acknowledge the one God (1:18–23).
      1) The Gentiles should have recognized God, since he can be perceived from his creation (1:18–20).
      2) But the Gentiles were unwilling to honor God and instead indulged in idle religious speculation and ended up worshipping idols (1:21–23).
   b. Consequently, by God's decree the Gentiles fell into gross sin (1:24–32).
      1) False worship led to perverse desires which in turn led to wicked and degrading practices (1:24–31).
      2) Worst of all, the Gentiles actually encourage one another to follow such evil even though they realize that it leads to death (1:32).

2. Without Jesus those who condemn are no better than those they condemn and will fare no better at the final judgment (2:1–16).
   a. Those who judge the Gentiles are in practice committing the same sins (2:1).
   b. Therefore, those who judge will themselves receive condemnation at the last judgment (2:2–5).
   c. At the last judgment God will impartially judge both the Jews and the Gentiles, and, consequently, there will be rewards and punishments for both Jews and Greeks in accordance with what they have done (2:6–16).
      1) God will judge the Jews and Greeks impartially on the basis of their deeds (2:6–11).
      2) Specifically, Jews will be judged, not on whether they know the law, but on whether they have kept it (2:12–13).
      3) Gentiles will be judged on whether they have followed the leading of their consciences which instinctively know the law (2:14–16).
3. Despite the fact that the Jews who do not follow Christ have the advantage of knowing the law and being circumcised, they nevertheless are grievously sinful and are subject to God's condemnation (2:17-3:8).
   a. The Jews boast about the law and use it to instruct others (2:17-20).
   b. But in practice the Jews do not keep the law, and this sinfulness causes Gentiles to revile God (2:21-24).
   c. Circumcision is only of value if those who are circumcised keep the law, because true circumcision is spiritual (2:25-29).
   d. The fact that God entrusted the Jews with both the Law and circumcision does not mean that he must spare the Jews in order to accomplish his will (3:1-8).
4. Summary: The Jews as well as the Gentiles are totally under the control of sin because the law by itself does not give us the power to live more righteously (3:9-20).
   a. Scripture shows that the Jew is no better off than the Gentile because no one is righteous (3:9-18).
   b. The purpose of the law is to make us subject to God's condemnation (3:19).
   c. The law does not by itself give us the power to live better (3:20).
B. Both Jews and Gentiles will be saved in the same way—by faith in Jesus rather than through the Jewish law (3:21-8:39).
1. All must be saved by faith apart from deeds performed through the power of the Jewish Law (3:21-31).
   a. All have failed to keep the law and must be saved by the trusting in the gift of Jesus' blood (3:21-26).
   b. Only such trust frees us from pride in our own deeds (3:27-28).
   c. There is only one God and, hence, Jews and Gentiles must be saved in the same way (3:29-30).
   d. Faith in Jesus does not undermine the law but actually upholds it (3:31).
2. The example of Abraham who was the ancestor of both Jews and Gentiles helps show that all must be saved through faith (4:1-25).
   a. Abraham was the physical ancestor of the Jews (4:1).
   b. If Abraham had been justified by his own deeds, he could have boasted (4:2).
c. But scripture insists that Abraham received salvation through faith (4:3).
d. Such faith delivers us from pride, for if we were saved by our own deeds we could boast (4:4).
e. If we trust in God to save us despite our unrighteousness, he will treat us as if we were righteous. David proclaims this (4:5–8).
f. The example of Abraham proves that all must come to salvation through faith, because he had faith, and before Abraham was circumcised God treated him as if he were righteous. Indeed, circumcision was the attestation of what Abraham already possessed (4:9–11a).
g. Abraham is the ancestor of all who have faith, whether circumcised or not (4:11b-12).
h. It was by faith that Abraham received the promise that he would inherit the world and be the father of both Jews and Gentiles (4:13–17a).
i. Abraham showed his faith by believing that God could give life to the dead through giving Abraham a son despite his advanced years and impotence (4:17b-22).
j. Today we too will receive life and righteousness if we imitate the faith of Abraham by believing in the God who raised Jesus from the dead so we might be justified (4:23–25).

3. By faith we are saved from the power of sin and receive the hope of sharing in God’s glory (5:1–11).
   a. By faith in Jesus we have access to God’s grace and, hence, have hope (5:1–2).
   b. By the power of the Holy Spirit, this grace and hope allow us to grow despite suffering (5:3–5).
   c. Through the death of Jesus, God has shown how great his love for us is (5:6–8).
   d. Consequently, we can be sure that in the future God will save us and, therefore, we boast in him (5:9–11).

4. Because Jesus is the new Adam, both Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way (5:12–21).
   a. Through Adam, sin and death spread to all people, even though there was no Jewish Law until the time of Moses (5:12–14).
b. Through Jesus God’s grace has become available to all people and more than overcomes the consequences of Adam’s sin (5:15–19).
c. The Jewish Law merely caused sin to abound, but the grace available in Jesus is more than sufficient to deal with the problem (5:20–21).

5. We are all saved in the same way because Jesus has freed us from sin and law (6:1–7:6).
   a. As Christians we cannot continue in sin, because when we were baptized into Christ we died to sin and rose to new life in him (6:1–11).
   b. Consequently, we should live as people who have died and risen, since we are not subject to the Law but to God’s grace in Jesus (6:12–14).
   c. We are slaves to whomever we obey, and we must either choose to serve sin which leads to death or serve righteousness which leads to eternal life in Christ; of course, we should do the second (6:15–23).
   d. As the analogy of marriage shows, when we died with Jesus, we were freed from the Law (7:1–6).
      1) By law, a woman is bound to her husband only as long as he is alive; once he is dead she is free to marry someone else (7:1–3).
      2) So too, since we died with Jesus, we are no longer subject to the old Law (7:4).
      3) Consequently, we are no longer slaves to the sinful passions which the Law provoked but can serve God in the new life of the Spirit (7:5–6).

6. Indeed, even though the Law is itself not sinful, nevertheless without Jesus it causes us to become more sinful (7:7–25).
   a. Even though the Law is not sinful, it teaches us what sin is (7:7).
   b. Sin then makes use of this knowledge gained through the Law to produce more sin (7:8–11).
   c. By this process, sin is exposed, and, consequently, the Law itself is good (7:12–13).
   d. Although the Law is spiritual, we are slaves to sin (7:14).
   e. Even when we choose to do what is right, we are unable to accomplish it, because, when we are under the Law, sin controls us (7:15–23).
f. Hence, only Jesus Christ, not the Law, can free us from sin (7:24-25)

7. Through the Spirit of Jesus, Christians have been set free from sin and the Law and look forward to final salvation (8:1-39).
   a. By sending his Son into the realm of sin and law, God vanquished them (8:1-4).
   b. The test of whether we have been freed from sin is whether we can set our minds on spiritual things (8:5-8).
   c. Christians have God’s Spirit which gives us new life (8:9-11).
   d. Hence, Christians are free to serve God, and if we follow the leading of the Spirit, we become children and heirs of God (8:12-17).
   e. We along with the whole creation wait in hope for final salvation (8:18-25).
   f. As we wait, the Spirit helps us (8:26-27).
   g. We can be certain that we will be saved because God predestined us to become like his Son (8:28-30).
   h. Nothing can separate us from God’s love made known in Jesus (8:31-39).

IV. Because of God’s unchanging election, which we know through faith, the gospel is for the Jews first, and, consequently, the Gentiles should not despise them (9:1-15:6).

A. God has a continuing plan for the Jews and will in the end save all Israel. Hence, Gentile Christians should not look down on them (9:1-11:36).
   1. Paul himself has deep personal concern for the Jews, especially since their heritage gives them priority in salvation (9:1-5).
   2. God intends to save all Israel through his own mysterious plan, and Gentiles have no basis for feeling superior (9:6-11:32).
      a. God’s plan for the Jews has not failed (9:6-29).
         1) In the past God has fulfilled his plan by choosing some rather than others to belong to his chosen people (9:6-9).
         2) His choice was based on his own will, not the virtue of those who were called (9:10-13).
3) God has the right to make such a choice, and, hence, everything depends on him (9:14-23).

4) In the prophets God foretold that he would call the Gentiles and that only a remnant of the Jews would remain faithful (9:24-29).

b. The Gentiles are in no way superior to the Jews (9:30-11:24).

1) The reason that the Gentiles are presently achieving righteousness, whereas most Jews are not, is that the Gentiles are striving on the basis of faith, whereas the Jews are still trying to establish their own righteousness through keeping the Law (9:30-10:3).

2) Christ is the goal of the Law, and now both Jews and Gentiles must be saved through calling on him (10:4-13).

3) Before people can call on Jesus they must first hear the gospel (10:14-15).

4) Israel has heard the gospel, but it was prophesied that Israel would have to become jealous before returning to God (10:16-21).

5) God has not rejected his people, since there is still a faithful Jewish remnant chosen by God’s grace; Paul himself is an illustration (11:1-6).

6) By God’s decree the rest of the Jews were unresponsive (11:7-10).

7) This hardening is temporary and allows the Gentiles to receive salvation; the Gentiles will make the Jews jealous (11:11).

8) The coming inclusion of the Jews will be a blessing for the world (11:12-16).

9) Gentile Christians should not boast against the Jews, because Gentile Christians depend on the Jewish heritage and stand only by faith (11:17-22).

10) God has the power to bring the Jews into the church (11:23-24).
c. Moreover, in the end all Israel will be saved (11:25–32).
   1) All Israel will be saved when Christ returns (11:25–27).
   2) This salvation must take place because God is faithful to his ancient promises to the Jews (11:28–29).
   3) Just as the Gentiles were disobedient and received mercy, so the Jews needed to become disobedient in order that they too might be saved by God’s mercy (11:30–32).

3. Although God’s ways are beyond understanding, we can affirm that all things must return to him because he created them all (11:33–36).

B. Christians should be humble and live in harmony, and the strong should be especially considerate of weak Jewish Christians (12:1–15:6).
   1. Christians should exercise a host of general virtues and, especially get along with one another and outsiders (12:1–13:14).
      a. Christians should not conform to the ways of the world but discern and follow God’s will (12:1–2).
      b. As individuals, we must not have an excessively high opinion of ourselves but by God’s grace use our gifts for the good of the community (12:3–8).
      c. We should exercise the virtues of love and humility (12:9–16).
      d. We are to leave vengeance against our persecutors up to God (12:17–21).
      e. We must always obey the government because it derives its authority from God (13:1–7).
      f. We fulfill the entire law by loving one another (13:8–10).
      g. Since the day of salvation is near, we must live virtuously now (13:11–14).

2. Strong Christians and weak Jewish ones should be tolerant of one another, but the strong should be especially considerate of conservative Jewish members of the church (14:1–15:6).
   a. The strong and the weak should not judge one another, because God is the only one who has the right to judge, and each of us will have to answer to him (14:1–12).
b. Although the strong are right in claiming that nothing is inherently unclean, they should, in practice, not do anything which would entice the weak to act against their own consciences (14:13-23).

c. Conclusion: As scripture teaches, we who are strong should follow the example of Christ and not do as we please but do what builds up the church (15:1-4).

d. A blessing: May God grant that the church in Rome be united (15:5-6).

V. Conclusion to 1:1-15:6: Consequently, Jewish and Gentile Christians should support one another because the gospel is for the Jews first and also for the Gentiles (15:7-13).
A. We should all welcome one another as Christ welcomed us (15:7).
B. Christ became a servant of the Jews to fulfill God’s promises to them, and Christ also brought mercy to the Gentiles (15:8-9a).
C. Scripture attests that the Gentiles will receive salvation along with the Jews (15:9b-11).
D. Scripture also reminds us that Jesus was born as a descendant of David and by the resurrection became ruler of the Gentiles (15:12).
E. A blessing from Paul: May God fill the entire Roman community with joy and hope (15:13).

VI. Personal appendix: The Roman Church should support Paul’s missionary work, because it is both to the Gentiles and the Jews, and Paul is opposed to anything that would divide the church (15:14-16:23).
A. Paul was rather bold in giving his advice, especially since the Roman Christians are themselves knowledgeable (15:14-15).
B. He was bold because his gospel is for the Gentiles, and through him God had accomplished so much. Hence, the Roman Church should support Paul (15:16-24).
2. By the power of God Paul has preached the gospel to Gentiles throughout the eastern Mediterranean, always working in virgin territory (15:17-22).
3. Paul now plans to visit the Roman Christians on his way to preach to (Gentile) Spain (15:23-24a).
4. The Romans should consider giving him support for his work in Spain (15:24b).

C. Nevertheless, he is also working to help the Jews since he is taking the offering of the Gentile churches to the church at Jerusalem. The Romans should also support his mission to Jerusalem (15:25—32).
   1. Paul is now taking the offering of the Gentiles to the church at Jerusalem (15:25).
   2. Paul feels that it is important for Gentiles to help the Jews in material things since the Gentiles are spiritually indebted to Jewish Christians (15:26–27).
   3. Only after taking the offering to Jerusalem, will Paul go to Rome and Spain (15:28–29).
   4. Paul appeals to the Romans to pray for him in order that he will be safe and successful in his trip to Jerusalem (15:30–32).

D. Paul gives a blessing to all his readers (15:33).
E. Paul commends Phoebe to the Romans (16:1–2).
F. He sends greetings to both individual Jewish and Gentile Christians (16:3–16).
G. Paul urges the Romans to beware of divisive Christians (16:17–20a).
H. Paul gives a blessing (16:20b).
I. Paul sends greetings from both Jewish and Gentile Christians (16:21–23).

[VII. Additions to Romans made after Paul’s death.
   A. A blessing modeled on the one in 16:20b (16:24).
   B. A doxology which praises God for revealing his eternal purposes in this letter (16:25–27).]