

Romans

1. Why Romans?

- Longest letter – no co-author – first among letters in NT manuscripts
- Later Pauline letter – mid- to late 50s (56-58 CE)
- Most coherent account of the gospel for Jews and Gentiles
- Great influence in Christian theology
 - Augustine (386) and original sin/free will (Romans 5) and *tolle lege* (Romans 13.14)
 - Luther (1515-16) and justification by faith alone (1.17)
 - Wesley (1738) whose heart was “strangely warmed” when reading Luther on Romans
 - Barth (1919) and his *Römerbrief*
- At centre of Protestant-Catholic debates and Jewish-Christian controversy

2. The Roman Text

- Authenticity of text not seriously questioned (1.1-16.27 virtually unattested)
- Textual fluctuations in some manuscripts have raised questions about specific parts

3. Paul's Situation and Romans

- Written from Corinth and delivered by Phoebe (16.1)
- Corinthians connections (?) also via Gaius and Erastus (16.23)
- To community(ies) not founded or visited by Paul or his assistants
- 15.14-33: Jerusalem and the Collection – Travel plans to Rome – Mission to Spain

4. The “Romans Debate”

- Competing theories about the purpose of Romans
- Three locations are part of this debate
 - Jerusalem/apologetic: rehearsal of Paul's speech to Jerusalem (Jervell)
 - Spain/missionary: seeking assistance of Romans (Jewett)
 - Rome/pastoral: specific Roman situation (Watson); defence against antinomianism (Tobin); proclamation of gospel to correct misunderstanding (Gaventa)

Other options:

- Thesis statement is 1.16-17 and focus on justification
- Thesis statement is chapters 9-11 (11.25-26) and relationship between Israel and the

Gentiles

- Explanation of apparent failure of God's promise to Israel
- Thesis statement is 11.13-32 and warning against Gentile arrogance

5. Roman Situation and Paul

- Audience is difficult to determine: 1.5-6 and 11.13 (Gentile?); 2.17 and 7.1 (Jewish?)
- Judaism in Rome post-Edict of Claudius (49 CE) – well-established, history of conflict, multiple synagogues, Greek speaking, return not long before Paul's letter
- Beginning of the reign of Nero (54-68 CE)
- Most extensive greetings by name in ch 16
 - Slave and free?
 - Not a single community addressed but multiple ones
 - Role of women (9 of 26 individuals greeted are women)

6. Overview

- 1.1-15: Introduction
- 1.16-17: Thesis Statement
- 1.18-4.25: God's righteousness manifested in Christ/God's saving power
- 5.1-8.39: Reconciliation and new life in Christ/God's saving power extended
- 9.1-11.36: Salvation of Israel/God's saving power considered in light of Israel
- 12.1-15.13: The Christian life/God's saving power in community
- 15.14-16.24: Conclusion

7. Distinctive Elements and Issues

- Structure and Rhetoric
- Use of Scripture
- Paul, the Law, and Righteousness/Justification (cf. 1.16-17; 3.21-26)
- Israel and the Gentiles (chs. 9-11; esp. 11.25-27)
- Sin, sins, and Original Sin (?) (cf. 5.12)

Pauline Soteriology

1. Paul's Soteriology: Introduction

Focus: death *and* resurrection of Jesus (cf 1 Cor 15.3-5; Rom 4.25; Rom 6.3-4)

Salvation history: emphasizes the continuity of the divine plan for salvation

Salvation (*soteria*) in context

“saved” (Rom 8.24) – “being saved” (1 Cor 1.18) – “will be saved” (Rom 5.9-10)

2. Dimensions of Paul's understanding of salvation

Cosmic: salvation as rescue from evil powers (Sin vs sin) – Romans 5

Ethnic: salvation as inclusion with the chosen people of God – Romans 11

Personal: salvation as forgiveness and restoration; justification – Romans 1.16-17; 3.21

3. Soteriological language in Paul's letters

Salvation as:

Justification (recall Romans 3.25-26)

New creation (2 Cor 5.17; Gal 6.15; Rom 8.19-23)

Incorporation into the Body of Christ/Baptism (Romans 6.3-5)

Reception of the Spirit (Romans 8.11)

Freedom and liberation (Gal 3.13; Rom 6.18; 8.2)

Inheritance and adoption (Gal 3.18; 1 Cor 6.9-10; Rom 4.13-14)

4. Key titles (Christology)

Saviour (Phil 3.20; see also 1 Thess 5.9; Rom 1.16-17; 1 Cor 15.1-2; Rom 11.26)

sin offering (Rom 8.3)

mercy seat (Rom 3.25)

sin and curse (2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.13)

first fruits (1 Cor 15.20-23)

last Adam (1 Cor 15.22, 45; Rom 5.12-21)

5. Key metaphors:

Sacrifice: Christ's death as victim and substitute (Rom 3.25; 1 Cor 5.7)

Juridical: Christ suffers penalty due to guilty under the law (Rom 5.1)

Cosmological: Christ's death defeats evil powers and ushers in a new age

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