

NT 750
Romans
Fall, 2009
Loyd Melton, Ph. D.
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Due West Campus
Thursdays, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course deals with the historical background and other introductory matters pertaining to Romans as the basis for a detailed interpretation of the Epistle. Emphasis is placed on the theological ideas of Romans in relation to the whole of Pauline thought. Bibliography and methodology of interpretation are given attention.

ELECTIVE/EXEGESIS. Three hours credit.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

"The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church." (ETS 2008-2009 *Catalog*, p. 5) Understanding the meaning of Christ's coming into the world is central to Christian service. Romans is Paul's most systematic presentation of the Christian faith. Thus, this course is a direct expression of the Seminary's mission.

More specifically, by the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Summarize the way that Romans has influenced the life of the church from the Reformation period to the

- present;
2. Describe the major options for understanding the purpose of Romans, while indicating the strengths and weaknesses of each one;
 3. Describe the likely circumstances to which Romans seems to be addressed;
 4. Outline the basic structure of Romans;
 5. Sketch what can be known with reasonable certainty about the life of Paul;
 6. Describe the major influences on the thinking of Paul, especially as they appear in Romans;
 7. From the text of Romans, define these terms: *sin*; *wrath of God*; *righteousness*; *justification*; *reconciliation*; *grace*; *faith*; *sanctification*.
 8. Trace the development of the major themes that run through Romans;
 9. Suggest specific ways that Romans can be preached and/or taught in the church today;
 10. Begin to develop a bibliography on Romans.

III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Each student must purchase the following books for the course. **NOTE: Students are required to secure their own copies of required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary offers a bookstore portal on the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors, and can compare prices and place orders. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will stock a small number of each required text and book orders can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.**

Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. ISBN 0-8028-3636-4

Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. ISBN 0-6642-2873-9

Th. M. students must purchase the following additional textbook:

Kark P. Donfried, ed. *The Romans Debate*, Rev. Ed. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991. ISBN 9-7815-6563-6712

In addition, the student will need a copy of the New Testament in the translation of his/her choice. Students who are proficient in Greek are encouraged to use the Greek text for the course.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student must attend class. If a student must miss a class meeting, he/she is responsible for all work done and/or missed on that day. **A student who misses more than three of the class meetings will automatically fail the course.**
2. Each student must be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation consists of completion of all reading and/or writing assignments for that day. It is especially important that each student read the portion of Romans that will be discussed on that day. The format of the course will be lecture-discussion. The student is expected to participate intelligently in classroom discussions based on his/her reading.
3. All work must be done on time and all tests must be taken on the assigned dates. **Work that is turned in late may be graded down at least one letter.** The professor reserves the right to reject any work that is excessively late.
4. **Two one-hour tests will be given.** See the **COURSE OUTLINE** for the dates and material covered on these tests.
5. **A comprehensive final examination will be given at the end of the course during the Exam days.** The date for this exam is December 10.

6. **One major research paper will be required.** The student has a number of different options for this paper. He/she may choose some topic related to the background, structure, theology, etc. of Romans. Some possible topics are included in this syllabus.

Students intending to use this course to fulfill their New Testament exegesis requirement, must choose a passage from Romans and do a thorough exegetical study, using the exegetical procedure taught in the Principles of Exegesis course. **Such students, then, must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis and, for those who began in Fall 2008 or after, BI 503 Introduction to the Biblical Languages prior to taking any course for exegesis credit.** Additionally, students who are required to take the Biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) must, in place of BI 503 Introduction to the Biblical Languages, successfully complete the respective language courses (Greek I & II for New Testament courses) prior to taking any Bible course for exegesis credit. Students taking Bible electives without having met the exegesis and language course prerequisites may only count those courses as general Bible electives, and cannot receive exegesis credit for them.

The major paper for this course should be no more than 20 pages long. It must be well-written and fully documented using Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition or later, as the guide. The paper will be graded primarily on content but also on style and form. This paper is a research paper. The student must make use of at least 10 scholarly sources with no more than one of these being an Internet source.

The finished copy of this paper is due no later than Thursday, December 3. Papers submitted after this date may be penalized at least one letter grade or not accepted at all.

7. Throughout the semester, students may be given short,

individual assignments which they will complete and usually report back to the class at a specified time.

These assignments will relate to issues raised in our study of Romans.

8. Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

9. Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

10. The student is encouraged to keep a loose-leaf notebook for the course. He/she can use it for class notes, reading notes, hand-outs, sermon ideas, bibliographical information, etc. If done properly, this notebook can be a great resource for further study, teaching, and preaching from Romans.

11. The student should review the Seminary policy on "Incompletes." An "Incomplete" is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. According

to the Seminary *Catalog*, it can be given as a final grade only (1) when the student has completed most of his/her course work and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from doing the rest. **In this class, the grade "Incomplete" will be given only when both of these conditions are met. If a student is granted an "Incomplete" in this course, he/she has until March 1, 2010 to remove it. If it is not removed by that date, it will automatically become an "F."**

12. The student should note the following administrative policy concerning registration, withdrawal, etc. The student's completed and signed registration form is a binding contract and the student's billing is based on this contract. If the student decides to drop/add a course, he/she must fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Registrar. Failure to do this will result in the student's being charged for the course even if he/she does not attend or the student's not getting academic credit if the student has added it without registering for it. Under no circumstances can a professor withdraw a student from or add a student to a course. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.**

13. A student who chooses to use this course to fulfill his/her New Testament exegesis requirement must submit the exegesis paper as a part of his/her Portfolio requirement. This Portfolio requirement applies to all students who enter any Master's program in the Fall of 2002 or afterwards. Students in the M. Div. program are required to submit a New Testament exegesis paper. **It is the student's responsibility to turn in a clean, corrected copy of his/her New Testament exegesis paper to the seminary office for inclusion in his/her Portfolio.** Failure to do so will delay the student's graduation. Portfolio requirements are listed on the back of the academic worksheet of all degree programs.

14. In addition to meeting the course requirements that have been specified in this syllabus, Th. M. students must also read Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate*, by the end of the semester. They must submit a statement that they have read

the book and their major paper should demonstrate dialog with the issues raised in this book.

V. EVALUATION

The Seminary grade scale (ETS 2008-2009 *Catalog*, pp. 42-43) will be used. The student's final grade will be determined as follows:

Two tests	=	40%
Major paper	=	30%
Final examination	=	30%

COURSE OUTLINE

9-3 Course introduction, requirements, etc.

I. An Introduction to Romans

- A. The importance of Romans in the life of the church
- B. Introductory problems with Romans
- C. The quest for the historical Paul
- D. Major influences on the thinking of Paul
- E. The probable date of Romans
- F. The audience of Romans
- G. The purpose(s) of Romans

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-3:

1. Read the entire book of Romans in a translation of your choice. In your notebook, describe your impressions, the tone of the letter, any features that are unusual to you, and your impressions of the letter as a whole.
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 1-34.

9-10 II. The Salutation, Thanksgiving, and Theme (1:1-17)

- A. Introduction
- B. The greeting (1:1-7)
- C. The thanksgiving (1:8-15)
- D. The theme of Romans (1:16-17)
- E. *Excursus*: **The thanksgiving as a key to Paul's thought**

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-10:

1. Read carefully Romans 1:1-17 in a translation of your choice. Note any unusual features. In particular, note the tone of this section. What seems to be going on with Paul and his readers here?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 35-72.
3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. xix-xxvi, 1-9.

**9-17 III. The Wrath and the Righteousness of God
9-24 (1:18--4:25)**

- A. Introduction
- B. The Biblical meanings of "wrath" and related terms
- C. God's justified wrath upon the Gentiles (1:18-32)
- D. God's justified wrath upon the Jews (2:1--3:8)
- E. The Biblical meanings of "righteousness" and related terms
- F. The righteousness of God as shown in the Old Testament (3:9-22)
- G. The righteousness of God as a gift for all (3:21-31)
- H. The justification of Abraham by faith alone (4:1-25)

- I. A summary of Paul's argument in 1:18--4:25

ASSIGNMENT FOR 9-17 AND 9-24:

1. Read carefully Romans 1:18--4:25. Record your impressions. Ponder especially these questions: (a) What is the view of God's wrath that emerges here? (b) How is sin understood? (c) Are the horrible things that we humans do our problems or only symptoms? (d) What does Paul mean here by the righteousness of God?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 72-216.
3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. 11-41.

10-1 TEST # 1 ON I - III ABOVE (first part of period)

10-1 IV. The Results of Justification (5:1--8:39)

10-8

10-15

- A. Introduction
 - B. The gift of the access to grace (5:1-11)
 - C. The old Adam vs. the new Adam (5:12-21)
 - D. The antinomian perversion of salvation as a gift from God (6:1-23)
 - E. Unmasking the real nature of the Law (7:1-25)
 - F. The gift of the Spirit (8:1-11)
 - G. Living in the Spirit (8:12-17)
 - H. The redemptive presence of the Spirit in suffering and hope (8:18-30)
 - I. The grand assurance of the presence of the Spirit in the experience of absence (8:31-39)
 - J. A summary of Paul's argument in 5:1--8:39
 - K. *Excursus: Paul and the Spirit*

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-1, 10-8, AND 10-15:

1. Read carefully Romans 5:1--8:39 in a translation of your choice. Note your impressions. In particular, consider these questions: (a) How does this section relate to Romans 1-4? (b) How does Paul's teaching about the Spirit here compare to that in 1 Corinthians 12-14? (c) Describe in your own words here what Paul means by life in the Spirit.
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 217-342.
3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. 43-94.

10-22 V. The Place of Israel in God's Redemptive Purposes in the World (9:1--11:36)**10-29**

- A. Introduction
- B. The place of Romans 9-11 in the overall structure of Romans
- C. Paul's plea for Israel (9:1-5)
- D. The grace revealed in God's choice (9:6-18)
- E. God's initiative and Israel's rejection (9:30--10:21)
- F. The remnant (11:1-10)
- G. Paul's warning against Gentile arrogance (11:11-24)
- H. The hope of Israel's restoration (11:25-36)
- I. Romans 9-11 as a missiological statement

ASSIGNMENT FOR 10-22 AND 10-29:

1. Read carefully Romans 9:1--11:36 in a translation of your choice. Record your impressions. Think especially about these questions: (a) How do these chapters tie in with the situation that we have set forth as the most likely events which have produced Romans? (b) Describe the tension you see in these chapters between God's sovereign

- will to do as He pleases and human responsibility.
 (c) What, if anything, do these chapters say about the nation of Israel today?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 343-430.
 3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. 95-128.

11-5 TEST # 2 ON IV AND V ABOVE (first part of period)

11-5 VI. The Life of Obedience (12:1--15:13)
11-12

- A. Introduction
- B. The call to be transformed (12:1-2)
- C. The transformed life lived in the church (12:3-13)
- D. The transformed life lived in the world (12:14--13:7)
- E. The relationship between obedience and the Law (13:8-10)
- F. The real nature of our time (13:11-14)
- G. The weak and the strong in the church (14:1-12)
- H. The warning against causing others to stumble (14:13-23)
- I. Jesus as our example in living (15:1-6)
- J. The church as a welcoming community (15:7-13)
- K. *Excursus*: **Paraenesis in Paul**

ASSIGNMENT FOR 11-5 AND 11-12:

1. Read carefully Romans 12:1--15:13 in a translation of your choice. Note your impressions. Consider these questions:
 - (a) How does 12:1-2 tie this section to the rest of the letter?
 - (b) What is the significance of this text and of what follows in understanding the relationship between theology and

- ethics in Paul? (c) In this section, Paul deals with concrete problems in the first-century church. Think of modern-day examples of the same things. How would you apply what Paul says here to some of these contemporary situations?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 431-507.
 3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. 129-142.

11-19 **VII. Paul's Closing Words to the Romans**
12-3

- A. Introduction
- B. The reason Paul writes boldly (15:14-21)
- C. The upcoming perilous visit to Jerusalem (15:22-33)
- D. The interpretative problems with Romans 16
- E. Personal greetings (16:1-16)
- F. Final warning, final blessing (16:17-27)

VIII. A Summary of Romans

- A. The major themes of Romans
- B. Contemporary issues addressed by Romans
- C. The preaching/teaching value of Romans

ASSIGNMENT FOR 11-19 AND 12-3:

1. Read carefully Romans 15:14 - 16:27 in a translation of your choice. Note carefully your impressions. Think about these questions: (a) What is the tone of chapter 15? (b) How do you connect Paul's abrupt return to the discussion about his delayed visit to the Romans here with his discussion in chapter 1? (c) How do you explain the presence of the large number of greetings in Romans 16 to people in a church where he had never been?
2. Read Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 508-548.

3. Read Mark Reasoner, *Romans in Full Circle*, pp. 143-149.
4. **Research/Exegetical Paper on Romans is due on 12-3.**

**12-10 COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAMINATION ON
EVERYTHING ABOVE.**

POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS ON ROMANS

1. The Importance of Romans in the Reformation
2. Paul's Understanding of the Law in Romans
3. Paul's Understanding of Sin in Romans
4. Romans as a Missionary Document in the First Century
5. Christ as the New Adam in Romans
6. How the Letter to the Romans Reflects First-Century Roman Society
7. How the Letter to the Romans Reflects the Life of First-Century Churches
8. An Analysis of a Modern-Day Understanding of Romans
9. A Description of the Christian Churches in Rome in the First Century
10. Paul's Understanding of Flesh in Romans
11. Paul's Understanding of the Spirit in Romans
12. First-Century Jewish Understandings of Abraham

13. A Review and Analysis of Ten Journal Articles on Romans from 1980 to the Present
14. The Relationship Between Theology and Ethics in Romans
15. Paul's Use of Rabbinic Argumentative Techniques in Romans
16. Literary Forms Used by Paul in Romans
17. A Comparison/Contrast Between Romans and Galatians
18. Paul's View of the Church in Romans

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ON ROMANS

Note: A list of significant works on Romans is found in Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. viii-xii and in Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate*, pp. xiii-lxxii.

Barrett, C. K. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper and Row, 1957.

Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. (first published 1933)

Bartlett, David L. *Romans*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995.

Best, Ernest. *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Calvin, John. *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960.

Cranfield, C. E. B. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. Edinburgh: T and T Clark,

1975-79.

Donfried, Karl, ed. *The Romans Debate*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991.

Dunn, J. D. G. *Romans 1 - 8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1988).

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Fitzmeyer, J. A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

Hunter, A. M. *The Epistle to the Romans*. London: S C M Press, 1955.

Kasemann, Ernst. *Commentary on Romans*. Trans. G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

Kaylor, David. *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988.

Moo, Douglas. *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996).

Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Murray, John. *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-65.

Nygren, Anders. *Commentary on Romans*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949.

O'Neill, J. C. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1975.

Schlatter, A. *Romans: The Righteousness of God* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995).

- Stendahl, Krister. *Final Account: Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Stott, John. *Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994).
- Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Trans. Scott J. Hafemann. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994.
- Wedderburn, A. J. M. *The Reasons for Romans*. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1989.
- Ziesler, J. A. *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1989).