Romans

Church History Comments

Impact of Romans huge—key book on Christian doctrine

Augustine

Luther

Wesley

Barth

Paul the apostle

Birth--Tarsus

3 Cultures

Jewish religiously--Phil 3:5, Acts 22:3f

Roman politically—Acts 22:25ff

Greek culturally—Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33


One person can make a difference

Romans

Date: 57 AD; 3MJ from Corinth

Authorship: Paul

Purpose: uniqueness

Coming to them—1:11ff

Needs support for Spain—15:28

Major Issue: Jews & Gentiles

Propositio: Rom 1:16-17 main point—gospel

Gentiles grafted in to olive tree 11:13, 17

Greetings: Rom. 16

Jewish: Herodion, my relative, Priscilla...

Women: Junias—apostle—16:7

Phoebe—servant, carrying letter, receive her—16:1
Tertius: amanuensis—16:22

Basically: neither Jew/Gentile, male/female, bond/free

Rom. 12:1-2 sacrificial system reoriented to personal piety

Romans’ Themes: Harmartiology

Rom. 1-3 on Sin: How do you tell if something is right or wrong? Rom. 1:18, 32; 12:9

Sin –how do we get rid of the notion of sin?

Victim, my parents, my genes, society, pushback—hypocrites, psychological, relativism, tolerance, freedom, love, second chance, supports our ideology

Importance of separating: cultural & transcultural

General External Revelation—1:20 no excuse

Does God ever give up on people?—1:24

Are we better? No; sin → repentance; cf. Rom 1:29-32;

2:4 kindness of God leads to repentance

Modern difficulty with the wrath of God because of moral issues –propitiation, anger appeased 1:18; 2:5f

Gentiles sinful Rom 1:28-32; spiral down

Jews sinful 2:21; 3:20-22

Romans’ Themes

Total Depravity – hamartiology

What’s the problem with “Total Depravity”? Rom 3:9

Gentiles sinful – Rom. 1

Jews sinful (Rom 2): Jews as foil to Christians?

sin/grace; law/faith/works; flesh/Spirit

All sinful - Rom. 3:9f; 20

Rom 1:16f Major theme—new way

not human need/sufficiency,

movement beyond Judaism

How do you get rid of sin: repent /confess/ forgive

or deny/hide/rationalize/accept/defend/advocate

Justification by Faith – sola Fidei

Is sola Fidei a man made doctrine made up by Martin Luther? –Rom 1:16; 5:1; 10:8-9; Gal. 2:16
Careful on the sola—James 2:21ff; Rom 2:6f; Mat 25 sheep/goats; Mat 7:7; Mat 12—who is my brother and sister?

Soteriology Terminology

Justification, 5:1—legal term (regeneration)
Redemption, 1 Pet. 1:18f—debt term
Atonement, 3:25—covering, substitutionary, 5:8
Propitiation, 1:18—appease wrath
Expiation; 1 Jn. 2:2—cleanse
Reconciliation 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18ff—enemies
Adoption: Rom 8:18ff—family term
Sole fidei? cf. James 2:24, 1 Jn. 3:9; Mt 25

Paul’s view of Law

Old view: Jews as foil to Christianity: legalism/grace, law/faith, flesh/spirit, individual salvation
New View: Dunn/E.P. Sanders; law as exclusion/separation versus inclusion—group salvation
Rom 7:12 law good
Rom 3:28, 20, 22 law—expose sin not goodness
Abraham justified when uncircumcised; 4:9
Adam—universal sin; 5:12, 20—all dead/all live

Law not a means of justification—misuse

Sanctification

Is perfection possible? Mat 5:28 be perfect.

Paul’s struggle – Rom 7:21ff

Four approaches

Unbeliever’s struggle—pre-Christ days
Young believer’s struggle
Struggle in the flesh outside the Spirit
Mature believer’s struggle—Normal Xn life

2 Cor 10:5 every thought captive
Election – Predestination

Election
Rom 8:28-29
Eph. 1:4
Rom 9:11 Jacob/Esau; Jer 1:5; 1 Pet 1:2

Problems (see below)—Puritan terror: am I chosen?

Human choice and divine election?

- Hyper-Calvinistic Hard determinism—Ultra-Reformed position – good part = sovereignty of God
- All divine → problems --whosoever will passages
- Contingency or Lucky Calvinists -reformed
- Oxymoron/Antinomy/Paradox –

TULIP Calvinism

TULIP

- Total Depravity –image of God in people
- Unconditional Election: predestination based in divine choice, nothing in us -- whosoever believes
- Limited Atonement: Christ died for the elect, 1 Jn 2:2
- Irresistible Grace: God irresistibly calls the elect—Choice
- Perseverance of the Saints—eternal security; once saved always saved; --fall away?

Election – Predestination cont.

- Arminianism – foreknowledge → predestination, prevenient grace open to all.
- Openness – future open and unknown even to God, pros/cons. We partner with God. God choses some for special tasks—Paul, Isaiah, Jeremiah but not everything specified...open to possibility,

Election/Rejection of Israel not individualized in Rom 8-11 –point is to show building of God’s grace from 9→11 (Doxology: 11:33ff).

Some difficulties

- Rereading Romans 9-11 Election of Israel/Gentiles as groups
- Problem of evil
Problem of prayer
Problem of God changing His mind
Stories of choice—Moses, David
“If” passages --Saul
Invitations seem open to all

Reflections
Systems and boxes: knowing and not knowing—yet wonder/mystery
Transcendence and immanence
Holy other – relational
On breaking boxes and heretic hunting
On arrogance and humility Isa 40:28
Importance: sovereignty of God 8:39f/ choice 2:4

Christian Living
Rom 12:1f—self-sacrifice, transforming the mind,
Hating evil 12:9
Overcoming evil with good 12:21
Government – Rom 13—submit to gov.
Christian Liberty: Weaker Brother – Rom 14