

The primary objective of this project, or final paper in NT631 is to produce a preaching/teaching outline for bringing Romans to an audience typical in any church or para-church organization. The audience may not contain any scholars (although there could be a few in the church!), but men and women in all walks of life with modern, frenetic lives, little time to pay attention to proper scholarship and theology, but with a desire to understand enough of Romans to understand and live out the theology and gospel principles contained therein.

When Paul originally wrote Romans, the letter may have taken weeks to complete in multiple drafts at significant cost¹ of papyrus, quills, and the use of a scribe (in this case, Terius). It is also viewed as a rich, deep, theological treatise. The question therefore is how do I - as a rather unsophisticated, entry-level scholar on the book of Romans - bring it's richness in a straightforward and simple manner to my mid-sized church, or a group of men, or women, or teenagers, or singles, or retirees, or new Christians? How can it be presented and taught so its basic principles and encouragement and theology are understood, remembered, and applied? And finally, how can we bring Romans to regular people in the church without it requiring a year's worth of sermons or teachings?

Perhaps this is a naive and unfair (to Romans, to Paul, to the Gospel) objective. Perhaps we really need to take the time necessary to go through Romans with whatever time is required. A year? Two years? Six months? The equivalent of a school semester? I think I am not yet qualified to address this question effectively, but I know that whether it is one teaching or twenty, there is worth and richness in bringing Romans to our Christian (and non-Christian) sisters and brothers.

¹ In this case estimated total cost of \$2,275 in 2009 dollars. Keener, Craig S., *Romans, A New Commentary*, Cascade Books, Eugene, 2009.

At a practical level, this objective stated in the very first paragraph above will culminate in an outline with key points. The key points will not yet have flesh on the bones. The goal here is to get a general outline together for my esteemed professor to provide some feedback and input. Does it meet the objective above? Are there better ways to organize it?

A Bibliography of resources, listed here with some comments, was the best place to start with this project.

Thielman, Frank, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1018

A detailed and very helpful commentary in that it also provided a “Theology in Application” at the end of each section. This is useful to the teacher to reinforce key points. The Introduction also contains helpful information on Rome and the context in which Paul wrote. The outline in this commentary was very detailed but useful. An example of the practical usefulness of the section titled “Theology in Application:” Romans 2:17-29 - Do not replace obedience with ritual. Do not make a talisman out of any ritual. Ask: how grateful am I to God for what he has done for me?²

Keener, Craig S., *Romans, A New Commentary*, Cascade Books, Eugene, OR, 2009

This commentary also provided a useful background on New Testament letters, on Paul’s relationship to Judaism, on Rome and the early church, and the culture in Rome at the time. Keener also provided a very high-level organization or outline of Romans, and one that was under serious consideration for use in this project.

(1:1-17) Opening and Introduction

(1:18-5:11) Made right by trusting Christ

(5:12-8:39) Life of Christ and the Spirit

² Thielman, pp. 157-159

(9:1-11:36) Israel's role and Salvation

(12:1 - 15:13) Living the Christian Life

(15:14-16:27) Close

Barnett, Paul, Romans - The Revelation of God's Righteousness, Christian Focus Publications, Scotland, UK, 2007 (reprinted)

This is a commentary with perspective from an Australian pastor and teacher. Gentle, warm, and informative, his chapter on Paul's theology is short and basic, but helpful. Dr. Barnett also deals clearly and helpfully with the "New Perspective." Dr. (and Bishop) Barnett had numerous roles in churches and universities in Australia. He also presented a useful condensed outline of Romans.

- Part A - Sin (Romans 1:1 - 3:20)
- Part B - Justified by Faith (Romans 3:21 - 5:11)
- Part C - From Plight to Salvation (Romans 5:12 - 8:39)
- Part D - The Salvation of Israel (Romans 9:1-11:36)
- Part E - The Law of the Spirit (Romans 12:1 - 15:6)
- Part F - Missionary Statesman (Romans 15:7 - 33)

Gorman, Michael J., Romans: A Theological & Pastoral Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2022

A new and wonderfully useful (especially to the pastor and teacher), engaging commentary, the front flap of the cover describes Dr. Gorman's approach.

This commentary engages the letter to the Romans as Christian scripture and highlights the Pauline themes for which Michael Gorman is best known— participation and transformation, cruciformity and new life, peace and justice, community and mission. With extensive introductions both to the apostle Paul and

*to the letter itself, Gorman offers background information on Paul's first-century context before proceeding into the rich theological landscape of the biblical text.*³

This commentary also provides a section at the end of each chapter titled: **Questions for those who Read, Teach, and Preach**. Most helpful! A good checkpoint on whether people are receiving and understanding the teaching.

Gorman's outline of Romans is quite detailed.

Keller, Timothy (edited from the study by), Romans 1-7 for You, The Good Book Company, www.thegoodbook.com, 2014.

This is a Timothy Keller study converted into a group Bible study book. It is written in a very conversational way for small group discussion. The value of this book is not its scholarship, but its process of making the key concepts in Romans accessible and practical. For example, initial outline entries are as follows.

- Introducing the Gospel 1:1-17
- The Pagans Need the Gospel 1:18-32
- The Religious Need the Gospel (Part One) 2:1-16
- The Religious Need the Gospel (Part Two) 2:17-29⁴

Moo, Douglas J., Encountering the Book of Romans, 2nd Ed., Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2014

One of the primary books of this class, it has been very useful and informative to understand the various schools of thought around the key issues in Romans. I especially appreciated how he explored various alternative viewpoints before settling on one

³ Gorman, Inside front cover-flap

⁴ Keller, Contents page

recommended view and explaining his logic for doing so. It is like having a friend far smarter than me, explaining things clearly and helpfully without talking down to me.

Moo's outline in this book is almost identical to the outline contained in one of his other books on this list, *The NIV Application Commentary on Romans*. Both outlines are very detailed and granular.

Moo, Douglas, J., *The NIV Application Commentary: Romans*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2000

Mentioned above, this commentary pivots toward application so usefully. Combined with the other commentaries listed, this one would remain by my side as I teach through Romans.

Moo, Douglas J., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd Ed., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2018

A very detailed commentary and consulted on occasion to dig more deeply into a particular verse or word.

Schreiner, Thomas R., *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans*, Second Edition, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2018

Also very detailed, this commentary was useful in the "exegesis and Exposition" sections of each chapter.

Kierspel, Lars, *Charts on the Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul*, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, 2012

I found this book to be a delight and a gold-mine of useful information. I'm sure I'm not the first person to wonder..."Hmmm...could I convert these charts to PowerPoint slides and teach Romans using some, though maybe not all, of these charts? It would not be appropriate for a sermon or church teaching, but I could see use of these charts in a more serious college-level course.

Certainly the graphical approach appeals to me. This one also stays readily available to consult when I have gone deeply into Romans and wondered...where am I? I rarely sell-back books I purchase for seminary classes, but this book...I will never sell back or give away.

Goodrich, Richard J., and Lukaszewski, Albert L., A Reader's Greek New Testament, 2nd Ed., Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2007

Consulted on occasion for questions on Greek words or phrases. Usually the commentaries handled these questions and issues well, but it was often good to see the words and phrases in context of the rest of the book.

Levine, Amy-Jill, and Brettler, Marc Zvi, Editors, The Jewish Annotated New Testament (Kindle Edition), Oxford University Press, New York, 2017

This book was also consulted on a regular basis. Given the obvious tension between Paul and the Jewish Christians in Rome, the notes and translation in this New Testament were helpful and illuminating.

One Proposed Outline for this Project

Interestingly, the major themes of Romans were represented in slightly different ways across all the commentaries. For example, Thielman summarizes the three main reasons (actually two primary, and one subordinate reason) for writing Romans as follows.⁵

- 1) To exercise his apostolic calling to proclaim the gospel to the nations in a multicultural context of Rome, especially in the sense that he wanted to use the gospel to encourage and strengthen the city's Christians in their faith.
- 2) To ask for support of the Roman Christians in his effort to take the gospel west to Spain.

⁵ Thielman, pp. 38-39

- 3) To ask for Roman Christians to support with their prayers his theologically and practically important task of bringing alms to the predominantly gentile churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia to poverty-stricken Jewish Christians in Jerusalem.

Teaching “Principles” for this Romans project.

- When teaching this, use ample references from the Old Testament in the manner that Paul referenced them. Remember—Romans was written in 57AD (CE) and so other New Testament epistles and letters were not readily available.
- Keep the concepts as simple as possible and avoid controversial views.
- Provide ample context. Compare certain contextual elements to the elements of our day.
- Continuously emphasize the importance of the book of Romans, and why it is so important.
- Do not use big theological words, but do not make it obvious that you are avoiding them because your audience may not understand.
- Where possible, tell stories.

Proposed Teaching/Preaching Outline

Teaching 1: Overview of the letter and context - why it is important. Roll-out the full context in pieces at the front of each teaching in order that you do not have one entire teaching on context only without actionable teaching. An idea to consider: when teaching a section of Romans (e.g., the introduction of Romans 1:1-7), at the end of the teaching, read a “letter” written in modern

style and context to mimic the Pauline letter. For example, v 7 would read “To all in Colorado Springs who are loved by God and called to be his people.”

Teaching 2: Sin, God’s Righteousness, and the Hope of the Gospel. How sin twists all that is good—the law, our identity, God’s justice, even our behavior, into darkness and perversion.

Teaching 3: Identity - who are you? A Jew? A gentile? Who does God say we are? Our ability to turn our own identity into something unintended.

Teaching 4: Idols and idolatry: How they develop; how to deal with them; what God thinks of them.

Teaching 5: the Law, its purpose, beauty, perfection, holiness, and power.

Teaching 6: Jesus, who he is, what he did, the cost to God.

Teaching 7: The Holy Spirit.

Teaching 8: How then shall we live in light of Romans? How are we to think and act? Address behaviorism in the context of Romans.

Teaching 9: Why the Letter to the Romans *matters*. A summary of all the key findings, take-always, and encouragement on identity and living. How the letter to the Romans fits into the

overall panoply of scripture, and why. This is also a final opportunity to reinforce any thinking and life changes we choose.

Finally, a major concern of teaching Romans is how we are able to receive it. Perhaps when we are mentally distracted, emotionally damaged, disinterested or intimidated. It's nice to sit here in a beautiful quiet room amongst brothers and sisters expecting to hear some scriptural encouragement and teaching. What about in the middle of the night when you wake from a nightmare, or the baby is crying and you're so tired you could scream, or when you are angry at your son or daughter or mom or dad or you've been so frustrated at work you could quit? Or you don't have work? Or you just sit down with your phone or tablet or computer and fall victim, once again, to your preferred form of idolatry and lust, whether that's thing porn, money porn, power and entitlement porn, or porn-porn. What about Romans then?