

BL 543, Exposition of Romans (2 crs.). I wanted to share a few thoughts about the letter. Romans is Paul's most famous letter. Church history illustrates its indispensable role through the millennia as copious commentaries scatter throughout the historical terrain. The letter benchmarked Paul when he stood at the height of his missionary prominence and theological prowess. Having fulfilled his eastern Mediterranean mission, Spain captured Paul's apostolic gaze, and Romans captured Paul at his prime. As a result, many see the letter as a collection of Paul's theology; and in a real sense, Romans amounts to a robust conveyance of his theology. However, the letter no doubt falls short of resembling *all* his theologizing. Vital topics are skipped or imprecisely grazed—the Lord's Supper, the Church, the resurrection of believers, and the Second Coming—that were essential issues in his previous letters. Why? We are left to believe that Rome had much to do with why Paul employed *some* but not a *fuller* set of his theological positions in Romans. Furthermore, Paul fascinates with new material in Rom 9–11 and even develops his understanding of the OT Law from his previous work in Galatians.

No other introductory letter preceded Paul's destinations, and yet, Romans preceded Paul's visit to Rome. The letter was an anomaly. Therefore, the letter constitutes a rarity and thus maintained a special place in Paul's life and proved to be a vital instrument to the apostle. The occasion and purpose of the letter are intimately intertwined and not easily exposed. A reading of Rom 1.10–15 and 15.14–33 evidences the occasional nature of the letter and Paul's direct intentions with the Romans. However, the body of the letter is general and irenic with hints of apologetic and pastoral expressions in 1.16–15.13. Yet, both *must be understood in a coherent circumstantial manner*. Therefore, locating the purpose of Romans proves difficult; multiple purposes ensue, as a result. The letter's purpose is ascertained by relating the letter's direct and occasional elements to the letter's general body within the socio-historical situations in Rome and Spain. Join in for the study.

The course will explore the literary structure, theme, and message of Romans. We will also investigate the main historical, exegetical, and theological issues in Romans. The course hopes to share the value the message of Romans for orthodox Christian faith and that the student desires to glorify God in preaching and teaching Romans showing its relevance to life experience.

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