

The Book of Romans

From Back to Front

The Life of Paul

The Life of Paul

- c. CE 6 - Born a Roman citizen to Jewish parents in Tarsus
- c. 20-30 - studies Torah in Jerusalem with Gamaliel, becomes a Pharisee
- c. 30-33 - persecutes followers of Jesus of Nazareth
- c. 33-36 - has vision of Jesus on road to Damascus - joins the Way
- c. 36-44 - flees Damascus, visits Jerusalem and meets apostles, goes to Tarsus
- 44-46 - invited by Barnabas to teach in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)

The Life of Paul

c. 46 - visits Jerusalem with Barnabas to bring famine relief (Acts 11:29)

47-48 - First missionary journey (Acts 13-14)

49 - Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) and confrontation of Peter in Antioch (Gal. 2) - writes Galatians at this time

49-52 - Second Missionary journey (Acts 16:1-18:22)

52-57 - Third Missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:26) - writes 1-2 Corinthians and Romans at this time

The Life of Paul

57 - Returns to Jerusalem and arrested; imprisoned in Caesarea

59-60 - Appeals to trial before Caesar; journey to Rome

60-62 - Under house arrest in Rome - the Book of Acts ends here

62-64 - Released, further travels in the west?

64 - Return to Rome, arrested and martyred

Paul's Letters

The Writing of Paul

Definitely – Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon

Maybe – Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians

Probably not – 1-2 Timothy, Titus

Definitely not – Hebrews

Christianity in Rome

Christianity in Rome

753 BC – Rome founded by Romulus

Rome's victories in the Punic Wars (246–146 BC) over Carthage make Rome the most powerful empire in Western Mediterranean. Victorious in the West, Rome sets its eyes to the East.

63 BC – Led by Pompey, Roman armies conquer Jerusalem

Rome occupies Judea – Jews divided into many sects: Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Pharisees, “people of the land”

Christianity and Rome

19 BC – 14 CE – Augustus Caesar reigns as Emperor – Jesus is born

14-37 – Tiberius Caesar reigns as Emperor – Jesus is crucified

Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) – people visiting Jerusalem from all over hear the gospel; some from Rome would have returned as disciples of Jesus

Tradition is Peter founded church in Rome – probably not true. It's difficult to place Peter in Rome and to imagine Paul writing to a church Peter started

37-41 – Emperor Caligula is CRAZY

Christianity and Rome

41-54 - Emperor Claudius

The historian Suetonius tells us that Claudius “expelled all the Jews from Rome because they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Chrestus.”

”Chrestus” is probably Christ - this hints at disputes in Jewish community over the identity of Jesus.

This event is mentioned in Acts 18:2

By Claudius’ death the Jews were returning. Jewish-Christians would return and find they were a minority in the church, causing social tension

Paul's "Conversion"?

What happened to Paul?

Paul did not “convert” from one religion to another.

Judaism was not one thing - there were a variety of ways of being Jewish

Christianity was not a separate religion yet - a sect of Judaism

As a disciple of Jesus, Paul still identified with Pharisees

Judaism and Christianity

66-70 CE - Jewish revolt against Rome - Vespasian leads Roman siege

69 - Year of Four Emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian) - Vespasian leaves siege to his son Titus to go become emperor. Siege ends with destruction of Temple

132-135 - Jewish revolt led by bar-Kochba - Rabbi Akiva declared Messiah

Aftermath of this revolt is much more violent - Jews barred from Jerusalem

Between 70 and 136 is when Christianity and Judaism went separate ways

The Letter To Rome

The Letter to Rome

Date - 56-57 AD

Location - from Corinth (Acts 20:30; 1 Corinthians 16:5-6)

Occasion

1. To introduce himself to Roman church and ask for help for planned journeys to the West
2. To present teaching in an effort to unify the church
3. To present teaching that would quell rumors he was false teacher

Interpreting Letters

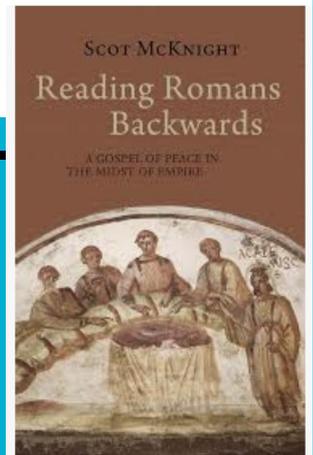
Interpreting Letters - Get Feel For Whole Letter

1. Do some study on historical context
2. Read through letter in one sitting and ask questions
3. Make an outline

Interpreting Letters - Study your specific passage

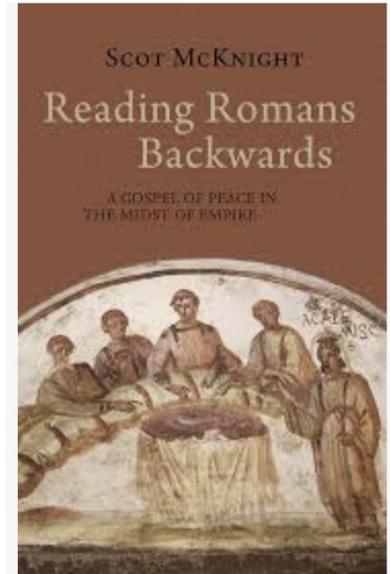
1. Read your passage again and ask more questions
2. Determine the genre - Romans is a letter but within books of Bible there may be other genres or types of the genre
3. Determine context - where the passage occurs in the structure of the book
4. Study Terms - Are there words or images to study deeper
5. Summarize - the main point of the text; the demand on its original readers
6. Bridge the Gap - from what it meant to them to what the lessons are for us

Reading Romans Backwards



‘Romans 12-16 is lived theology, and Romans 1-11 is written to prop up that lived theology. Romans 12-16 is not the application of Paul’s theology, nor is Romans a classic example of the indicative leading to the imperative. . .

Romans is about theology but it isn’t mere theology - it isn’t abstract theology. If you will, the theology of Romans is about a way of life, about lived theology” (xiv)



Read Romans 16:1-27

What jumps out at you from this text?

What questions do you have?

Phoebe

What is the significance of Phoebe in vs. 1-2?

Phoebe is a diakone (deacon) in the church of Cenchreae

House Churches

There were at least five house churches in Rome

Christians in Rome were mostly among the poor with some wealthy

Return of Jewish Christians created tensions - during their exile the Gentile Christians formed a culture that was not Torah-centered - more on this tension when we get to chs. 14-15

Roman homes included many more people than just a nuclear family - renters, slaves, extended family

House churches probably about 40 people

House Churches

1. Household of Prisca/Priscilla and Aquila (16:3-5a)
2. Residence of Aristobulus (16:10)
3. Residence of Narcissus (16:11)
4. Residence of Asyncritus and others (16:14)
5. Residence of Philologus, Julia and others (16:15)

Women Leadership

“Women’s leadership at Rome is obvious: Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena and Tryphosa (perhaps sisters), Persia, Rufus’ mother, Julia, Nereus’ sister, as well as the sisters in the household of Asyncritus” (13)

“Junia was a woman, she was a fellow apostle with her husband, she was a highly esteemed apostle, her name was changed in the course of church history to Junias because it was thought no woman could be an apostle, there was no such masculine name Junias, and it took until the last quarter of the twentieth century for Junia to recover (fully) her female status in the church!” (13)

Divisions

What does Paul say in 16:17-19 about divisions?

What divisions do we have today? What ought we do?