

The Letter to the Romans
Kieran J. O'Mahony OSA
www.tarsus.ie/www.tarsusscriptureschool.ie

Presentation 5

Welcome

- Questions for today
- Place in the letter
- Romans 9-11
- How far have we got?
- And today?

Questions for today

- Jewish/Christian dialogue
- Supercessionism
- In the course of Christian history
- At the beginning: Paul, John, Matthew, Acts - Jesus?
- In Romans, specifically: the Jews and the Gentiles
- The precisely theological nature of the question
- God and the existence of evil
- Tragedy in some pastoral situation
- In the past: static “classical” world-view; what happens is foreseen and is therefore God’s will
- In the present: “evolutionary” world view of ordered randomness; what happens happens; all must – eventually – be dealt with in terms of the relationship with God

Vocabulary

Rom. 9:7 And not all of Abraham’s children are his true descendants; but “It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.” 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants.

Rom. 9:29 And as Isaiah predicted,
 “If the Lord of hosts had not left survivors to us,
 we would have fared like Sodom
 and been made like Gomorrah.”

Rom. 11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Likewise, the following figures occur only here: Sarah, Jacob, Esau, Moses, Abraham, Hosea, Benjamin, Elijah, and Israelite. We could include as well Rebecca and Isaac, and also David.

Frames

Frame (1)

(only occurrences of the word covenant in Romans)

Rom. 9:4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;

Rom. 11:27 “And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.”

Frame (2)

Rom. 9:5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Rom. 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

Rivets

Rom 11:25 So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

Rom 11:30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received

mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy.

Rom 11:36 For from him (God) and through him (God) and to him (God) are all things. To him (God) be the glory forever. Amen.

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is

the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Rom 12:3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

VERSE	TERM	TOPIC
1:1-7	Superscript	Greetings
1:8-15	Introduction	Reasons for coming to Rome
1:16-17	Thesis	Justification, Faith, Jews, Gentiles, live
1:18-4:25	Proof 1	Sin (all) and faith (everyone)
5-8	Proof 2	Salvation for all through Christ
9-11	Proof 3	God's election of both Jews and Gentiles
12-15:6	Proof 4	Life together in the Roman communities
15:7-33	Conclusion	Reasons for coming to Rome
16	Postscript	Greetings

Thesis

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous by faith will live."

<i>Verses</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Frames</i>	<i>Rivets</i>
1:16-4:35	(Un)faith, unrighteousness, Gentile; to write	1:16-17 faith, righteous, written 4:23-25 written, believe, justification	4:23-25 believe, our Lord Jesus, justification 5:1-2 justified, faith, our Lord Jesus Christ
5-8	Sin, Christ, life/live, Spirit.	5:1 God, our Lord Jesus Christ 8:39 God, Christ Jesus our Lord.	8:39 separate, Christ 9:1-2 Christ, anathema
9-11	Sarah, Jacob, Esau, Moses, Abraham, Hosea, Benjamin, Elijah, and Israelite	9:4-5 covenant, forever and ever. Amen. 11:27.36 covenant, forever and ever. Amen.	11:25 not wiser, 11:30-31 mercy; 36 ages, God 12:1 mercies, 2 this age, 3 not more highly, God
12:1-15:6	Appeal; self, one another, neighbour and brother and sister	12:1 I encourage you; God ("liturgy") 15:5-6 God, encouragement ("liturgy")	15:5-6 Christ, one another, glorify, God 15:7 Christ, one another, glory, God 15:7 Christ, one another, glory, God

Key texts

Rom. 9:6 It is not as though the word of God had failed.

Rom. 10:4 For Christ is the end (telos) of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Rom.11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people?

Steps in the argument

Introduction	9:1-5	Enigma
A Proof	9:6-29	God is consistent
B Proof	9:30-10:21	Torah v. Christ

A* Proof 11:1-32 God has a purpose
 Conclusion 11:33-36 Mystery God's will

Enigma

Romans 9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ (I am not lying!), for my conscience assures me in the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed—cut off from Christ—for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen, 4 who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen.

God is consistent

1. Reversal of primogeniture (9:6-13)
 2. The sovereignty of God (9:14-18)
 3. The inscrutability of God's will (9:19-21)
 4. Salvation through a remnant (9:22-29)
- We look briefly at each step.

Romans 9:6-29

See the text of Romans

Torah and Christ

- But some kind of reversal occurred...
- Christ as the end/purpose (telos) of the Law
- Failure was not because of the Gospel
- They were informed
- Argument from Scripture

God has a purpose

- Has God rejected his people?
- A remnant did keep faith
- Argument from Scripture (Isaiah 6:10)
- Future inclusion of the Jews
- Illustration: the olive tree

A clue

Isaiah 6:10 “Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind. Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed.”

Matthew (3)	Mark (2)	Luke (5)
With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: ‘You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.’ (Matthew 13:14)	In order that ‘they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.’ (Mark 4:12)	He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that ‘looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.’” (Luke 8:10)
Acts (5)	Romans (1)	John (4)
Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. (Acts 28:26)	As it is written, “God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.” (Romans 11:8)	He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them. (John 12:40)

Romans 11*See the text of Romans***How far have we got?**

Romans 1-8	Romans 9-11	Romans 12-15
No distinction (twice!)	Intricate relationship	Welcome one another
Inclusion of the Gentiles	Inclusion of Israel	Exhortation: Live inclusively!

And today?

- Christians and Jews in God's plan of salvation
- Our own journey of faith, as God's writes straight with our crooked lines
- Faith in God's unseen purpose
- Acknowledgement of mystery
- My own accompaniment of those who struggle with tragedy can help me enter the text here, perhaps.
- How do I experience the mystery of God using what is negative to create what is positive?
- The advice of not to be too sure of yourself is "hard advice" – perhaps quite hard Christians after 2000 years!

Prayer

Almighty God,
 long ago you chose Abraham and Sarah
 and their descendants
 and established them as the children of the promise.
 Hear our prayer that
 the people you first made your own
 may continue in fidelity to the covenant
 and so come to the fullness of salvation.
 Amen.