

Session 2

Literary Introduction: The Romans Context

Romans 9–11: "Paul's Story of Israel," © 2024 Gerald L. Stevens

Paul's Story of Israel: Romans 9–11 Intro: Historical, Literary Context

- 🌐 Historical: Synagogue Context
- 🌐 Literary: Romans Context

Paul's Story of Israel: Romans 9–11 Literary: Romans Context

- 🌐 Romans: Synagogue Context
- 🌐 Romans: Literary Structure

Paul's Story of Israel: Romans 9–11

🌐 Romans: Synagogue Context

👤 *Beginning of Jews in Rome*

- 🌐 Pompey's Near East military campaign takes Judea (63 BC)
- 🌐 First wave Of Jews to Rome as Roman slaves
- 🌐 Jews significant part of Rome's minority demographic well before Jesus
- 🌐 Estimated about 40,000 Jews by the time of Paul's letter to the Romans

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Romans: Synagogue Context

Edict of Claudius (AD 49)

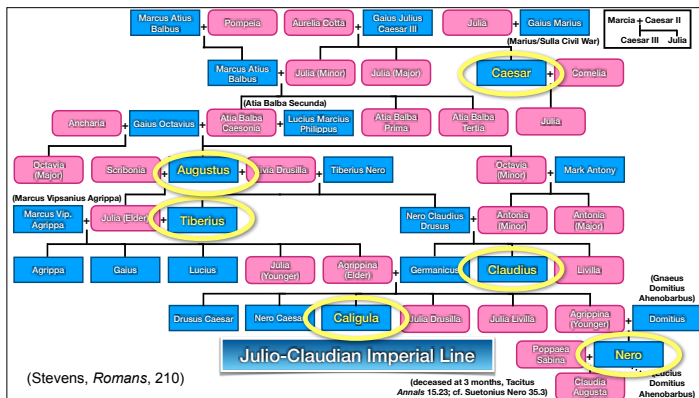
- Synagogue disturbances over “Chrestus”
- Jews leaders, others, expelled from Rome
- Impacts synagogue leadership, activity
- Explains why Roman leaders Prisca and Aquila in Corinth (Acts 18:1–2)
- Stimulus for house church development
- Redefines leadership and relocates the church
- Claudius's death, edict rescinded, Jews return (Prisca/Aquila, Rom 16:3)

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Romans: Synagogue Context

Roman Adoption and Paul's Theology of Israel

- Roman vicissitudes of life and marital troubles destabilize inheritance
- Imperial problem: setting up an heir to succeed
- Imperial solution: the necessity of adoption
- Paul innovates Roman imperial adoption policy for understanding Israel



Roman Imperial Succession:

- Caesar—no son; adopted great nephew
- Augustus—no son; adopted stepson
- Tiberius—no son; adopted grandson
- Caligula—no son; Praetorian Guard appointment
- Claudius—no son; adopted great nephew
- Nero—no son; suicide, civil war; new dynasty

Roman Imperial Succession

two sons predeceased

- Caesar—no son; adopted great nephew
- Augustus—no son; adopted stepson
- Tiberius—no son; adopted grandson
- Caligula—no son; Praetorian Guard appointment
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(Stevens, *Romans*, 210)

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one son disowned

(Stevens, *Romans*, 210)

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Romans: Synagogue Context

Church in Rome: Jewish demographics

- Source 1: early beginnings, Jewish, likely Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:10)
- Source 2: Rome's commercial business likely undocumented source
- Main locations in city of Rome
 - Trastevere district west of Tiber River (lower economic status, *insula* apartments setting, controlling social context of "house churches")
 - Porta Capena district at southeast entrance to city, again indicating lower economic status
- Romans 16 evidence: names mainly Greek, immigrant, slave

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Romans: Synagogue Context

Church in Rome: caught in Jewish/Roman crossfire

- Summary: Jewish beginnings, synagogue setting, conservative religious traditions, non-apostolic, but after Edict of Claudius, new house church setting evolves as more multicultural, multi-ethnic, and gentile, harboring more Roman attitudes. Thus, the Roman church has unclear structure, undifferentiated demographics, and unknown traditions.
- Israel on the brink of national disaster
 - Increasing Jewish nationalism, patriotism (cf. Zealots, Sicarii)
 - Huge political pressures on Jerusalem church
 - First Jewish War (AD 66–70) destroys nation nine years after Romans

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🌐 Romans: Synagogue

- 🗨️ *Church in Roman Context*
 - Summary: Jewish traditions, non-apostolic church setting evolves as more Roman attitudes. Thus, church has unclear structure, undifferentiated demographics, and unknown traditions.
- Israel on the brink of national disaster
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Definition of "Israel" up for grabs; everyone saying, "And thus, all Israel will be saved"

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Literary: Romans Context

🌐 Romans: Synagogue Context

🌐 Romans: Literary Structure

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🌐 Romans: Literary Structure

- 🗨️ *Two Recognized Units (Basic Two-Part Structure)*
 - Romans 1–11: apologetic (two subunits agreed)
 - Romans 1–8 (gospel), but subdivision argued
 - Romans 9–11 (Israel)
 - Romans 12–16: application (three subunits agreed)
 - Romans 12–13: general exhortation
 - Romans 14–15: weak and strong
 - Romans 16: greetings

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🌐 Romans: Literary Structure

- 🗨️ *One Argued Unit (Romans 1–8)*
 - Division point: two subunits agreed, but where to subdivide argued
 - Romans 1–4, 5–8
 - Romans 1–5, 6–8
 - Relationship of 1–4 to 5–8 a major issue (cf. "Pauline Polarities")
 - Romans 1–4: Justification
 - Romans 5–8: Participation

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Romans: Literary Structure

One Argued Unit (Romans 1–11)

- Division point: two subunits: **theology of atonement, pp. 9–10**
 - Romans 1–4, 5–8
 - Romans 1–5, 6–8
- Relationship of 1–4 to 5–8 a major issue (cf. "Pauline Polarities")
 - Romans 1–4: Justification
 - Romans 5–8: Participation

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Romans: Literary Structure

One Argued Unit

- Division point: **Justification (Rom 1–4) vs. Participation (Rom 5–8)**
 - Romans 1–4, 5–8
 - Romans 1–5, 6–8
- Relationship of 1–4 to 5–8 a major issue (cf. "Pauline Polarities")
 - Romans 1–4: Justification
 - Romans 5–8: Participation

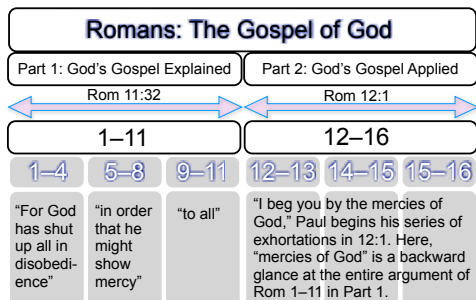
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Romans: Literary Structure

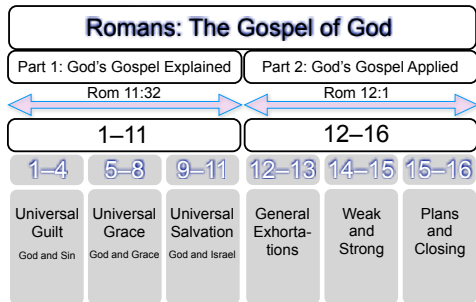
Romans 1–11: Organizing Verse (Rom 11:32)

- Rom 11:32: concluding summary of Romans 1–11
- Reveals tripartite logic of argument
 - Romans 1–4: "For God has shut up all in disobedience" (universal guilt)
 - Romans 5–8: "in order that he might show mercy" (universal grace)
 - Romans 9–11: "to all" (universal salvation)
- Romans: the "Gospel of God" explained and applied
 - Romans 1–11: God's Gospel Explained
 - Romans 12–16: God's Gospel Applied

Paul's Story of Israel: Romans 9–11



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Paul's Story of Israel: Romans 9–11

Conclusion:

"The very structure of Romans, particularly the steady movement toward the climatic denouement in Romans 9–11, demonstrates that all of Romans from first verse to last is all about Israel."

—Dr. Stevens

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🌐 Romans: Literary Structure

🗨️ Paul's Two Distinctive Uses of "Israel" in Romans

● Israel as ethnic

"Abraham our father" (4:1)

"my kinsmen according to the flesh" (9:3–4)

"my kinsmen" (16:7, 21)

● Israel as messianic

"not a Jew who is one outwardly" (2:28–29)

"they are not all Israel that are of Israel" (9:6)

"all Israel will be saved" (11:26)