



Commentary on Romans

Martin Luther

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A valuable introduction to the study of Martin Luther's own spiritual pilgrimage and the roots of the Reformation.

Commentary on Romans Details

Date : Published June 1st 1976 by Kregel Publications (first published December 12th 1963)

ISBN : 9780825431197

Author : Martin Luther

Format : Paperback

Genre : Religion, Theology, Reference

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Mary says

Luther was amazing! He was one of the first to break from the medieval methodology of teaching and preaching, and laid the modern method of exegetical preaching, teaching verse by verse through Romans. No wonder he started the Reformation-- he brilliantly discloses God's plans through Scripture, ignoring man's ideas and tradition. Wonderful insight on the book of Romans.

Russell Hayes says

This early work of Luther's serves as a good introduction to his writings. That being said, there are certainly more in-depth commentaries on Romans out there.

Christopher says

Today, verse-for-verse commentaries on the books of the Bible are a dime a dozen. But in the early 16th century, they were a new thing in Biblical scholarship. Among the many revolutionary things in Biblical scholarship and church history Martin Luther did, his verse-by-verse commentary on Romans was one of the first. This volume, translated from the original German and abridged for a general audience, brings one of Martin Luther's first major works to the public. It was written two years before Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg cathedral and some of the ideas that he would come to advocate, particularly that salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone, are worked out for the first time within these pages. There are some fascinating passages, particularly how willing Luther was to call out the princes of Europe in general for not being faithful agents of God's justice on Earth, and from a historian's perspective, it is interesting to see Luther's thoughts beginning to form. But this can be a difficult read. To make up for holes in the manuscript or long tangents Luther would go off on, the editor uses parentheses and italicized letters to denote when it is the editor writing and not Luther. And the editor does this A LOT. Though it seems to hew pretty close to Luther's thoughts, the number of edits does make you wonder. Not to mention that it can be a little distracting. There are also some parts that are not as interesting as other parts in the book, making this an, at times, boring read. Still, for those interested in something different to supplement their daily Bible readings, this would be an interesting choice.

Tyler says

As a piece of history, helping us understand Lutheran thought, I give this a 4. As a commentary on Romans, I give it a 2 (only because there are a dozen or more I'd send someone to in order to understand Romans first). On the whole, a helpful work that offers sound insight into Paul's magnum opus. Mueller's additional comments and explanation are usually unnecessary and distracting.

Ron says

This is my third reading of this Christian classic. It was even better than I remember it. Luther's sharp rose and clear analysis lose little in the translation from German.

Worthwhile reading by any seeking to understand this important Biblical book.

(Historical note: John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, reported that his heart was listening to Luther's preface to Romans when his heart was "strangely warmed" in 1738, an event since referred to as his Aldersgate Experience. Methodists curious why may wish to read this short document.)

Seth Pierce says

This book got better as it went along. Martin seems a bit muddled in the middle when trying to make the point that our only hope is Christ, while at the same time dealing with predestination. At times he seems to suggest that we should worry over our salvation and just hope for the best--instead of having confidence that we are part of the elect. He also intimates in several places that God is so Sovereign that even if we did our best, and sought God--but He chose to damn us--we should still respect that choice. He argues that any questioning of predestination is "of the flesh"--which is troubling since many people don't ask to get away from the subject--but rather to reconcile apparent contradictory pictures of it with God's character.

Perhaps, as a friend suggested, his passion got in the way of his communication.

Nonetheless, Luther ardently preaches the Gospel and encourages us to seek Jesus. What kept this from being 4 stars was that in many places he didn't offer anything others hadn't said--particularly Augustine (whom he quotes profusely). He is much close to Calvin than I anticipated as well. Despite these things, Luther encourages us to be loving and placing potters above ourselves. Good read, but perhaps I hyped it up in my own mind to be something more.

Todd says

Both a fascinating look at the Roman Catholic monk/professor coming to grips with Pauline thought and a penetrating commentary on the book of Romans. Truly a life-changing book.

Royce Ratterman says

Most books are rated related to their usefulness and contributions to my research. Overall, a good book for the researcher and enthusiast.

Read for personal research

- found this book's contents helpful and inspiring - number rating relates to the book's contribution to my needs.

Ginny says

Sorry Martin. Maybe if I'd taken your class I would have understood this more. (Or if my Bible study "leader" had been something more than horrible.) Keep up the good work though. :)

John Lucy says

Luther's Commentary on Romans stands as an important historical document for all Christians of the West because it was his study of Romans that more or less led to all of his other ideas. Anyone interested in Luther's thought process, then, should read this commentary for historical purposes. For Methodists, like me, this commentary takes on a bit of a special role, because it is Luther's Preface to his Commentary that inspired John Wesley's "heart strangely warmed" moment.

Once you read the Preface, though, you might find yourself lost in boredom. Luther unfortunately spends a lot of time stating the obvious. And when he's not stating the obvious, you can hardly know what he's saying sometimes. If you can make it through, there are some really strong declarations of faith, some inspiring declarations, and some rather insightful declarations as well. I can't say the whole Commentary is worth reading for those moments, but why not give it a go?

Becky says

First sentence from the Preface: This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes. Therefore, I, too will do my best, so far as God has given me power, to open the way into it through this preface, so that it may be better understood by everyone.

This is an abridged commentary for the 'popular' audience looking for the 'fundamentals' of Luther's evangelical teachings. If you count Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans as a chapter, this one has seventeen chapters. There is one chapter per chapter of Romans. This commentary includes the text of Romans.

I am glad I read it. I want to start off by saying that much at least. Perhaps my expectations were on the high side--expecting every single sentence to be a brilliant gem, expecting every sentence to be as wonderful as the Preface itself. With reasonable expectations, I think this one would rate well with most readers.

I'm not sure if the abridged edition is the perfectly perfect fit for me. Not having the unabridged to compare

it to, I can't honestly say for sure. There were times that I found this commentary to be rushed. Whole books could be written--have been written--on short sections of Romans. Romans contains so many grand, glorious, foundational doctrines that to spend just a short time per verse seems a slight injustice. (For example, I could easily imagine an author dedicating 224 pages to unpacking the wonders of Romans 8.)

It reads like a commentary and not a devotional. I think the Luther devotional that I read a year or two ago spoiled me.

But because it was abridged, it did move quickly. One or two chapters per day felt like a good speed. And there is a lot to be said for movement and progress. This one wasn't intimidating, and again that is a plus.

Quotes:

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. (xvii)

Judgment day is called a day of wrath and a day of mercy; a day of tribulation and a day of peace; a day of damnation and a day of glory. On that day the wicked will be punished and put to shame, while the righteous will be rewarded and crowned with glory. (55)

In this life we never reach such perfection that we fully possess God, but we must continually seek after Him; indeed we must seek Him evermore, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 105:4. Those who do not make progress in seeking after God, are bound to retrogress;... We must never stand still in seeking after God. (71)

To believe God means to trust Him always and everywhere. (82)

Christ's resurrection is not merely the pledge of our righteousness, but also its cause. (87)

It has been said that human nature knows and wills what is good in general, but that it errs and does not will what is good in special cases. It is better, however, to say that human nature knows and wills what is good in special cases, but that in general it does not know and will what is good. The reason for this is that it knows only what it regards as good, honorable, useful and not what is good in the sight of God and the neighbor. Therefore it knows and wills the good only as it is connected with man's own interests. (118)

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good (Romans 12:9). This command seems easy to perform but it is most difficult because of the emotions of hate, love, fear, and hope. There is no one who can truly save that he abhors what is evil and cleaves to what is good.

Elizabeth says

Wonderful examination of the book of Romans. I recommend it to all.

Rachel says

I went through this book as a bible study and thought it was great. I loved it and GOD definitely showed me a lot about Romans through it.

Coyle says

A decent commentary on Romans, though not as good as Luther's Galatians commentary. The big down-side of this for me was that it's an abridgement, where the translator/editor went through and took out all the comments which were too "Catholic." (In the preface, this is justified by the fact that a "scholarly" edition of the complete Romans commentary was available to those who wanted it, this was just to be a devotional for those who follow what Luther's faith developed into.)

Having said that, it is still a decent commentary. Even at this early stage (1515-1516), Luther is already pretty solid on justification and predestination.

If nothing else, this volume has Luther's "Preface to Romans" (1552), which is easily one of his greatest writings, if not the greatest.

Ryan says

A good introduction to Luther's early work, but not nearly as good as his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians which he called "my Katie von Bora."
