

The Reason for Romans

The Reason that Paul wrote Romans has been endlessly debated as the reason for Paul's writing is never explicitly expressed. John Stott notes that there are three criteria in order to sufficiently argue for why Paul writes:

- Paul's context
- The context in Rome
- The content of the letter

Paul's Context

- Paul is commonly agreed to have written the letter from Corinth
- Paul is most likely on his third missionary journey
- Paul's time of writing is commonly dated between 55CE and 57CE

The Context in Rome

- Claudius wrote an edict in 49CE that expelled the Jews from Rome
- Claudius died around 54CE which allowed the Jews to return to Rome
- The Jews very likely faced problems re-integrating with the Gentile churches on their return
- Paul was aware of the situation in Rome and had in mind to address conflict between the Jews and Gentiles

Paul's Plan for Spain

- Paul had intentions of a missionary journey to Spain
- The first half of Romans looks very much like a missionary support letter
- Rome would have been a perfect home base for Paul's mission to Spain
- Considering the content of the whole letter, it is unlikely that this is the sole reason for Paul's writing.

An Apologetic Letter

- This is the traditionally accepted view for Paul's writing
- This is an important and obvious element of Paul's letter, but focusing solely on this is negligent of the context of the letter.

Conclusion

The length of Paul's letter indicates there is more than one purpose for Paul's writing. Paul's motives for writing may well have been to certain extents, all of the above. Though readers can never be certain as to why Paul writes, by examining the context, there is a reasonable insight to be gained.

Romanian Why

A compilation of roughly accurate speculation as to why Paul wrote his letter to the Romans
by Royce Dawson and Braden Fildes (music and some lyrical credit Don Mclean)

A long, long time ago
I can still remember how that letter used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
I could make those Gentiles dance
And maybe they would house me for a while
But February 57 made me shiver with the letter I delivered
Mission on the doorstep
Spain was my next step
I can't remember if I cried
When I read about the Roman pride
So this is the reason that I write
The letter to the Roman site

Chorus:

So bye, bye old tensions and fights
Need the Jews and the Gentiles to somehow comply
Going to Spain on a mission and need to stop by
Singing: here's some theology to apply
Here's some theology to apply

Did you write the book of love?
And do you have faith in God above?
If the Bible tells you so
Do you believe in grace at all?
Can works save your mortal soul?
I can teach you what you need to know
Well I know that you're in love with him
But saved by works is a mortal sin
You both blew off a fuse
You silly Gentiles and Jews
You crazy Gentiles were running a muck
And the Jews came back as sitting ducks
I was thinking to myself: "you're looking stuck"
In the letter to the Roman site

[Chorus]

Now for five years you've been on your own
When the Jews got kicked out, out of Rome
But that's not how it used to be
Now Claudius the king was really mean

When he kicked the Jews out of the scene
And the Jews from Rome, they had to flee
And while the king was looking down
The Jews snuck back into the town
All this I had learned
I started getting concerned
If Spain was going to see a spark
Rome would have to come out of the dark
The grace of God was the bench mark
The letter to the Roman site

[Chorus]

And there you were all in one place
A prospering city next to Spain
A cool place to stay now and then
So come on Jews be nimble, Jews be quick
Jew please write me a big fat cheque
'Cause I need some money to get to Spain
Oh, and as I saw my next big stage
To go to Spain in this new page
To save them all from hell
And tell them this bombshell
And the mission there looked really bright
I hope that if I stay its right
There's no way I can catch a flight
The letter to the Roman site

[Chorus x2]

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