

REVIEW

FAITH IN ROMANS

This paper argues that “faith” is used in Romans to emphasize Gentile inclusion in salvation. It follows Campbell’s argument that the audience of Romans is predominantly Gentile, and that Paul is writing to oppose Torah-enforcing teachers (2). The paper first describes Paul’s opponents in Romans as those he writes against in Galatians (2-3). They are those who argue that Gentiles must be assimilated into Judaism in order to be in Christ (3). Next, this paper examines the contexts behind Paul’s major treatments of faith, highlighting that Jewish-Gentile relations are “the background to most of the occurrences of faith and its cognates in Romans” (3-4). The discussion then turns to specific faith-based passages in Romans. The author first displays that 1:16-17 and 3:21-31 both emphasize the universality of faith (4-5). The author avoids choosing whether “faith” in 3:22 refers to Christ’s faith or the faith of individual Christians, instead displaying that either meaning is still in the context of the inclusivity of faith (5-6). The paper then examines the story of Abraham in Romans 4 to show that even this discussion of faith is about Gentile acceptance, since Abraham’s faith was “reckoned to him as righteousness” before his circumcision (Romans 4:9-12) (5). The author highlights that Paul’s opponents potentially used Abraham to exclude Gentiles, so this section uses their own example to argue for their inclusion (6). The paper concludes with a short restatement of its arguments.

The author of this paper convincingly demonstrates that Jewish-Gentile relations is a major aspect of Romans’ discussion of faith. The strongest point of evidence was the list of verses that discussed faith (3) compared to the list of their contexts, Jewish-Gentile relations (3-4). This effectively displayed a context of inclusivity in Paul’s discussion of faith. The analysis of more specific sections was also convincing. The point that the precise definition of faith was less important than its context of Gentile inclusion shows a good knowledge of scholarship but also avoids straying from the thesis of the paper. The treatment of Abraham was also exemplary in this regard.

However, the paper could be improved. The reliance on controversial scholars like Douglas Campbell and J. Louis Martyn should be qualified. This paper assumes the accuracy of their arguments (1,2). A discussion of the drawbacks of their arguments should have been mentioned,

even if in a footnote. Though differing scholars, such as Douglas Moo, were also used to justify the argument of this paper (1), this is not a satisfactory solution to omitting the strong opposition to Campbell and Martyn's arguments. In other words, the emphasis on Gentile inclusion in Paul's discussion on faith is not evidence for opposing teachers who were preaching Torah-piety. Or, if it is, this paper has not made that explicitly clear.

Overall, this paper shows a deep knowledge of Romans itself and important scholarship on the book. It effectively proves that the background of Gentile-inclusion is essential to understanding faith in Romans. Ultimately, Christ's death means access to salvation for all, whether Jew or Gentile.