

PAUL'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN ROMANS AND THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

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Abstract. This study is a contribution to the never ending issue of New Testament Studies often referred to as "The Romans Debate": why did the apostle Paul write his Epistle to the Romans? What is the main theme or themes of the Epistle? What are the main problems Paul is wrestling with? Günther Bornkamm, the great German New Testament scholar of the 20th century gave a very interesting answer to these questions: Romans is Paul's theological last will or testament. Bornkamm argues that in this writing Paul brings out again all the main topics and theological reasoning of his previous epistles and treats them again, more clearly, more systematically and therefore brings them to a new level. Therefore - according to Bornkamm - Romans is a compilation or reworking of his previous letters, basically a collection of earlier literary sources. In this study, I try to test the Bornkamm-thesis and see if the treatment of Old Testament quotations (so frequent theological tools in Paul's epistles) supports this hypothesis. If Bornkamm is right, the Old Testament quotations in the passages of Romans where Bornkamm suspects earlier Pauline material will reflect similar treatment of similar OT quotations from earlier Epistles. However if the treatment of illustrative or supporting Old Testament quotations is different, Romans can be read as an independent writing that reflects new historical and theological problems to which Paul has to give new solutions. The result of this special investigation can be found in this study.

Keywords: Epistle to the Romans, Bornkamm, Old Testament quotations in the New, Romans Debate

In my paper I will investigate one aspect of Paul's use of Old Testament in his Epistle to the Romans. I am interested in the question, why Romans is different from Paul's other letters, both in its references to the Old Testament and in its special content. The question of purpose, i. e. why Paul wrote Romans in the first place and why did he write what he wrote, is also connected to my investigation here. Paul's use of Old Testament served more than illustrating certain theological points he wanted to make in his writings. In that he was a good Jewish Biblical scholar, using quite faithfully the interpretational methods of first century