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978-0-521-03664-1 - The Strong and the Weak: Romans 14.1-15.13 in Context

Mark Reasoner

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This book situates Romans 14.1–15.13 in the context of first-century Roman thought, using the lenses of asceticism (especially vegetarianism), superstition, and obligation. It also seeks to situate this section of Romans within the letter as a whole, and concludes by arguing that the section illustrates the theme, or primary topos, of the letter: that Paul, his gospel, and those who follow it are not shameful. New contributions to Romans research surface where this book examines the terms “strong” and “weak” in light of their use within Roman social discourse; identifies the Roman social value of obligation throughout the letter as a key element both within Paul’s self-understanding and in his ethical teaching; raises previously unrecognized implications of the letter’s occasional nature for how we read and use Romans; and traces the topos of not being ashamed through the letter and back to its roots in the LXX.

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SOCIETY FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

MONOGRAPH SERIES

General editor: Richard Bauckham

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Bethel College, St. Paul



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521633345

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First published 1999
This digitally printed version 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Reasoner, Mark.

The strong and the weak: Romans 14.1–15.13 in context / Mark Reasoner.

p. cm. – (Society for New Testament studies monograph series; 103)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 63334 6 hardback

1. Bible. N.T. Romans XIV, 1–XV, 13 – Socio-rhetorical criticism.

I. Title. II. Series: Monograph series (Society for New Testament Studies); 103.

BS2665.2.R33 1998 98–20168 CIP

227'.106–dc21

ISBN 978-0-521-63334-5 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-03664-1 paperback

Cambridge University Press

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To my dear wife Wendy

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PREFACE

The opportunity to write a book on Romans has reminded me of my first Christmas visit to my in-laws' home. Everyone was talking in a crowded room, and it wasn't clear who was listening to whom. Just as it was difficult to listen and converse with everyone that first visit, so it is a challenge to interact well with everyone writing on Romans. Sometimes a nod or a glance is given, when an in-depth conversation is preferable. In any case, I have done my best in this book to recognize and converse with many who are writing on Romans.

This book began as my dissertation, "The 'Strong' and the 'Weak' in Rome and in Paul's Theology," accepted at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1990. I express thanks to the director of my dissertation, H. D. Betz, for mentioning this passage of Romans as a text that needed work. His suggestion of looking at the text through the lenses of asceticism, superstition, and obligation has been formative and helpful in the project. I also thank Arthur J. Droge and Richard P. Saller, the other members of my committee.

Since 1990 I have undertaken a thorough revision of the project, omitting an exegetical chapter, conversing with authors who have published on Romans since 1990, and integrating my findings on this section of Romans with the whole letter.

An earlier version of chapter 3 was presented by invitation in November of 1992 at an SBL session on the social history of Judaism and Christianity. An earlier version of chapter 12 was presented in February of 1997 to the Twin Cities NT Trial Balloon Society. I thank those present at those occasions for their comments on the papers. In addition, I wish to thank Steven E. Enderlein, Robert Hodgson, Jr., Robert Jewett, and Mark D. Nanos for their conversation and encouragement along the way. Of course, I alone carry the responsibility for all the weaknesses of this book. I hope

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that my readers may share some of the pleasure and excitement that I experience in studying Romans.

I have done my best to indicate where I have used existing translations. If no such indication is found with regard to a given quotation, the translation is my own.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	American Anthropological Association
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
Aristotle:	
EN	<i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
Rh.	<i>Rhetorica</i>
AS	<i>Ancient Society</i>
Athenaeus:	
<i>Deip.</i>	Δειπνοσοφισταί
AUS	American University Studies
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
Bauer–Aland	Bauer, Walter. <i>Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur</i> . 6th ed., eds. Kurt and Barbara Aland. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	Brown, Francis; Driver, S. R.; and Briggs, Charles A. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1951
BDF	Blass, F.; Debrunner, A.; Funk, Robert W. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie

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BibS (F)	Biblische Studien (Freiburg, 1895–)
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BLib	The Bible and Liberation Series, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis
BMS	Benedictine Monographic Series
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZNW	Beihefte zur ZNW
CAH	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
Can. Ap.	<i>Canones Apostolorum</i>
CBA	Catholic Biblical Association
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
Cicero:	
Att.	<i>Epistulae ad Atticum</i>
de Orat.	<i>de Oratore</i>
Div.	<i>De divinatione</i>
Fam.	<i>Epistulae ad familiares</i>
Flac.	<i>Pro Flacco</i>
Mur.	<i>Pro Murena</i>
ND	<i>De natura deorum</i>
Off.	<i>De officiis</i>
Phil.	<i>Philippicae</i>
Q. fr.	<i>Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem</i>
Tusc.	<i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
1 Clem.	<i>1 Clement</i>
Const. Ap	<i>Constitutiones Apostolorum</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
Did.	<i>Didache</i>
Dig.	<i>Digesta Iustiniani</i>
Diog. L.	Diogenes Laertius
EA	Das Erbe der Alten
Ebib	Etudes bibliques
EDR	<i>Enciclopedia delle religioni</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ER	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i>
ET	English translation
Eusebius:	
HE	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>

List of abbreviations

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FAS	Frankfurter althistorische Studien
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
Gel.	Aulus Gellius, <i>Noctes Atticae</i>
<i>Herm.</i>	<i>Hermas</i> :
<i>Man.</i>	<i>Mandate(s)</i>
<i>Sim.</i>	<i>Similitude(s)</i>
<i>Vis.</i>	<i>Vision(s)</i>
Hesiod:	
<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Theogonia</i>
HKAW	Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HNTC	Harper's NT Commentary
Horace:	
<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae</i>
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IESS</i>	<i>International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences</i>
Ign.	Ignatius:
<i>Eph.</i>	<i>Ephesians</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romans</i>
<i>Trall.</i>	<i>Trallians</i>
<i>Interp.</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
Josephus:	
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
<i>C. Apion.</i>	<i>Contra Apionem</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNT Sup	JSNT Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Justin	Justin Martyr
<i>1 Apol.</i>	<i>First Apology</i>

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KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LSJ	Liddell, H. G.; Scott, R.; Jones, H. S. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1940
Lucian:	
<i>Demon.</i>	<i>Demonax</i>
<i>Peregr.</i>	<i>Peregrinus</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MAPS	Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society
Martial:	
<i>Epig.</i>	<i>Epigrammata</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
MNTC	Moffat NT Commentary
MT	Masoretic Text
NovT Sup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
n.s.	new series
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Eds. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1970
<i>OF</i>	<i>Orphicorum Fragmenta</i> . Ed. by Otto Kern. 2nd ed. Berlin: Weidmann, 1963
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graece</i> (Migne)
Philo:	
<i>Anim.</i>	<i>De animalibus</i>
<i>Cont.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione</i>
<i>Praem. poen.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>
Plato:	
<i>Laws</i>	<i>Leges</i>
<i>Phileb.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>
Pliny:	
<i>HN</i>	<i>Historia naturalis</i>

List of abbreviations

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- Plutarch:
Esu carn. *De esu carniū orationes (Moralia 993A–999B)*
Quaest. conv. *Quaestiones convivalium*
Superst. *De superstitione (Moralia 164E–171F)*
 PTWECL *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature*. Ed. by H. D. Betz. Leiden: Brill, 1975
- PW Paulys Real-Enzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft (Pauly–Wissowa)
- PW Sup Supplement to PW
- RAC *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
- RevQ *Revue de Qumran*
- RGG *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 3rd ed. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1958
- RHLR *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses*
- RVV Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
- Sallust:
Cat. *Catilina*
Jug. *Jugurtha*
- SANT Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
- Sat. *Satirae*
- SBAW Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft
- SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
- SBLTT Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
- SBS Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
- SBT Studies in Biblical Theology
- SCHNT Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti
- SCL Sather Classical Lectures
- SD Studies and Documents
- SEÅ *Svensk exegetisk årsbok*
- SEHRE M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957
- Seneca:
Ben. *De beneficiis*
Ep. *Epistulae*
- SHA *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
- SHJ Studies in Hellenistic Judaism

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SIHC	Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and its World
Sophocles:	
<i>Aj.</i>	<i>Ajax</i>
<i>OT</i>	<i>Oedipus tyrannus</i>
SPIB	Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici
SSRH	Sociological Studies in Roman History
Suetonius:	
<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Augustus</i>
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
Tacitus:	
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>Agricola</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus de oratoribus</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
Theophrastus:	
<i>Char.</i>	<i>Characteres</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>
TPINTC	Trinity Press International New Testament Commentary
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Eds. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977–
<i>TSK</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
TSR	Texts and Studies in Religion
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
Varro:	
<i>L.</i>	<i>De lingua Latina</i>
Vg	Vulgate
VKHSM	Veröffentlichungen aus dem kirchenhistorischen Seminar München
VLGLB	Vetus Latina: Aus der Geschichte der Lateinischen Bibel

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<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>