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# Acts and Romans

Lectures by  
Robert J. Cara, Ph.D.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Virtual Campus

# RTS Distance Education

The Virtual Campus of Reformed Theological Seminary offers students the convenience of home study with the quality of on-campus instruction. This course is based on classroom lectures using the GUIDE approach to learning.

Each lesson contains the following:

**G**etting Started      To prepare adequately for each lesson, a reading assignment and recording are listed.

**U**nderstanding      To maximize student learning, the purpose and objectives for the lesson are given.

**I**nvestigating      To integrate readings, the recordings, and the outline, students are encouraged to notate information in a manner that will prove beneficial for study and examination. The study guide allows space for notetaking to expand the outline.

**D**eveloping      To further develop the concepts presented, suggested readings and applications are offered.

**E**valuating      To help students summarize and synthesize the material covered, study questions are provided.

Syllabus

Outline

Study Guide I,  
Lessons 1-11

Study Guide II,  
Lessons 12-22

Appendices A-G

COURSE SYLLABUS  
Acts and Romans, 0NT516, 2 hours  
Dr. Robert Cara  
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

*Professor*

Dr. Robert J. Cara is Professor of New Testament at RTS-Charlotte and Chief Academic Officer for the RTS institution. Dr. Cara was an engineer for seven years before the Lord re-directed him toward seminary. In addition to the traditional New Testament topics, Dr. Cara's academic interests include relating the New Testament to Reformed Theology, creeds, hermeneutics, creation, and narrative criticism. His commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians was recently published with Evangelical Press. As an ordained minister in the ARP Church, Dr. Cara has been very involved at both the presbytery and synod levels. He is a former vice-moderator of the denomination and for several years was the chairman of the denominational Inter-Church Relations Committee. He preaches regularly in the Charlotte area.

*Course Description*

A study of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Romans that emphasizes both the original meaning and the modern meaning.

*Course Objectives*

The over arching aim is to provide tools to the student in order that one might better interpret Acts and Romans to one's self, the church, and the world.

- Learn outlines and basic content of Acts and Romans.
- Learn major biblical-theological (BT) categories in Acts and Romans along with methodology to do further BT interpretation.
- Compare and contrast various systematic theology (ST) categories (e.g., Calvinism, RC) and various current church methodologies (e.g., "church growth") with/ Acts and Romans.
- Learn enough about critical views to:
  - 1) Utilize common grace insights in critical commentaries.
  - 2) Provide an intelligent global critique of critical theories.

*Required Textbooks*

Carson, D. A. and D. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Ladd, G. E. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Luther, Martin. Preface to *Commentary on Romans*. Translated by J. T. Mueller. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1976.

Ridderbos, H. N. *When the The had Fully Come*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001.

Holy Bible (Read Acts and Romans twice)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
Acts and Romans, 0NT516, 2 hours  
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*Online Student Handbook*

The Online Student Handbook is a guide that contains information for participation in this course. Needed forms may be downloaded and printed from this handbook. You will find it located at the RTS/Virtual website at the Student Services link. Check there for all the latest updates.

*Summary of Requirements*

- \* Complete lessons, reading assignments, and listen to audio lectures
- \* Participate in online discussion forums
- \* Research paper
- \* Midterm exam and final exam
- \* Mentor report or course application paper

*Required Readings (10%)*

The student must complete all of the required reading. Reading assignments are broken down week by week within the Virtual Classroom. As an assignment, the student will be asked to report the percentage of reading they have completed in the Virtual Classroom.

*Forum Discussion (10%)*

The student is to participate in forum discussions in the Virtual Classroom. The student must respond to the four Topical Discussion Questions. The student may pose questions of their own to the Professor regarding either the research paper topic or course content in the Student to Professor forum. The student must then post five interactions with fellow students in the Student to Student forum.

*Midterm Exam and Final Exam (25% each, 50% total)*

There will be two exams for this course; the midterm covers Acts material (Lessons 1-11) and the final exam covers Romans material (Lessons 12-22). Many of the questions are closely related to the “Lecture Review Questions” and “Reading Questions” (see below in Syllabus). Others will be miscellaneous questions from lectures and any readings. Please note the outline for Acts and for Romans, which are listed in this syllabus, will also appear on the exams. The exam will be 1.5 hours long and completely closed book. A proctor is required for this exam (cannot be a family member or someone else taking this course).

*Research Paper (25%)*

A research paper is required for this course. For more information and guidelines regarding the research paper, please see the relevant pages below.

### *Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)*

Each MA Distance student is required to have his mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student's grade. For students who are not registered in the MA program, you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

### *Assignments*

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall in the Virtual Classroom, using the upload links provided. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time. No late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

### *Contact Information*

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COURSE OUTLINE  
Acts and Romans, ONT516, 2 hours  
Dr. Robert Cara  
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Lesson 1  
Class Introduction

Lesson 2  
Mini-Hermeneutics and Theological Categories

Lesson 3  
Acts Introduction

Lesson 4  
The History of Interpretation of Acts

Lesson 5  
Acts 1-2 (Pentecost)

Lesson 6  
Acts 4 (The Name of Christ)

Lesson 7  
The Word of God Theme in Acts

Lesson 8  
Acts 10-11 (Peter and Cornelius)

Lesson 9  
Acts 15 (Jerusalem Council)

Lesson 10  
Acts 19 (John's Disciples)

Lesson 11  
Acts 20 (Ephesian Elders)  
Midterm Exam

Lesson 12  
Romans Introduction

Lesson 13  
Romans 1 (Theme of Romans)

Lesson 14

Romans 1-3 (The Law and Sin)

Lesson 15

Perspectives on Justification

Lesson 16

The New Perspective on Paul

Lesson 17

Romans 4 (Abraham Was Justified by Faith)

Lesson 18

Romans 5 (Adam-Christ Parallels)

Lesson 19

Romans 7-8 (The Flesh vs. The Spirit)

Lesson 20

Romans 9 (Not All Israel is Israel) and Romans 10 (Paul's Gospel in the OT)

Lesson 21

Romans 11 (All Israel Will be Saved)

Lesson 22

Romans 14-15 (The Strong and Weak Brother)

Final Exam

Course paper due

Course application paper / mentor report

## READING AND LECTURE REVIEW QUESTIONS AND OUTLINES

Acts and Romans, ONT516, 2 hours

Dr. Robert Cara

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

These questions are intended to be completed but not to be handed in as an assignment. The Final Exam will draw 85% of its material from these review questions. Neither Dr. Cara nor Student Services will answer these questions directly.

See the outlines for memorization of Acts and Romans. These outlines will appear on the relevant exam.

### READING QUESTIONS: CARSON AND MOO

#### *Acts*

1. Give two of Vielhauer's four arguments against the Paul of Acts being authentic and C-M's rebuttals.
2. Critical scholars assign a late date to Acts based on 1) Luke 21 relates to destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and 2) date of Mark. Explain hidden assumptions.
3. What is the Western text? According to C-M, what is its usefulness for determining the original reading? (Note, read carefully.)
4. How does the famous Thucydides quote affect the critics' view of the speeches in Acts?

#### *Romans*

1. Explain how the Roman church was started by Jewish Christians, but by the time of the writing of Romans, Gentile Christians were dominant.
2. Do C-M agree with Melancthon that Romans is a timeless treatise? Give a nuanced answer.
3. What is Romans' central theme according to C-M?

### READING QUESTIONS: LADD

#### *Chapter 24*

1. If Luke was with Paul at his Caesarean imprisonment as Acts 21:18 claims, How does this solve many of the supposed problems concerning historical sources?

#### *Chapter 25*

2. Explain the "vision" theory of the resurrection that most critics believe.
3. Explain Ladd's comment on p. 362, "The resurrection of Jesus ... ought not to be described simply as a supernatural event—a miracle—as though God had interfered with the 'laws of nature.'"

#### *Chapter 26*

4. What is Ladd's "best guess" as to why the Son of Man title is virtually dropped in Acts?

5. How does maranatha (1 Cor 16:22) argue against Bultmann's view of the rise of the expression "Lord" for Jesus?

#### *Chapter 27*

6. According to Ladd, What is the relationship between the "tongues of fire" in Acts 2:3 and "[Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" in Matt 3:11?

### **READING QUESTIONS: RIDDERBOS**

#### *Chapter 3*

1. Contrast Luther and Ridderbos as to their view of the theological "entrance" to understanding Paul's theology.
2. According to Ridderbos, How does Paul's R-H view relate to the "Kingdom" from the Gospels?
3. Explain the "X for us" and "we in X" ideas.

#### *Chapter 4*

1. In simplistic terms, What is the difference between the Lutheran and Reformed views concerning the "law" in Paul?
2. According to Ridderbos, How does Paul relate the demands of the law and love (related to 3rd use)?
3. Explain how Eph 6:2-3 argues for the 3rd use of the law.
4. At the beginning of the chapter, Ridderbos asks about the unity of Jesus' (Sermon on the Mount) and Paul's use of the law. What component of X's teaching and Paul's teaching match?

### **LECTURE REVIEW QUESTIONS**

Note: These LRQ's are included here in the syllabus for your convenience of reference. They may also be found at the end of each relevant lesson under the section titled "Evaluating" and are labelled "Lecture Review Questions" (excepting Lesson 1, which are not LRQ's and will not appear on the exam).

#### *Lesson 2*

1. Give a brief explanation of the difference between hermeneutics and interpretation.
2. Explain Dr. Cara's distinction between the original meaning to the historical audience and original meaning to the reading audience. Give at least one example.
3. Briefly explain Dr. Cara's views of BT, R-H, and ST.

#### *Lesson 3*

1. Why does Dr. Cara believe that Luke-Acts should be primarily interpreted as one book?
2. Choose one of the six summary statements in Acts. Explain how this relates to the general outline of Acts and the expanding of the Church?
3. Chose one of the "Holy Spirit events" excepting Pentecost. Explain how this relates to the general outline of Acts and the expanding of the Church.

#### *Lesson 4*

1. Dr. Cara believes that Luke is both a historian and theologian. Explain.
2. Of the many proposed secondary purposes of Acts, list two that Dr. Cara agrees with and one that he does not.

#### *Lesson 5*

1. Some have noted that Acts should be entitled “Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Show how Acts 1:1-11 supports this statement.
2. Concerning “God has made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), give Dr. Cara’s rationale for concluding that the meaning of “Lord” is some combination of master and YHWH.

#### *Lesson 6*

1. In Acts 4:8, explain the “filling of the Holy Spirit.”
2. Compare and contrast the use of *pais* for Jesus in Acts 3 and 4.

#### *Lesson 7*

1. How does Dr. Cara summarize the propositional content of the Word of God in Acts?
2. Dr. Cara believes that preaching is the Word of God. Give Dr. Cara’s justification for this and the nuances of this statement.
3. What type of “entity” is the Word of God in Acts according to Dr. Cara? What implications follow from this conclusion?

#### *Lesson 8*

1. Dr. Cara believes that Acts 10:1-11:18 addresses two problems. Give these and their solutions.
2. What does Dr. Cara see as the primary reason for the tongues event in Acts 10:45-46?
3. Compare and contrast either the four Cornelius-Angel events or the three Peter-vision events. Make conclusions from your comparison.

#### *Lesson 9*

1. Explain how the relationship of Acts 15 to Gal 2:1-10 affects the critics’ negative historical view of Luke’s account.
2. What are the three arguments at the Jerusalem Council which favor Gentiles? Speculate on why this was convincing?
3. Was Paul consistent in not circumcising Titus and circumcising Timothy? Give a rationale for your answer.

#### *Lesson 10*

1. Give Dr. Cara’s view that Acts 19:1-7 points toward the Trinitarian formula in baptism.
2. What connections does Dr. Cara emphasize between the Holy Spirit tongue-events in Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19? Briefly explain each event and how it matches to Dr. Cara’s overall emphasis.
3. What minor complaints does Dr. Cara have about Reformed creeds related to baptism and its emphases in Acts?

#### *Lesson 11*

1. Respond to Childs’ quote concerning Paul being a “theological composite” in Acts 20.
2. Give Dr. Cara’s rationale as to why it is not historically unusual that Paul’s Acts 20 speech is different than his Acts 13 speech.

### Lesson 12

1. According to Dr. Cara, what part did Tertius play in the authorship of Romans?
2. Concerning Romans 5, give one argument why it should be connected to the Justification Section one reason why it should be connected with the Sanctification Section.
3. Does Dr. Cara consider Rom 1:18-11:36 a pristine summary of Paul's theology which was independent of the *Sitz-im-Leben* of Rome or Paul? Give a nuanced answer.

### Lesson 13

1. In Rom 1:16, what is Dr. Cara's view of "salvation"?
2. Explain how Phil 3:9 would support Luther's interpretation of "righteousness of God" in Rom 1:17.
3. How does Dr. Cara use the outline of Romans to support his interpretation of the Hab 2:4 quote in Rom 1:17?

### Lesson 14

1. How does Paul prove in Rom 1:18-3:8 that both Jew and Gentiles have sinned (3:9)?
2. According to Dr. Cara, does Rom 2:13 indicate salvation by works? Give a nuanced answer.
3. "For by works of the law, no one will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes a knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). How does this verse relate to the "second use of the law"?

### Lesson 15

1. Give two related meanings of "forensic" justification.
2. Did the Reformation view faith as the instrument or merit of one's salvation? Briefly explain.
3. What is the relationship between the righteousness of God on the one hand, and Christ, faith, gift-grace on the other in Rom 3:21-26?

### Lesson 16

1. Give the two conclusions for which E. P. Sanders is most famous.
2. What does Paul's use of "works of the law" mean according to Dr. Cara and according to Dunn?
3. What is Dunn's view of (1) Justification and (2) Ephesians 2:8-9?

### Lesson 17

1. How does Paul understand Genesis 15:6?
2. How is Rom 4:6b ("God counts righteousness apart from works") proved true by the Psalm 32 quote in Romans 4:7-8?

### Lesson 18

1. Give the three primary interpretations of "because all sinned" in Rom 5:12 ("Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned").
2. According to Dr. Cara, the parallel in Rom 5:19 confirms that Rom 5:12-14 teaches that all sinned in Adam, not that all sinned personally. Explain.
3. Give Dr. Cara's exegesis of "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (5:13) and fully explain what "law" has been violated.

### Lesson 19

1. Some believe that Romans 7:7-8:17 is connected to Rom 7:6. Give a rationale for this.

2. Use any verse in Romans 6-8 to prove that sanctification is a necessary consequence of justification.
3. Is a Christian equally controlled by *sarx* and the Holy Spirit? Give a rationale for your answer.

*Lesson 20*

1. What is the ultimate reason and proximate (human) reason that non-spiritual ethnic Israel was not converted?
2. According to Dr. Cara, how is “Christ the end of the law” in Rom 10:4?
3. According to Dr. Cara, how can both a righteousness by faith and a righteousness by works be in the OT? Relate this to Romans 10.

*Lesson 21*

1. Concerning “all Israel” in Rom 11:26, explain the view of premillennialists including their view of *hour[s]*.
2. Assume that “all Israel” (Rom 11:26) is a mass conversion at the end of the age. What is the “mystery” according to this view?

*Lesson 22*

1. Most scholars believe Rom 14:1-15:13 refers to Jewish / Gentile problems. Give support for this view.
2. Concerning Rom 14:23, how can someone be sinning if he eats meat which is OK to eat?
3. Choose a modern situation which relates to your life and show the impact Rom 14:1-15:13 should have on it.

**ACTS OUTLINE**

Church in Jerusalem	1:1-8:1
Church in Judea, Samaria, Antioch	8:2-12:25
First missionary journey of Paul, NE Med	13:1-14:28
Jerusalem Council	15:1-35
Second missionary journey of Paul, Aegean Sea	15:36-18:22
Third missionary journey of Paul, Aegean Sea	18:23-21:16
Jerusalem to Rome	21:17-28:31

**ROMANS OUTLINE**

Opening	1:1-7
Thanksgiving and Travel Plans	1:8-15
Theme	1:16-17
Justification	1:18-5:21
Sanctification	6-8
Israel - Has God’s Word Failed?	9-11
Hortatory	12:1-15:13
Travel Plans	15:14-33
Greetings / Closing	16

## PAPER TOPIC OPTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Acts and Romans, 0NT516, 2 hours

Dr. Robert Cara

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

### PAPER TOPIC OPTIONS

#### *General Comments*

- \* This should be a serious research paper, using at least six to eight serious commentaries (including both critical and conservative) and a few BT's. You must also footnote at least one journal article. Take advantage of the helpful annotated bibliographies in Appendices A & B.
- \* You must theologize! Connect the dots on the original and modern levels. Solve a problem, draw attention to something neglected, make an interesting or unique point, explain modern relevance, etc.
- \* 10-15 pages typed.
- \* Paper may concern either Acts or Romans. If one has not had *any* Greek, you must do the paper on Acts.

#### *Acts Options*

1. BT study on any major or minor theme in Acts or Luke-Acts.
2. Exegesis of a pericope highlighting (in a BT way) its (or one aspect in the pericope) relationship to the rest of Acts or Luke-Acts.
3. Compare and contrast two similar pericopes of which one is in Luke, and the other, Acts.

#### *Romans Options*

1. Exegesis of a pericope within the introduction (1:1-15) and hortatory (12:1-16:27) sections highlighting its relationship to any or all of the doctrinal sections (1:16-11:36).
2. Hermeneutical study of any OT quote or allusion in Romans. You must consider the LXX and MT. (If you don't know Hebrew, consult both standard OT commentaries and OT in NT works).
3. Compare and contrast two similar pericopes of which one is in Luke, and the other, Acts.