

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #3

Romans 1:1-7

Now keep in mind that this letter from God is designed to unravel His gospel. That adds a whole different dimension to the letter. This isn't a letter aimed at correcting some problems; this is a letter aimed at revealing the gospel of God.

Most letters begin with one opening sentence. Paul's letter to the Romans begins with seven key verses.

Grammatically, Paul does not spend much time in the opening words talking about himself, but he does spend a great deal of time talking about the gospel.

INTRODUCTORY SUBJECT #1 – Paul introduces himself. **1:1**

Way #1 - Paul is a bond-servant of Christ Jesus. **1:1a**

The Greek word for “bond-servant” is “doulos.” It is the common word for “slave.” This is a term most Christians in the Roman world could readily relate to for most of them were slaves.

In the Roman world there were three ways to become a slave: 1) By capture in war and by force; 2) By birth; 3) By choice. Sometimes people will say, “God does not do anything contrary to a human will.” However when you see what God did to Paul on the road to Damascus, God did just the opposite of Paul’s will (Acts 9:1-8).

I also want us to notice the word order “Christ Jesus” rather than “Jesus Christ.” Most of the other N.T. writers use the order “Jesus Christ” rather than “Christ Jesus” (47 times to 7). Paul, on the other hand uses “Christ Jesus” more than “Jesus Christ” (80 times to 25). This shows the precision of Paul's theology. Jesus Christ offered Himself first as the Jewish Messiah and second as the Savior of the world.

Way #2 - Paul is a called apostle. **1:1b**

In the Greek text, the word “called” functions as an adjective, meaning Paul was to qualify that he is not just an apostle, but he is a “called apostle.” He was an apostle because God had specifically called him to be one. He did not become an apostle because he wanted to become one, but because God called him. Now to be an apostle there were at least five prerequisites that need to be met:

1. An apostle had to be chosen to be an apostle by Jesus Christ Himself.
(Acts 1:2, 24; Galatians 1:1, 12; John 15:16)
2. An apostle had to physically see Christ after His resurrection.
(Acts 1:22; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:5, 7, 8)
3. An apostle had specific power to work miracles.
(Acts 8:14-18; Hebrews 2:4-5; II Corinthians 12:12)

4. An apostle had general authority over the church.
(II Corinthians 11:28; 12:28; Ephesians 2:20)
5. An apostle received special revelation and could speak or write by inspiration of God.
(II Corinthians 12:1; 13:3; II Timothy 3:16)

Paul had become an apostle by way of invitation of God.

Way #3 - Paul was set apart for the gospel of God. **1:1c**

The participle "set apart" is perfect passive meaning Paul had been set apart by God, through no act of himself, at some point in the past and continued to be set apart at the present. The word "set apart" in Greek literally means to mark off specific boundaries or to separate for a specific purpose. **Paul had been called out by God and marked off by God with the specific purpose of unraveling the gospel of God.** In fact, Paul believed if he didn't preach the gospel, he would receive a "woe" judgment of God (I Corinthians 9:16).

- 1) Paul had been set apart by God from the day of his birth. Galatians 1:15
- 2) Paul received his information directly from Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:12
- 3) Paul's specific ministry was recognized in his local church. Acts 13:1-2

INTRODUCTORY SUBJECT #2 – Paul introduces God's gospel. **1:2-6**

In the Greek text, the word "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) show up nine words into the text and is repeated several times in the first chapter - **1:1, 2, 9, 15, 16, 17**. The word means "good news." But as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, most just take this as their definition and don't know how good the news truly is (*Romans*, Vol. 1, p. 55). This good news sets you free from sin, from the law and from all condemnation and actually gives you the righteousness of God to the point that you are forever God's child. **That is not just good news, that is great news and that is God's grace news.**

There are at least eight different ways that Paul classifies the gospel which are all the same .
gospel:

1. He classifies it as the "gospel of God" (**1:1**; 15:16) - good news of God about how one may be saved from his sins.
2. He classifies it as "my gospel" (2:16; 16:25-26) - gospel was specifically revealed by God to Paul.
3. He classifies it as the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24) - gospel offered to a sinner based on no merit.
4. He classifies it as the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19, 29) - gospel is about faith in Jesus Christ.
5. He classifies it as the gospel of peace (Romans 10:15) - gospel that any sinner may have peace with the Holy God.
6. He classifies it as "the gospel" (Galatians 2:1) - the specific one and only gospel that can save a sinner.

7. He classifies it as “the gospel to the uncircumcision” (Galatians 2:7) - the gospel to be preached to Gentiles
8. He classifies it as “the gospel to the circumcision” (Galatians 2:7) - the gospel to be preached to the Jews.

Fact #1 - God's gospel is rooted in the Scriptures . **1:2**

The good news of God's gospel was rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures. As Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said: “...while it is good news, it is not new news. Its roots lie embedded firmly in the Old Testament...”

It is amazing how many allusions to the Old Testament actually show up in the proclamation of the gospel. For example, Paul quotes Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10 in reference to Christ's resurrection; Phillip connects Isaiah 53:7-8 to Christ's humiliation on the cross (Acts 8:32-33); Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 to establish that Israel would reject Jesus Christ (Acts 2:14-36); Jesus unraveled many O.T. passages to show how they all connected to Him (Luke 24:25-27). Dr. Johnson is correct; ‘the gospel is good news, but it is not new news.’

Now the specific good news Paul is writing about is the good news that sinful man can be in a right relationship with the Holy God. It is possible for a sinful man to have an intimate relationship with the Holy God through a Divinely Ordained sacrifice .

Fact #2 - God's gospel is centered on a Person . **1:3-4**

The whole gospel message is centered on one special person - Jesus Christ - the Son of God. Jesus Christ does not teach Christianity, He is Christianity. In these verses it is clearly established that He is the God-man.

(Point #1) - Jesus Christ was physically born in the Davidic line. **1:3**

The first point we may observe is that Jesus Christ had an actual humanity and an actual pedigree . He was physically born into this world. He was born in the Davidic line which makes Him Jewish and Kingly . This pedigree gives Jesus Christ a legitimate, Biblical right to reign as Messiah for God promised David that it would be his line that would produce the King of Kings (i.e. II Samuel 7:12-17). This was also confirmed by prophets like Isaiah (11:1) and Jeremiah (23:5-6).

(Point #2) - Jesus Christ was deity demonstrated by His resurrection . **1:4**

Jesus Christ was not just a Davidic Son, He was a Divine Son. Jesus Christ was powerfully declared to be the Son of God and our Lord by His resurrection . The word “declare” is the Greek word from which we get our English word “horizon .” The word literally means to appoint, to determine, to designate and to mark off by boundaries (Smith, p. 323).

Christ was declared to be God by an appointed, designated, determined event - His resurrection . It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ that establishes He is God and that everything He accomplished on the cross was fully pleasing to God (Romans 4:25).

This is further substantiated by the prepositional phrase “according to the spirit of holiness.” This phrase is the contrast of “according to the flesh” in **verse 3**. Both of these “according to” prepositional phrases are designed to give us insight into the person of Jesus Christ, who is the essence of the gospel of God. “According to the flesh” (**1:3**) establishes Christ's physical humanity. “According to the Spirit of holiness” (**1:4**) establishes Christ's holy deity. **Verse 3 proves Jesus Christ was a man and verse 4 proves Jesus Christ was God.** As **verse 4** says, Jesus Christ is our Lord and you must believe this in order to be saved from your sins (Romans 10:9).

Fact #3 - God's gospel is connected to all believers . **1:5-6**

(Relationship #1) - It was through Jesus Christ that the apostles received grace and apostleship . **1:5**

Phrase #1 - The apostolic ministry was designed to bring about “obedience of faith.” **1:5a**

The apostolic ministry was designed to get people to respond to the faith system of salvation as opposed to a works system of salvation. In other words, if you believe in Jesus Christ, you are obeying what the gospel teaches you that you must do to be saved. As Frederic Godet said, this is “the obedience that consists of faith itself” (*Commentary on Romans*, p. 82). John Calvin believed it was his responsibility to preach the Grace Gospel of faith and it was the person’s responsibility to obediently respond and believe. Calvin further believed that if one rejected Christ they were, in fact, irreverently resisting the authority of God (*Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 19, p. 48).

Phrase #2 - The apostolic ministry was to reach out to “all the Gentiles.” **1:5b**

God's grace extended His plan to all other nations , not just Israel . What is grace? Well most define it as God’s favor which is not earned and unmerited and undeserved. But we need to understand that it is even beyond this concept, for it is God’s favor toward those who deserve just the opposite. It is God’s gracious favor upon a sinner who deserves condemnation and hell.

It is hard to know what was going on in the mind of God when He decided that He would permit His gospel to reach out to depraved Gentile sinners who deserve His wrath; but all we may say is praise God for grace. ‘Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that would save a wretch like me.’

Phrase #3 - The apostolic ministry was “for His name’s sake.” **1:5c**

The gospel of God and the work of God are done for the name of God.

(Relationship #2) - It was through Jesus Christ that all believers receive their calling . **1:6**

Paul gives the Romans something profound to think about - just as the sovereign God called Paul, so God has called every believer.

Point #1 - Every believer has been Divinely called to salvation. **1:6a**

The word “called” is never used in the Epistles to refer to one who is given a mere invitation to something, to which he may or may not respond. The term is always used of one God has saved.

Point #2 - Every believer has been Divinely called by Jesus Christ. **1:6b**

Jesus Christ, the Lord God, is the source of your salvation. He paid for it on the cross, He proved it by His resurrection and He picked you in His choice. **If you downplay or disregard the doctrine of election, you demean Jesus Christ.**

INTRODUCTORY SUBJECT #3 – Paul introduces the letter’s recipients. **1:7**

I want you to notice who needs to know the heavy theology of the doctrine of the gospel in Romans - those who are believers. The truth is most who are believers don’t know this book.

Fact #1 - They are beloved of God. **1:7a**

Even though the believers in Rome were being outcast and doomed by powers of this earth, they were beloved by the God of heaven. How did Gentiles who were dead in their sins ever come to faith in Jesus Christ? Dead people don’t make life choices. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “We are Christians for one reason only and that is that God has set his love upon us” (*Romans*, Vol. 1, p. 159).

Fact #2 - They are called saints. **1:7b**

The word "saint" means God considered His people to be consecrated, sacred and dedicated unto Him. This refers to their positional status and it should affect their practical conduct. **You do not achieve sainthood by your works ; you achieve sainthood by a call of God.** When God saves you, you are, positionally speaking, a saint and from that point on you are His sacred property.

Fact #3 - They have God's grace and peace. **1:7c**

The Roman believers were in a peace relationship with God, due to the grace of God found in Jesus Christ. There are some who think peace means a quietness of conscience and sometimes this is precisely what it is. However, here it is speaking of being in a peaceful, not hostile relationship with God.

Notice where grace and peace are found - only from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the quintessence of Pauline theology.

Your life will lack peace and tranquility until you are right with God through Jesus Christ. Will you believe on Christ today? Will you put your faith totally in Him and not rely upon your works or religion? If so you shall be saved. That is the gospel of God found in Romans!