

**Message #2****Romans 1:1-7**

One night, D. L. Moody was preaching and he had unlocked many of the Gospel truths that are found in the book of Romans. One of the things that Moody brought out was that “we are all sinners from the worst criminal to the most religious moralist.”

There was a woman in the audience who was a very active church worker and she did not like hearing that. She was angry and she went to Mr. Moody and said, “Do you mean to tell me that I, a good educated woman who comes from a good upstanding home and family, who have been a member of this church all my life and has been a hard worker who has done a lot of good for people must enter heaven the same way as the worst criminals of our day?” “Is that what you are telling me?” Moody said, “No ma’am, I am not telling you that, God does.” That is exactly what God tells us in Romans.

It would be like someone in the church today saying you mean to tell me that I have to get into heaven the same way that guys like Ted Bundy or Jeffrey Dahmer or Charles Manson get into heaven? We would say that is what God is saying in Romans.

**Romans is the longest letter written by Paul.** This is not the normal letter. He is writing this to reveal the doctrine of the Gospel of God. This letter is not aimed at correcting some problem; it is designed to reveal the theology of God’s Gospel.

Most letters begin with a short opening sentence. Romans begins with one long sentence comprised of seven introductory verses, which makes this the longest letter opening of any letter in the Bible.

In fact, it has been observed that no other known written letter from the Greece or Roman world or from the Jewish world has such an extensive opening. This fact alone shows the sacredness and seriousness and depth of God’s gospel.

In analyzing the one long sentence Paul writes, there are three main introductory topics that he develops:

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

Paul begins the letter by giving his credentials as the writer. The first thing he does is name himself, Paul. After naming himself, he qualifies himself by listing three credentials:

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

The Greek word “bond-servant” (doulos) was a common first century word for slave. It was a common term to which most Christians could relate because most were slaves in the Roman world.

One could become a slave in three ways: 1) By forced capture; 2) By birth; 3) By choice. Now for most people in the Roman world, they became a slave by the first two methods - capture or birth. But for Paul, it was all three.

- 1) Paul was literally captured on the road to Damascus and put into God's family, against his own will (Acts 9:1-8). His will was to track down and destroy those who believe in Jesus.
- 2) Paul was born into the family of God by a spiritual birth.
- 3) Paul willingly chose to serve Jesus Christ and do His will.

Notice carefully the proper noun order Paul uses: "Christ Jesus." There is theological precision in this. Jesus Christ first offered Himself as Jewish Messiah and then world Savior.

We who are Gentiles know Jesus in the order of Jesus Christ, which means our Savior first, and Israel's Messiah second. But Paul will emphasize the importance of Israel later in this book so he begins with "Christ Jesus."

### **Credential #2 - Paul is a called Apostle. 1:1b**

In Greek the word "called" is an adjective. What this means is that Paul is qualifying his apostleship as a "called Apostle." He was an Apostle because God called him to be an Apostle. He did not become an Apostle by his own choosing. He did not become an Apostle because that is what he thought he would like to do in a career. He was called by God to be an Apostle.

Now to be a "called Apostle" there were five prerequisites:

- 1) An Apostle had to be chosen by Jesus Christ Himself. Acts 1:2, 24; Gal. 1:1, 12; John 15:16
- 2) An Apostle had to physically see the resurrected Christ. Acts 1:22; I Cor. 9:1; 15:5, 7, 8
- 3) An Apostle had to perform special apostolic miracles. Acts 8:14-18; Heb. 2:4-5; II Cor. 12:12
- 4) An Apostle had to have general authority over the church. II Cor. 11:28; 12:28; Eph. 2:20
- 5) An Apostle received special revelation to speak and write that which was inspired by God. II Cor. 12:1; 13:3; II Tim. 3:16

One other point, the same adjectival construction "called" is used of every believer in **verse 7**. So if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you too have experienced the sovereign call and election of God.

### **Credential #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 (passive voice) from some point of time in the past and continued to be at the present and into the future (perfect tense).

God had marked off the boundaries of Paul's life and he set him apart for the purpose of revealing the "Gospel of God."

- 1) Paul had been set apart by God from the day of his physical birth. Gal. 1:15
- 2) Paul was set apart in that he received gospel revelation directly from Jesus Christ. Gal. 1:12

3) Paul was recognized as being set apart by his local church in Antioch. Acts 13:1-2

What Paul was specifically set apart by God for was the gospel of God. **So God set Paul apart from all others and gave him the Apostolic responsibility to present the doctrine and theology of the good news of the gospel of God.**

Paul so recognized this responsibility that he said “woe” is me if I do not preach and teach the gospel (I Cor. 9:16).

### **INTRODUCTORY TOPIC #2 – Paul introduces the gospel. 1:2-6**

Paul uses a series of subordinate clauses to immediately start unlocking truth about the gospel. In the Greek text, Paul is only nine words into the letter (in English 12-13 words) and he immediately starts developing the gospel.

The word “gospel” (euaggelion) means “good news.” But, as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, most don’t know how good this news actually is. He said this is the greatest good news to ever come into the world (*Romans*, Vol. 1, p. 58).

This news is so good that it can set one free from sin, from the law, from all condemnation and give a person the righteousness of God and a relationship that has peace with the Holy God.

**This is not just good news, this is great news, this is amazing grace news.**

The Apostle Paul was focused on the Gospel of God and he developed it eight ways:

- 1) He said it was the “gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1, 15,16) - God’s gospel to save sinners from sins.
- 2) He said it was “my gospel” Rom. 2:16; 16:25-26) - specifically revealed by God to Paul.
- 3) He said it was the “gospel of grace” (Acts 20:24) - no works, no merit, no earning.
- 4) He said it was the “gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:19, 29) - only faith in Jesus Christ saves.
- 5) He said it was the “gospel of peace” (Rom. 10:15) - Any sinner may have peace with God.
- 6) He said it was “the gospel” (Gal. 2:1) - there are not multiple gospels; there is one and only one.
- 7) He said it was “the gospel to the uncircumcision” (Gal. 2:7) - gospel proclaimed to Gentiles.
- 8) He said it was “the gospel to the circumcision” (Gal. 2:7) - gospel proclaimed to Jews.

There are three facts that Paul brings out in this introduction about the Gospel:

### **Fact #1 - God’s Gospel is rooted in the holy 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...”. **Don’t overlook the fact that the Scriptures are holy.**

It is amazing how many allusions to the O.T. 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 (Acts 13:34). Paul quoted Isaiah 42:6 and 49:5 to say that it was clearly predicted that his ministry would take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:47). Philip 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 Christ Himself unraveled many O.T. passages to show how they all connected to Him (Luke 24:25-27).

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

**The entire Gospel of God is centered and found in one Person - Jesus Christ. He is the only Savior. He is the only Messiah. He is God. He is the Son of God and He is the Lord.**

To be right with God, you must have a relationship with one Person, Jesus Christ.

There are two key points that Paul opens with concerning Jesus Christ:

**(Point #1)** - Jesus Christ was physically born as a human through the Davidic line. **1:3**

God's gospel is centered on a Person who was really and truly human. He had an actual humanity and an actual pedigree. He was born in the Davidic family line that makes Him Jewish and Kingly.

This pedigree is crucial to giving Him the legal right to be identified as the King of kings and Lord of lords (II Sam. 7:12-17). It is predicted that He would sit on David's throne (Acts 2:30) and to sit on that throne one has to be Davidic.

**(Point #2)** - Jesus Christ was declared to be God by His resurrection. **1:4**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just some nice story to tell at Easter time. This is concrete proof that Jesus Christ is God, the very Son of God. The verb "declare" is the Greek word from which we get our English word "horizon" (orizw). The word literally means to determine and designate and mark off by boundaries (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 323).

God has designated a very special event to mark off the fact that Jesus Christ is the God/Savior/Messiah/Son of God King. That event is His resurrection.

It is the resurrection that becomes critical to Christ's identity and to the Gospel because it is the resurrection that proves that everything Jesus Christ accomplished by dying on the cross was acceptable to God to be able to save us sinners (Romans 4:25).

Now the prepositional phrase "according to the Spirit of holiness," is in contrast to "according to the flesh" (v. 3). Both of these prepositional phrases are critical pertaining to Jesus Christ. "According to the flesh" proves Jesus Christ had real humanity.

“According to the Spirit of Holiness” proves Jesus Christ had real Holy Deity. **Verse 3 lets us know Jesus Christ was a real man and verse 4 lets us know that Jesus Christ was God.**

The entire Gospel of God is about one Person - the God/man Savior Jesus Christ. The good news of the gospel is that this one Person can save us from all of our sins and give us peace in a relationship with God. The proof that Jesus Christ has the power to save a sinner is that resurrection. That declares Him to be our Lord and our Savior.

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

There are two connections all believers have with the Gospel of God:

**(Connection #1)** - Through Jesus Christ the Apostles received grace and Apostleship. **1:5**

This is important to see. The Gospel that saves us is connected to the Apostles. The gospel of God’s grace was first given to the Apostles and they passed it on to us. There are three prepositional phrases Paul uses to define it:

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

**The gospel of grace presents a message of obeying the faith saving gospel rather than a works saving gospel.** The obedience to the Apostolic gospel is an obedience to believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. This gospel does not rely on our works, our obedience or our goodness or the O.T. law. The message the apostles tried to get a religious world to believe was a grace, faith message.

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

God’s grace message was to be proclaimed to all the Gentiles. The gospel was to go to all sinners all over the world and tell them that if they would believe on Jesus Christ, they would be saved.

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

The name that saves is Jesus Christ. There is no other name that can save anyone. The grace gospel message is a message of one Person and one Name, Jesus Christ. Believe on Him and you will be saved. It is not our name that will save us from our sins, it is His name.

**(Connection #2)** - Through Jesus Christ all believers receive salvation calling. **1:6**

There are two remarkable statements that Paul makes to believers:

***Statement #1*** - You received grace by God’s calling.

The adjective “called” (κλητός) is never used in the Epistles to refer to one who is given a mere invitation to something, to which one may or may not respond. The term is used of one God calls and saves.

Paul says I want you believers to understand that it was God who called you and saved you. You are not a believer by coincidence or chance. You didn’t just randomly bump into Jesus Christ one day, you were called by God into grace salvation.

**Statement #2** - You received God’s grace by Jesus Christ.

The grammar here indicates that Jesus Christ is the source of grace salvation. He paid for our salvation on the cross. He proved our salvation by His resurrection. He picked us to salvation by His choice.

**INTRODUCTORY TOPIC #3** – Paul introduces the recipients. **1:7**

There are three facts that Paul brings out about these believers in the church of Rome:

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

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

This is the same adjective Paul uses in **verse 1**, **verse 6** and again here in **verse 7**.

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

This grace and peace is from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says “our” Father and “our” Lord Jesus Christ. Paul never believed salvation was about him or from him. It was about God and from God and it was about Jesus Christ the Lord and from Jesus Christ the Lord. Believe on Him and you will have the same grace and peace Paul had.