

Romans 1

The Book of Romans

Chapter One

"The Just and the Unjust"

THE AUTHOR OF THIS LETTER

The playwright once asked, "What's in a name?" In the first verse of Romans chapter one the author is identified with the name "Paul." In this name is a wonderful testimony of the matchless and powerful name of Jesus. The author was once known as "Saul of Tarsus" who was a man of great education and emotion. Saul was on his way to Damascus with papers authorizing him to imprison and harm Christians, but on that road a light shined bright from Heaven and Jesus revealed himself to Saul and shortly after that Saul's name was changed to Paul. Paul means: ("*pause*"; *to stop (transitively or intransitively), i.e. restrain, quit, desist, come to an end:--cease, leave, refrain.* Saul was headed 180 degrees full speed in the wrong direction and Jesus brought his threatenings and hatred against the people of God to an abrupt pause and in that moment Paul yielded to the Lord and was never the same again: in name and nature.

1. A servant Of Jesus Christ

The word servant in this verse is the Greek word *doulos* meaning: *bondservant (one bound by honorable ties), a servant of choice, a slave by reason of love.* The writers of the New Testament used the title "servant" often as a name by which they expected to be known. Christ commanded His disciples in Mark 10:44, "*And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*" Paul's writing of Romans was with great authority not because of his credentials, but because of His Master Whose ambassador he was. Paul made his plea known based on Christ's Lordship and the blessing of the Believer's voluntary service to Him. Paul's heart and spirit rang in trueness with John the Baptist's declaration and was a world apart from the theologians and "Doctors of Divinity" who strive for masteries. John the Baptist declared speaking of Christ in John 3:30, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" The heart of a true servant exalts its Lord and not itself.

2. Called to be an apostle

My pastor has often declared that as a man called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be elected President of the United States would be a demotion and disappointment. An apostle is a messenger and an ambassador of God Almighty.

3. Separated Unto the Gospel of God

Absolute consecration is spoken of in these words. Paul was set apart to preach one message only one message. Paul did not declare a message that exalted himself nor did he do a work to further his position in the eyes of men. Paul declares the he as a believer and therefore so should we be only for the Lord's use and not for our own petty causes.

THE SUBJECT OF THIS LETTER

The next 5 verses speak of the "Gospel." The Gospel is not something new but has been promised afore by God's prophets. God has given us a promise by His prophets. This promise has been recorded in the Holy Scriptures. This promise which is the Gospel is concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Gospel or *Good News* is in its entirety a message concerned with Christ.

Paul declares three things concerning this Christ of the Gospel:

1. He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.
2. He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection from the dead.
3. By Him we have received both GRACE and APOSTLESHIP. John 1:17 echo's part of the fact, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
 1. The purpose of these gifts is not for the exalting of the flesh, but for the exalting of God's name: "for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name." God has bestowed grace and called us that many more might come to Christ and glorify God.
 2. In verse six, Paul reaffirms two facts: We are AMONG all nations and we also as Paul declared he was, the CALLED of Jesus Christ. Though we live IN this world, we are not OF it. We must live as strangers and sojourning pilgrims whose home is beyond the mortal bounds of this earth.

THE ADDRESSEES AND SALUTATION OF THIS LETTER

Paul addresses this letter to:

1. ALL that be in Rome
2. Beloved of God (dearly loved)
3. Called *to be* Saints (notice the italics in this clause. We could properly render this clause "called saints.")

These are no strangers to Paul, but people near to His heart. Paul thanks God for these for their faith is renowned in the whole world and also Paul prays for them without ceasing with a desire that he might one day be able to come to them. (vv.8-10)

"Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This salutation is a trademark of sorts of Paul's. Compare with: I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:2; I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3. Peter and John in their writings also use this greeting.

THE BODY OF THIS LETTER BEGINS

Verses 10-13 Paul speaks of his request to God. Paul's desire in visiting them is for the purpose of imparting unto them spiritual gifts that they may be ESTABLISHED. Paul did not push others down to exalt himself a little higher, but he sought and worked for there to be MUTUAL faith, equal experience, in and with God for Paul knew it was not a one man show. If they were to excel they could be a great comfort to him and to others in the faith as workers together. Many times Paul planned on visiting Rome, but each time he was prevented. Though hindered over and over, Paul's desire was that he might have fruit among his brethren according to the flesh as he had among the Gentiles.

Verses 14,15 Paul acknowledges the divisions in the hearts of the people of his day with the terms 'You AND the Gentiles,' yet, he makes no distinction when it comes to for whom the Gospel is determined and to whom he must preach the glad tidings. He says it matters not Greek, Jew, Barbarian, wise, or even unwise, but that he, Paul, is ready to preach to them. Paul was indebted to Greek and Jew, there was no difference because the Gospel makes no difference, but is for both the Greek and the Jew.

In Verses 16,17,18, Paul addresses:

1. The Power of God v.16

Paul is ready to preach to whosoever unashamed because he knows beyond all doubt that the GOSPEL OF CHRIST is the POWER of God unto salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek. There is salvation by no other, but in that holy name, Jesus. (Acts 4:12)

2. The Righteousness of God v.17

In that Gospel is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith: as it is written the just shall live by faith. The revelation of God's character and nature is not something apart and separate from the Gospel, but is bound up in the Gospel that we as hearers may LIVE. This life and righteousness is not received all at once, but is revealed to us from faith to faith. As we obey and do as we have received, God gives us more and this continual progression in righteousness is the path of life of the JUST. The key to maintaining our experience with God is progression. Paul declares in Hebrews 6:1, "Let us go on."

3. The Wrath of God v.17

The revelation of God's wrath is upon those that hold the truth in unrighteousness.

The conclusion of this chapter continues on describing this people who are guilty and worthy of the wrath of God. They are without excuse because 1) God has manifested Himself to them (v.19), 2) Creation itself clearly declares the things of God (v.20), and 3) they once knew God but did not glorify Him as God (v.21). The great good they once had is now turned to great corruption. Their corruption and guilt is clear and the judgment is set. "...They which commit such things are worthy of death..."