

Chapter 1

- Paul's Introduction to his Letter
- Paul's Theme to his Letter
- All are Guilty and Under Sin

Paul's Introduction to his Letter

(Romans 1:1-17)

Paul's Salutation (v. 1-7)

An apostle is one who has been SENT FORTH as a messenger or representative of and fully authorized by the sender—a delegate or ambassador. (Acts 9:3-9, 15-22, 28) Paul's calling was not earthly. He was not even a candidate in the vote taken in Acts 1, but Paul's calling and sending forth as an apostle came from Christ. (1:5) Paul emphasizes that he was called to be an Apostle; this calling was by God and not by man.

Paul was a "preacher of the Gospel." He was a separated messenger with a special Message. The Gospel is a mystery (Mark 4:11; I Tim. 3:9,16; Col. 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9) and a Divine revelation. (Acts 9).

Absolute consecration is spoken of in these words. Paul was set apart to preach one message and 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 that his purpose in life was the Gospel of God, and so should this be our purpose as ministers of the Gospel.

His Message (v. 1-5)

Paul's message is the Gospel. The Gospel does not originate from Paul and is wholly concerned with Jesus Christ: our Lord, seed of David, Son of God, resurrected.

His Readers (v.6-7)

Those connected to Jesus are connected with Him by His calling. The Called that Paul is writing to does not simply mean those invited, but means those invited that have come.

It is unquestionable that the recipients of this epistle were the Roman Christians (v. 7, 15). Scripture seems to point to a predominantly Gentile Roman church as Paul's manner of addressing the church leaves hardly any doubt that he is writing to Gentiles. In chapter one, Paul speaks of his apostleship for obedience of the faith among all the nations (1:5). He refers to the recipients as "other gentiles" and also gives as his reason for being ready to preach the Gospel to them as that he is debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians (1:14), and that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, though to the Jew first, yet to the Greek also (1:16).

When the position and prospects of the Jewish nation are under review and Paul comes to admonition, it is to the Gentile believers that he addresses it (1:13; 11:13; 15:15-16).

The family of God comprises of saints called out of the world by God's grace to be His own people (I Cor. 1:2). Saints are those who are set apart for worship and praise. Another word key to understanding the meaning of "saints" is "sanctified." Saints are directly opposed to sin. Saints are those who allow holiness to become a reality in their lives. True righteousness is a phenomenon of the will. True righteousness always produces outward action and inward results. Every form of sin must be put out of the heart. As moral agents our intellect must disapprove of sin.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ

This is a common greeting of Paul in his epistles. The title "Jesus Christ our Lord" or "Lord Jesus Christ" is used ten times in Romans. Jesus is the personal name as Savior. Matt. 1:21. Christ is "God's anointed one" Lord denotes He is Lord of all things in heaven and earth (Acts 10:36). Jesus Christ our Lord is the Master of every situation!

Paul's Readiness (to Visit, Impart & Preach) (v. 8-15)

Verses 8-15 express Paul's personal feelings for the Roman saints.

Paul is thankful for the faith of the Roman saints and so prays for them (v. 8-9)

The whole world is in reference to the domain of the Roman Empire which often referred to itself as the whole world. It was Augustus who made the decree at the birth of Christ that the whole world should be taxed, which was in reference to the dominions of Rome.

The faith of the saints in Rome was spoken of throughout the entire Empire. These Roman Christians are the "Beloved of God," "Called to be saints," and recipients of the grace and peace "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Their testimony bears out that they are separated unto God and represent the King of Glory. What a treasure a good testimony is! Paul stands on the battleground in prayer that their faith and testimony would continue.

He has a great desire to visit the Roman saints and impart spiritual gifts unto them because of his motive to see the church established (v. 10-12)

Rome was strategic, but Paul is led by the Spirit and not statistics. It is probable that Paul realized the strategic value of building up the church in the capital city of the Roman Empire, but Paul was a caliber of minister that would invest as heavily in a city no one ever heard of. He was blessed to hear that there were saints in Rome and desired to visit them to do his part to strengthen the church there. It is logical that a revival in the city of Rome would have impact on the entire Empire, but the truth is, God could choose any place to be the start of a revival that would turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Paul had been hindered from going to Rome (v. 13-15)

He had wanted to and even planned to go, but he had been hindered. Paul would one day go to Rome as a prisoner to stand before the Roman leaders and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts tells us that Paul dwelt two years in Rome. It is believed that he was under house arrest during this time of being in Rome. He was beheaded in Rome in AD 67.

Paul had great desire to preach the Gospel in Rome. He uses the word "debtor" in reference to himself to show that he is committed to preach to all men (v. 14). He was a debtor to the sinner to tell him about Christ. "Greeks" is used to refer to the wise Gentiles who have been educated in Greek culture and philosophy. "Barbarians" is used to refer to those outside of the Greek culture, that would not have been educated. Paul is ready to preach to everyone.

Paul's Theme to his Letter

(Romans 1:16,17) Paul declares his theme in verses 16 and 17 (The Gospel) and these verses serve as a summary of the epistle.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation

All who believe can be changed by the power of God

The Scripture declares that the Gospel of Christ is to everyone that believes. Some falsely teach that God chooses only certain people to be saved. The Gospel is not for only a selected few, but for whosoever will come and drink of the waters of life. Whosoever believes in Jesus shall have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16). All men have the ability of believing, but all men will not choose to believe in Jesus and accept the provision of redemption through His blood.

Salvation is a work of God

Man can do nothing to save himself. He was born in sin with no human means of hope. Man could not be good enough to satisfy the law of God. He is guilty and condemned to hell. There is no price that man could pay to purchase his Salvation. Salvation is a work of God given by grace and received by faith in Jesus Christ. Many complicate the simplicity of the Gospel and cannot accept that sinful man can be made new and transformed by the power of God as he reaches out in faith to the nail scarred hands of Jesus.

The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith

Righteousness comes from God

Man has no righteousness of his own (Is. 64:6). The righteousness of Christ is put to the account of the sinner. This is what is meant by imputed righteousness. Impute is a KJV word that means to set to the account of. ILLUSTRATION: A man who has no money in the bank needs someone else to put money into his account. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness (James 2:23). Abraham had the righteousness of God put to his account (Rom. 4:3). God views the repentant through the blood of Christ.

Righteousness is received by faith at salvation. There is a difference between imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness. To impart means to put into. God places His righteousness in man at Salvation. There is a change of nature that accompanies the new birth (Phil. 3:9).

The expression from faith to faith is referring to an increase of faith; showing growth from the initial faith of salvation to a greater faith in God that comes with Christian growth. The Scripture tells us that every man is given the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3). All men have the ability to believe, yet all do not exercise their faith to believe in Jesus Christ. The apostles asked the Lord to increase their faith (Lk. 17:5). Faith is increased as it is put into practice. With Christian maturity comes an increase in faith. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith through the Gospel.

The Righteousness of God is progressive in the life of Christians.

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."

The just shall live by faith

Paul builds the theme of the epistle on the foundation of Scripture. "As it is written" is in reference to Habakkuk 2:4 from where this statement is quoted.

The just are those who have been justified by God through faith

The just refers to those who have been set in a right relationship with God through the atonement provided by Jesus Christ. Those who are saved are the just or those who have been justified.

The Christian is kept by the power of God

The just remain so by the keeping power of God. In this world of sin, the Christian needs the preserving power of God to keep him on the straightway that leads unto life. Jesus said that no man could pluck the sheep out of His hand (Jn. 10:28). This does not mean that God ever takes away the choice of man. Christians must choose to serve God, to live is an everyday experience (The just shall live) that requires a continual receiving of God's power by faith.

The path of the just leads to full maturity in Christ

Light represents truth which guides the Christian on his journey (Pro. 4:18; Ps. 119:105). The further we walk on the path, the more truth that is received. God reveals more truth as we obey the truth that has already been received. The life of the just is to continue by faith to mature in Christ and receive the fullness of our inheritance as believers.

The Christian lives his life by faith in Christ

Galatians 2:20—I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

All are Guilty and Under Sin

(Romans 1:18-32)

All are guilty and under sin (1:18-32; 2:1-29)

Romans 3:9—... we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

All are guilty

All mankind needs to be justified through Jesus, or the wrath of God will be revealed against it (1:18). Jesus is the only way to salvation and those who do not chose to accept the provision of Christ are condemned (John 3:18).

Gentile guilt (1:19-32)

The conclusion of this chapter continues on describing this people who are guilty and worthy of the wrath of God. They are without excuse.

They knew God (1:19-23)

God has manifested Himself to them (v.19). Creation itself clearly declares the things of God (v.20). Even those who did not receive the Law or have never heard the Gospel have been given a revelation of God through nature therefore they are without excuse. They once knew God but did not glorify Him as God (v.21). Graven images are the result of rejecting truth and not glorifying God. Man has worshipped the creature more than the creator.