

III. Romans in Biblical Perspective

The Gospel of God

“Who? Where? When? Whom? What? Why? — Part 3”

Romans 1:1–7

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This is our third study in the book of Romans. Romans 1:1–7 says *[1] Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, [2] which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, [3] concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations, [6] including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, [7] To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

There are some reading this today that have not known life without email but I have. I remember being introduced to email in the 1990s. The inventors, administrators and distributors did something very smart. We you received an email you would get a digital chime and then a message that said ‘you have mail.’ I don’t know if this story is true or not but there was lady who would walk out to her mailbox about 30 to 40 times a day and so one of her neighbors asked her, ‘Are you okay?’ She said ‘I’m fine but I just don’t understand this because my husband bought me this computer and it keeps telling me I have mail but every time I go to my mailbox there is nothing there.’

Today, when you receive an email what is the first thing you look at? You look at who sent it. You can also see perhaps what they are about to tell you because of the line that says ‘subject.’ The 21st century email is much more similar to the first century mail than 21st century mail is. The first century letters would always start off with who was writing the letter, where they are writing from, when, whom they are writing to and then what they are about to say. They clue you in at the beginning of the letter as to what they are about to say. That is what this Pauline letter of Romans is all about.

The four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – tell us who Jesus is and what He did. The book of Acts tells us what Jesus continued to do through His church and now we have the teaching of Christianity beginning with the epistles. The very first epistle is Romans, not because it was chronologically it was first but because of the glorious content of this epistle. We already know from our study that Paul wrote this epistle, who was formerly known as Saul, a religious terrorist, a Roman citizen, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and now a Christian. Now by God’s grace Paul evangelizes where people become Christians rather than killing them and he plants churches rather than destroying them. This is what grace does for it’s greater than sin and turns it all around. This one now out of love has surrendered and is called to be a servant/slave/doulos to Jesus Christ as his Lord.

Paul is also called to be an Apostle and this is interesting because he doesn’t meet all the three qualifications. He meets one. Peter gives the three criteria of an Apostle in Acts 1 when the

Disciples need to replace Judas Iscariot. One, is he had to be with the 12 Disciples. Two, he had to witness the baptism and resurrection of Jesus. Thirdly, he had to be appointed as an Apostle by Jesus. Paul tells us he is the Apostle “untimely born” and therefore he wasn’t there to be with the 12 or at the baptism and resurrection of Jesus but the governing qualification he met. The risen Christ saved him on the road to Damascus, taught him for three years in the wilderness and sent him as an Apostle to the Gentiles. He was also set apart for the Gospel of God.

We know when he wrote the book of Romans, where he wrote it, who he wrote it to and now he is telling us what the letter is going to be about. It is going to be about the Gospel of God. Another way to say Gospel is Good News. Why is it Good News? It is because it solves the problems of the bad news. The bad news is we are sinners, under the judgment of God and we can’t save ourselves and neither can man-made religion. The Good News is that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son and His Son has now done for us what we couldn’t do. He lived the life we couldn’t live and died the death we didn’t want to die, which is an atoning death and a perfect righteousness and this is what He provides for His people. This is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Paul calls it the Gospel of God for a reason. We are about to learn the reason.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God – inspired, inerrant, infallible and sufficient. Every word in the Bible has been put there by God and even the order they are put in. This is what we call a genitive preposition – a preposition of ownership, the Gospel of God. In other words, the Gospel is owned by God. It could be translated God’s Gospel. When you read Romans 15 we see Paul say “my Gospel” and for those of us who have surrendered to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior there is a sense of ownership, thus the Gospel is now “ours” since we are now Christ’s and we belong to Him. That is an ownership of response and that’s not what this is talking about for this is the Gospel of God and He owns the Gospel because He originates and reveals the Gospel. We wouldn’t know the Gospel without God revealing it and there wouldn’t be a Gospel if He hadn’t established it. It is from Him, to Him and for Him.

Paul will cover this when he gets to Romans 11. After Paul finishes explaining the Gospel in the first 11 chapters he says in Romans 11:33–36, [33] *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!* [34] *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?”* [35] *“Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?”* [36] *For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.* This is the Gospel of God.

The Gospel of God also means it’s a Trinitarian Gospel. It is a Gospel of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This passage affirms and clarifies that for us. One of the things we enjoyed doing during our annual family vacation is put together a jig saw puzzle. Therefore I have become a self-affirmed, self-acclaimed and self-announced expert at jig saw puzzles throughout the years. I would say there are three keys to solving the jig saw puzzle. First find all the corner pieces. Secondly, find all the straight-edged pieces so that you can go from corner to corner which will give you the framer to the jig saw puzzle with the rest of the pieces going inside the frame. Thirdly, look at the picture on the front of the box so you have an idea of where you will go from there.

In this study we have before us seven framing principles of the Gospel of God. Paul loves to write long sentences. There are 228 words in a sentence from Ephesians 1:3–14. Most English teachers would call this a run-on sentence but this one is inspired by the Holy Spirit so let’s find

out why it's run on to understand it. We will get to all seven of these principles over the next 16 chapters but I do want to put those framing principles in front of us.

The very first principle of the Gospel of God is, its origin – how do you know the Gospel of God. Let's start with Romans 1:2 which says *[2] which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures*. In other words, the Gospel of God is not a philosophical proclamation of men. It comes from God and was promised long before Jesus had His life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. The very first time the Gospel is prophesied for us is in Genesis 3:15. Moses is the Prophet writing the book of Genesis. Genesis 3:15 says *[15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel*. The first anticipation of the Gospel is that the woman will have a Seed and women don't have seed. Her Seed will crush the head of the serpent though the serpent will bruise His heel. The Promised Seed of the woman will win the victory over sin, Satan, and the kingdom of darkness.

Matthew in his Gospel, takes pains to tell his Jewish audience as he shows the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and he identifies ten prophecies that Jesus fulfills in those few opening chapters. In other words, this work of God was promised by God and given to us through the prophecies of the Old Testament writers. One thing we know is that the Gospel is not an invention in man-made religion. It is a message of Divine origin and revelation. The Gospel is God's because it comes from God and is communicated by God through the Prophets of the Old Testament. It is expounded in the New Testament but it has already been promised and prophesied. We see it in types, shadows and prophecies time and time again in the Bible. The whole Old Testament is pointing to Jesus.

Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 5:39, *[39] You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me*. Yom Kippur is pointing to Jesus' atoning day. The sacrificial offerings are pointing to Jesus. Jesus is the Ark that saves His chosen people. The Prophets, Priests and Kings are all showing us Jesus. All these percepts, signs, symbols, types, prophecies, promises and shadows are all yes and amen in Him which a reason we see the encounter of Jesus with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. How does He take slow hearts and turn them into burning hearts?

Luke 24:25–27, 32 says *[25] And He (Jesus) said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. [32] They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"* It is all pointing to Him.

Paul says in his last letter to Timothy in II Timothy 3:14–17, *[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings (the Scriptures), which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*. Timothy was raised with the Old Testament that was able to give him the wisdom that leads to

salvation. Now it wasn't as clear as New Testament for the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Augustine said the Old Testament was like a beautifully decorated living room where the lights are dim and the New

Testament cuts on the lights so you can see the glories of it. We have this glorious message of the redeeming work of Christ in the Bible that begins in Genesis 3 and comes to its consummation in Revelation 22. That is why Jesus says the Bible is there to point to Him because He is the fulfillment of it.

The Gospel of God is not plan B. The Gospel of God is the only plan, the eternal plan and the plan that is revealed in the Bible. God said to Abraham, 'In you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.' This is God's work of the Gospel of God to all the world that is revealed in the Word of God.

Secondly, we have the focus of the Gospel which is the Son of God – Jesus Christ having come in the flesh. We see this as we look at the next verse in Romans 1:3–4 which says *[3] concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh [4] and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.* Jesus is Yahshua meaning Yahweh saves. Matthew 1:21 says *[21] She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.* He is Christ, the Anointed One, the Prophet, the Priest and the King, who is our Lord. Rome and Roman citizens were required to say 'Caesar is lord' but the Christians would only say 'Jesus is Lord' and some would die who said this.

Who is this Jesus revealed in the Word that comes into history? He humbles Himself and then is exalted. This is how the Apostles' Creed says who Jesus is;

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to hell.

Then we see His exaltation in the Creed;

On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

The Bible prophesies and first we see His humiliation as the Son of God becomes a Man of the Jewish ethnicity. He is a Son of David and comes according to the flesh (Romans 1:3). Not only must Jesus be a Man according to the Scriptures because by a man came Adam, death, and by a Man comes the resurrection of the dead, and not only will He come through Abraham, the tribe of Judah, but specifically He will come from David. That's why Matthew takes great pains to record the birth of Jesus around Joseph with his genealogy to show He is legally from his line. He is the Son of Joseph and the rightful heir, not by flesh but by appointment that this Joseph is the adopted father. Then Luke tells us Jesus is of David by the flesh because the virgin that gives birth to Him, conceived without marital intimacy and therefore Jesus has legal right as the Son of David through Joseph. He has David's DNA in His body. He is a descendant of David according to the flesh in fulfillment of the promises of Scripture.

Then according to Romans 1:4 He is declared the Son of God by the Spirit of God who raised Him from the dead. The resurrection is making two announcements from God. Number God the Father says 'This is My Son.' This same God at Jesus' baptism and at the Mount of Transfiguration says 'This is My Son in whom I'm well pleased.' At the cross, the wrath of God

pours out upon this One who will cry out ‘My God, My God why has Thou forsaken Me?’ because there the Son had become us and taken our sin upon Himself. The wrath of God to the last drop is poured out upon Him as He pays the eternal price of hell on the cross for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity. On the third day, the Father again says ‘This is My Son’ and His atoning death has won the victory. ‘I now raise Him in the power of Spirit to tell the world here is the One who has won the victory of sin, death, hell and the grave, because this One who died for you is My Son.’ He is declared in glory and power, the Son of God through the resurrection accomplished by the Spirit of God. There He is proclaimed our Lord of glory. Now we have seen the focus and the origin of the Gospel of God.

So what is the Gospel of God’s effect? Romans 1:5 says *[5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all the nations.* We have received grace for we’re saved by grace alone because of what Christ did for us. This is not what Jesus did plus what I do, this is what Jesus did for us period. The reason He did it is because God loves you. You did not love God but you needed Him. He didn’t need you but He loved you. This Gospel of God is a Gospel of grace. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Not only the ground of our salvation is God’s grace in Christ, even the instrument that joins us to Christ which is saving faith is a gift of God. Ephesians 2:8–9 says *[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

From beginning to end we are trophies of grace. When God saves you by grace He sends you. We have an apostleship. We are not Apostles with a capital A but a small ‘a’ apostleship for those who He saves He sends to proclaim this message of grace through the world. So here are the effects – the saved people are the sent people, sent people are called to the obedience of faith. What does he mean by obedience of faith? One, when you believe in Jesus that is an act of obedience not a suggestion. I know we call it an invitation to Christ but it’s not, it’s a command – ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved...’ So when someone believes all because of grace they now have obeyed what God has called them to do and they do so because of God’s grace at work within them – the obedience of believing.

Secondly, when you are saved by faith then obedience is the evidence of saving faith. If you have true saving faith, you’re not perfect but you are changed and obedience becomes the mark of saving faith in Christ. So what is the effect of this Gospel of God revealed in the Word to Christ? It is salvation by grace, those saved are sent and those sent have a glorious message that Jesus saves – so obey and come to Christ by faith, then follow the One who has saved you by His grace.

If we’re sent where do we go? According to Romans 1:5 we go to all the nations. The promise to Abraham will be fulfilled as all the nations will hear about this Redeemer. The Great Commission is for us to go and make disciples of all the nations. We are to go to Jew, Gentile and every category of people. We spread the seed of the Gospel over the entire field and the field is the world. We indiscriminately take this Gospel of God to the entire world and spread that seed everywhere. We are to spread the love of Christ to every corner of the world.

So why do we do this, what’s the purpose? As Paul tells us in Romans 1:5, for the sake of Christ. I love that phrase. The Gospel of God saves you, sends you and you search out others to hear it for Christ’s sake and yes because people need to hear the Lord. The reason we know people need the Lord is because Jesus told us. We take it to others because of the preeminence, proclamation and prominence of Christ. We do it for the glory of God. Let’s join together for the

sake of Christ to contend for the Gospel and don't let it get adulterated in our age. Let's contend for the mission of the church which is to take that Gospel and make disciples with it, for Christ's sake. It because we love everything that He loves. He loves the glory of grace and we love the glory of grace. We do this because we love Him who first loved us.

Sixthly, what is our relationship? Romans 1:6 says [6] *including you who **are called** to belong to Jesus Christ*. I love Romans 8:28 which says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those **who are called** according to His purpose*. Do you love that verse? It shows the sovereignty of God and it is given to those who are called. We are the called ones and that's our relationship with God. He called you externally as the Holy Spirit sent people to you with the Gospel. He called you internally as He gave you eyes to see and ears to hear. He called you intentionally in all of the roles and relationships of life to do it for His sake.

Harry, for My sake, love your wife. Harry, for My sake, bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Harry, for My sake, be a faithful pastor. Harry, for My sake, be a Christian citizen in this nation. Harry, for My sake, I called you to take Me into every arena of life. Finally, I've called you to be with My people. What is the name of the church? It is the ekklesia – ek means out, kaleo means called. We are the called out ones. We have been called out of sin to Christ and we are the *sunagógé*, the called together one in Christ. We are His people, His own possession.

Finally, what's the Gospel of God's blessing? You were called to belong to Jesus Christ and if you know Him you belong to Him. Because you belong to Him, He now belongs to you. All I have is Christ. Christ has my life. I miss the unfettered opportunities we have to serve the Lord since this pandemic started and I'm praying we'll get those unfettered opportunities back soon. One of those opportunities I miss so much is the visitor's dinner my wife and I have at our home. I love the time when people introduce themselves. Sometimes what happens is a man will introduce himself and then his wife will say something like this; "I'm Sally Smith and I belong to him" meaning her husband. If the husband as any sense he'll speak back up and say 'And I belong to her.' I know what I just said is not popular in our culture but I still love it because I know what it means.

She is really meaning that in God's grace she trusts her husband to protect her, provide for her, love her and be there for her. She belongs to him and he has enough sense to say that she doesn't compete with him but she completes him and he belongs to her. He can't do this humanly speaking without her. Then you will see parents say 'these children belong to us, we take responsibility for them, we love them.' Even kids will say they belong to their dad and mom for they realize they love them and care for them. They're not perfect but look at all they have done for me.

Those human relationships are glorious but they are to be surrounded by Christ and you belong to Him and because you belong to Him, He belongs to you. You belong to Him who saves you, keeps you and sustains you, who will complete you, bring you to glory and you belong to Him who takes responsibility for you to save you before the Father. [20] *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body*, (I Corinthians 6:20). We are His and He is ours.

Here is the takeaway. The Gospel of God is a Trinitarian Gospel, authored by the promises of God the Father, accomplished by the preeminence of God the Son, and applied by the power of God the Holy Spirit. Did you see the Trinity in Romans 1:1–6? God the Father promised this Gospel from all eternity and reveals it in His Word. God the Son accomplished it

and He is the Center, the Sum, the Circumference, and the Substance of the Christian life. God the Holy Spirit raised Him up. The Father promises concerning His Son who was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit – all Three of them are there. By that same power you were raised from death unto life so that you could come to Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have a Trinitarian Gospel because God is the Owner of it. The One who has promised it has authored it, the One who accomplished it is preeminent and the One who applies it is powerful. All of that is revealed to me from God Himself in His Word.

Remember this; God said it, I believe it and that settles it. I know why it was put together and why it was put out there and I understand it in terms of its purposes but please don't ever say it. It should be said; God said it and that settles it. It's not settled because I believe it. It's settled because God said it. The question is, do you believe it? Hallelujah Christ is my life, is all my life. He is yours and you are His. This Gospel of God changed Augustine, through what he wrote a thousand years later Martin Luther, through what he wrote John Calvin, through what he wrote John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitfield and I could go on and on but it wasn't the Romans epistle that did it, for it was the content and that subject has now been introduced to you and framed – it is the Gospel of God that brings us to Christ. We belong to Him – He is ours and we are His.

We are living in a culture and world that is being torn apart because of identity crisis. People are making their identity their sin, their sexual sins, their ethnicities, their political identifications and it will never work, but we can come to people and tell them of the One who identified with them to take their place on the cross. When you come to Him you have eternal life forevermore in Jesus Christ. From the song *In Christ Alone* it says;

*No power of hell, no scheme of man
Could ever pluck me from his hand.*

I belong to Him and that's the message this world needs to hear from you and me. We ought not to just enjoy it, for we are sent to proclaim it to this world and to all the nations. Let's get started this week. There is a news program that always ends this way; We report, you decide. I didn't invent this for God has said it and I've just reported it, now you decide about the glories of this Gospel of God, this salvation by grace through Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Would You speak Holy Spirit to our hearts and in our hearts, then speak through our hearts by our lips to others. Please come and minister now. There is no puzzle for You have solved it through Jesus. Thank You for framing this Gospel of God for us. God, I love this journey we are going to make to its heights, depths, breadth and length in Romans but now I just simply thank You that this letter by the Holy Spirit, from Paul, written to us in time and history will tell us the Gospel of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I pray that all reading this have come this day to the Savior and then all who have will go and tell others about this Savior. We have a glorious, Divine Message – the Gospel of God. We thank You for it and we declare it to the world, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

WHAT?

The Gospel of God – 7 Framing Principles

I. Its Origin

II. Its Focus

- III. Its Effect
- IV. Its Scope
- V. Its Purpose
- VI. Its Relationship
- VII. Its Blessing

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The Gospel of God is a Trinitarian Gospel authored by the promises of God the Father; accomplished by the preeminence of God the Son; and applied by the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Lifestyle Stewardship