

- Paul received grace and apostleship, and the reason these two gifts are given is to produce “*obedience to the faith*,” or, the obedience that springs forth from faith. The gospel impacts individual lives. It isn’t some interesting theory or philosophy; it is life-changing good news. We are called not only to knowledge but to obedience. Obedience to Jesus Christ is not an optional step (v3: our “Lord”). True faith always produces obedience that leads to a transformed life. Faith and obedience cannot be separated.
- Paul points out that this gospel is to be proclaimed to “all nations” or the whole world – for everyone! The scope of the gospel is universal (1:14) – cf Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Luke 2:10-11. If the gospel is for “all nations,” then there is no other message in the world by which men and women may be saved except through this gospel. And this gospel, everything about this gospel is “*for His Name*,” for the glory, honour, praise, exaltation, and worship of God’s holy Name!
- This Book of Romans is about the gospel of God. The gospel is about God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Have you heard this gospel of God’s Son and responded to it in faith? Have you confessed Him as your Lord and yourself as His servant? What are you doing with the gospel of God’s Son. We are to be witnesses for Christ. We are to share the good news of God (cf 2 Kings 7:9).

Notes

The Gospel of God (1:1-5)

- The Book of Romans begins with the gospel of God (cf 1:1,9,15,16,17). Nowhere in the Bible is the gospel more clearly unfolded than in Romans.
- The word “gospel” means “good news.” The gospel is the good news of salvation and eternal life that God has provided for sinners through His Son, Jesus Christ (3:23; 6:23).

1. The Servant of the Gospel (1:1)

- As was the custom of the time, Paul identifies himself as the writer of the epistle at the beginning of the letter. Paul states 3 facts as he sees himself in relation to his Lord.
 - First, Paul describes himself as “*a servant of Jesus Christ*.” The word “servant” is the Greek word “*doulos*,” which refers to a “slave,” or one who is owned by his master who has paid a price to purchase him. Paul is not his own; he is the slave or property of Christ & completely at His disposal (Acts 27:23). We are all servants or slaves of God (6:22). He bought us, and now He owns us completely (1 Cor 6:19-20).
 - Second, Paul declares that is “*called to be an apostle*.” An “apostle” is ‘one who is sent’ or ‘a sent one.’ It refers to an ambassador or messenger who has been officially commissioned on a mission. The idea of being “called” is one of being “summoned.” Paul was an apostle because he was called to be an apostle; he was summoned by the authority of Christ Himself (Gal 1:1). The apostles (i) witnessed the Resurrection or have seen the risen Lord (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 9:1); (ii) performed confirming miracles (2 Cor 12:12); and, (iii) laid the foundation for the church (Eph 2:20). The office of apostleship ceased with the passing of the 12 apostles and Paul. The teaching of “apostolic succession” (ie. the transmission of authority and power from one person and generation to other, supposedly beginning with Peter) is without any basis in Scripture.
 - Third, Paul makes it known that he is “*separated unto the gospel of God*.” Paul has been set apart and separated by God for the work and propagation of the gospel (Gal 1:15-16; Acts 9:15; Acts 13:2-3). The once zealous Pharisee (one who is separated from) became separated to the gospel.
- By these three designations – servant or slave, apostle, and one set apart – Paul makes it clear that he is merely a messenger or servant of the gospel, not its author. He is only the messenger or servant of a much higher authority, God Himself. Paul was a man God could use because he did not think of life in terms of what he wanted to do, but in terms of what God meant him to do (1 Tim 1:12).

2. The Source of the Gospel (1:2)

- Paul has been “*separated unto the Gospel of God*.” God is the source of the gospel. He is the author of the gospel. The gospel did not originate in the minds

of men. It comes from the very heart of God. He is the architect of the gospel. Had man developed the plan of salvation, it surely would have included works and religious rituals so that he got a little of the credit. God, on the other hand, designed it so that lost sinners could come to Him freely, in faith and receive eternal salvation by the grace of God (Eph 2:8-9). Man-made religion is about what man can do for God. The gospel is what God has done for man!

- The gospel of God is that “*which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures.*” The gospel is not new; it is not an innovation of Paul nor a New Testament invention.
 - “*He had promised afore....*” - it has already been announced in the Old Testament.
 - “*By his prophets*” - it was the message of the prophets, and the message of Moses (cf Luke 24:25-27).
 - “*In the holy scriptures*” - the writings of the OT (& NT) are holy because they are given by God, divinely inspired and without error. Paul’s use of this term shows his extremely high regard for the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:16).
- God’s good news has been promised in the OT through types, symbols, and promises. Examples:
 - It was announced to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:15).
 - We see it in type when God told Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac (Gen 22).
 - The gospel was implicit in the OT sacrificial system. Christ was the substance of every OT sacrifice ordained in the law of Moses.
 - It was proclaimed by the prophets of Israel (Isa 7:14; Isa 53).
 - There are more than 300 promises & prophecies about the Messiah in the OT (Heb 1:1).
- The OT is full of Christ (John 5:46). Christ was the substance of every OT sacrifice ordained in the law of Moses, the true Lamb to which every daily offering pointed. Christ was the coming Prophet greater than Moses & the rest.
 - The fact that the gospel was promised “afore” or beforehand shows that the Gospel is no after-thought on the part of God. It is part of God’s unchanging purpose. The OT continues into the NT – it is part of the same progressive revelation of God. Augustine: The New Testament is concealed in the Old & the Old Testament is revealed in the New.
 - The message of the OT is identical to that of the NT. There was and is and will always be only one way of salvation, which was promised beforehand through His prophets.
 - Whether a person lived in OT times looking ahead to the coming of Christ, or whether they are in NT times looking back to the coming of Christ, we are all saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (1:17; Hab 2:4). There is no other way to be right with God. The Old Testament gospel is the New Testament gospel, which is the only gospel.

3. The Substance of the Gospel (1:3-4)

- The heart of the gospel is perfectly summed up in God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: “*Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord....*” (Luke 2:10-11). It is a Christ-centered Gospel (1 Cor 2:1-2). To be a Christian is to embrace and believe in the Person of God’s Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 5:12).
- The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is fully man and fully God.
 - He was “*made of the seed of David according to the flesh.*” Jesus descended from David, in accordance with the promise made to David that the Messiah would be of David’s descent (cf Isa 9:6-7). He is fully human. He shared in our human nature, except for our sinfulness (Gal 4:4; Heb 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21).
 - He was “*declared to be the Son of God.*” The term “Son of God” points to the full deity of Christ (John 5:17-18). He never ceases to be God even when He came as a man (Phil 2:5-9). His resurrection proved this.
- Jesus is God in human flesh. The gospel of God concerns His eternal Son, who humbled Himself to come from heaven and be born as a descendant of David according to the flesh. After He offered Himself on the cross for our sins, God raised Him from the dead and He ascended into heaven (1 Cor 15:1-4). Any teaching that denies either Jesus’ full deity or full humanity is heresy (Rom 10:9; 2 John 1:7).
- Jesus Christ had to be truly God and truly man to be our mediator (1 Tim 2:5). Jesus had to be truly man if He was to represent us before God. Being man, He had the ability to substitute for mankind on the cross (Heb 2:16-18). Jesus had to be truly God if He was to represent God to us. Being God, He had the capacity to save all of mankind because of the substitute for mankind on the cross. It is the very fact that Jesus is fully human and fully God that makes Jesus our Savior (Titus 2:13-14).
- There is only one way to God and that one way is through the Person of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Our eternal destinies hang on what we do with Jesus Christ in this life for there is salvation in no other name.

4. The Scope of the Gospel (1:5)

- Paul has received 2 two gifts from God:
 - He has received grace, which means, God’s unearned, unmerited favor. The Christian life is not a matter of striving to do enough good works or deeds to pay for or outweigh your bad deeds, so that God owes you forgiveness. Rather, it’s a matter of coming to God as a guilty sinner, deserving of His wrath, and receiving His undeserved favour through Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty you deserved (Rom 4:4-5).
 - He has received the gift of apostleship. Paul has been set apart to be the apostle to the Gentiles. This calling, as with his salvation, is of grace (1 Cor 15:10). God sovereignly bestows various spiritual gifts on His people by His grace (Rom 12:3-8).