

Romans

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Romans 1:2-6



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Vs 2

- Any one who is up on a platform in front of people absolutely must remember who their audience is, otherwise the whole thing will likely be a disaster. Paul's audience is the church in Rome, a congregation made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Throughout the letter, Paul is thus seeking a balance between the two and he starts off the letter striking that balance.
- The gospel of Jesus Christ has come, but this gospel was "promised beforehand" through the prophets and in Scripture. Here Paul echoes Luke 24:27 where the risen Christ is walking along the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples (who were not part of the 12) and Christ explained to the two all the things in Scripture concerning Him, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. His unspoken message here is to Jews in the church: the good news about Jesus Christ is not new but is deeply rooted in Hebrew Scripture where He is clearly God's answer for a sinful world. In writing to a church he has never visited, here Paul is validating both the message and the messenger.

Vss. 3-4

- In these two verses Paul strikes the balance he seeks between the Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church. Every Jew knew as a matter of fact that the Messiah would be a descendent of David and every Gentile believer believed because of the resurrection. Son of David and Son of God. Both human and divine.
- With a single stroke Paul affirms the proper lineage of Jesus to be Messiah as one from the line of David and also hits at the Gnostics who argued that the Christ was never a person, but only a spirit. We often do forget the humanity of Christ, allowing it to be overshadowed by His divinity. But if He were not human His coming could not fulfill

God's Word from Moses and the prophets, nor could He take the sin of the world, my sin and your sin, on Himself.

- But without the resurrection, the immaculate conception/virgin birth of Jesus is invalidated and Jesus is nothing more than a good and Godly man, not unlike the prophets. No, it is the resurrection which validates everything and erases any question about Jesus being the Son of God. It is by the resurrection that Jesus is "declared the Son of God". Jesus Christ is both of the seed of David and the Son of God. This Truth is demonstrated "with power", by "the Spirit of Holiness" and proven by "the resurrection from the dead". When humanity was at its worst, God was at His best.

Vss. 5-6

- Here Paul tells us two things about himself and about us. First, when Paul met Jesus, just like when we meet Jesus, the first thing received is grace! In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul declares that is by grace we are saved and that our salvation is not by anything we have done so that no one can claim any kind of superiority (Ephesians 2:8-10). All of his life until that day on the Damascus road, Paul had sought to earn God's favor by meticulously keeping all those microscopic little laws the Jews had devised. But he never found any peace there, because he was always in fear of missing some tiny thing and being damned forever. But "The law lays down what a man must do. The gospel lays down what God has done". Paul finally saw that salvation depended not on what his effort *could* do, but on what God's love had done. All of life and salvation was of grace, free and undeserved. Second, Paul received a task and so do we. Notice he uses an inclusive plural: "**we** have received grace and apostleship...". His job and our job as disciples of Jesus Christ is "to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake". This is what Jesus is referring to in the Great Commission of Matthew 28: "As you go, make disciples...". And we don't do it so that people will be impressed with our piety, but for His name's sake, so that people will be impressed with Jesus...so impressed that they will surrender their lives to Him.
- We are the called of Jesus Christ. He has met us with grace and not fury and condemnation. He has given us a task, to show and tell the world of the Word becoming flesh and of the life changing power, love, and Truth of the resurrection...for we have been called.