

Lesson 2 - Romans 1:1-17

**PART 1: INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS - CHAPTER 1:1-15**

COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 1:1 - 1:17

**1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ;** This man was called Saul up until his conversion. the name Saul means “demanded, ranks among the great names in Jewish history. Paul on the other hand means little and could have signified Paul’s small stature (2 Cor. 10:1, 10), the name is Gentile, was the name of Paul’s first distinguished convert, Sergius Paulus, Charles Hodge in his “Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans” page 14 suggests the possibility that the new Gentile name of the apostle derived from that conversion. It was common, for the Jews to mark some outstanding event in a person’s life and change his name accordingly. Examples of this can be seen with Abraham (Gen. 17:5), Jacob (Gen. 32:38), and Peter (John 1:42). The first use of the name Paul is recorded in Acts 13:9.

Servant of Jesus Christ. The Greek word here is *doulos*, actually means a bond servant a very strong word indicating a number of things. As Christ’s slave Paul was entitled to being heard and obeyed by all men on behalf of his master. Honor and dignity toward the owner were axiom through the treatment people would give the owner’s slave. Mistreatment of the slave being legally understood as mistreatment of the owner. Thus at the outset Paul announces to those in Rome that he is entitled to be heard in Rome on behalf of his owner Jesus Christ. The use of the word *doulos* or bondservant also carried the thought that in conscience, doctrine and conduct that Paul’s life was totally subjective to Christ. Paul is declaring that as a bondservant he has 1. a message from Jesus Christ to be heard and 2. That his life is totally dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ. “Wuest’s Word Studies From the Greek New Testament For the English Reader” in Volume 1 on Romans Page 11 states, “*Doulos designated one who was born as a slave, one who was bond to his master in chords so strong only death could break them. One who served his master to the disregard of his own interests, one whose will was swallowed up by the will of his master. Paul’s will at one time swallowed in the will of Satan is now swallowed in the will of Christ. Paul would never be released from the chords of slavery because Christ would never die again.*”

**Called an apostle.** The words to be aren’t in Greek texts they were added by the translators. Robertson L. Whiteside in his “A New Commentary On Paul’s letter to The Saints At Rome” on page 7 states “Paul was not telling what he was called to be, but that he was an apostle. Some Judaizing teachers charged that he was not a regularly constituted apostle, but that he had merely assumed that office, or had been appointed to that office by the church at Antioch. To meet that charge, Paul asserts that he was “a called apostle” an apostle that had been called into that office by Jesus Christ.”.

**Separated unto the gospel of God, 2. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)** this reference corresponds to the separation of the prophets of the Old Testament of a divinely appointed mission. For example Jeremiah 1:5 Jeremiah was set apart for his mission by God. Thus Paul was set apart for his mission by Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:2) The gospel Paul preached was the same system proclaimed an partially unfolded in the Old Testament by her Holy Prophets. Among those proclaimed the characteristics of the Messiah, the nature of the Lord’s kingdom, and finally the ultimate replacing of the Old Testament by a New Testament which would come in force through the death of the Testator, Jesus Christ.

**3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:** Jesus Christ is the son of God, Matthew 3 and Matthew 17:5 declare this fact as well as Hebrew 1:1-3. The contrast in these verses is both the humanity and divine nature of Jesus Christ. Paul declares Christ's dual nature the son of God and that He is of the seed of David that is through the tribe of Judah. (Acts 2:; Hebrews 2:14-16) among many other passages that show us this fact.

Christ was not just declared to be the Son of God, he was declared to be the Son of God with power. This power or proof is in His resurrection from the dead. The resurrection of all the dead is yet future. Thus Paul is not declaring the power of the resurrection of all the dead but of Christ's resurrection from the dead. (also note Ephesians 1:18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:14). The "Spirit of Holiness" refers to the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:11)

**5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:**

**6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:**

Paul understood he was saved by grace (1 Corinthians 15:10). Paul is probably referring to two different things here. 1. The grace by which he was saved. 2. The fact that he was placed into the apostleship, even though he did not make up one of the original apostles.

Paul links obedience inseparably to faith. Paul joins obedience and faith in Romans 16:26 as well.

**7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul doesn't single out one congregation in Rome. Apparently there was more than one congregation in Rome. (Romans 16:5). Christians are the "beloved of God" (2 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 8:15). The term Saint is from the Greek word Hagios, which according to which according to Wuest on page 18 means to "set apart for God". Saint, sanctify and sanctification are from the same Greek root hagi which means to hallow. It was customary among Gentiles to use the word Grace (charis) as a salutation. The term peace (Hebrew Shalom, Greek - eirene meaning the inner sense of serenity and well-being enjoyed by men through God's grace.) is often used by Jews. The Jewish word Shalom means peace. (Luke 10:5) The peace Paul hopes for is tranquility in daily living. Notice Jesus use of peace in John 14:27.

**8 -13 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often times I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.**

Paul is not producing an outline here. His idea of using first means the first thing I want to tell you. Thanks be to God is always a good first. You all here is not a colloquial expression. It is used here as the plural of you. He could have said for all of you. Their faith had not been something just held privately it had been known. They had made it known! They had a conviction that they would speak passionately, preaching and teaching anyone they came into contact. Notice what Paul says in Colossians 1:5,6. The way the gospel was spread was through personal contact. The way the gospel is spread today is through our personal contact with those we live by, work with, and associate with daily. Just as they were passionate in teaching others Paul says God is his witness that he is passionate and proud of them and mentions them often to God. The statement "God is my witness" is the highest form of

an oath. Someone has stated that this oath is “a reverent appeal to God for corroboration of what one says.” Some other places Paul uses this expression. (2 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 1:20; and Philippians 1:8). Paul had been promising to come and see them. Here he says he wants to come and impart to them some Spiritual gift. His wish to come and establish the church better there. Apparently there had been no Apostle in Rome at this time thus Paul wanted to come and impart some Spiritual gift. These gifts were only given by an apostle. Example Acts 8:14-17 the apostles John and Peter went to Samaria and laid hands on people that they would receive the Holy Spirit.

Verse 13 shows that Paul had intended to go to Rome but had been hindered. Don't know if this was Satan's doing that Paul had been hindered or not. The Scriptures often point out that both Satan in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 is said to hindered as well as the Holy Spirit in Acts 16:6. Whiteside makes a very keen observation at this juncture. *“This shows that he was not guided by inspiration in forming his plans, for the Holy Spirit would not have guided him into forming a plan and then have allowed him to be hindered from carrying out his plans. Paul did sometimes form his own plans or purposes which the Holy Spirit did not allow him to carry out.”* R. L. Whiteside page 14

**14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.**

**15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.**

**16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

**17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**

Paul no addresses the dual classification of all men. The Hebrews classified all men as either being Jewish or Gentile. The Romans classified all who weren't Romans as being Barbarians and Pagans. The Greeks would classify people as being either Greeks or Barbarians. So Paul is all inclusive with his classification. Paul's meaning here is “us and everyone else.” Paul felt indebted to all.

In verse fifteen it is an interesting note that it takes three English words to translate one Greek word (euaggelisasthai) or to announce the glad tidings. Note James Macknight's in his work “Apostolic Epistles” on page 57 says about this. *“The original word was first used by the LXX to signify the publishing of any good news; and having inserted it in their translation of Isaiah 60:6, 61:1, where Messiah's preaching good tidings to the poor is foretold (Luke 4:21), the apostles justly appropriated it to the preaching of the gospel, as the best news mankind could hear.”* Paul doesn't cower down to the noble Romans but declares I am not ashamed of this good news or glad tidings. I am not going to hide but am ready to proclaim it. He comes to a city noted for the power of her military. Out of six possible words for power in the Greek language Paul uses a word for power *dunamis* that means power contained within a thing. The gospel is the omnipotent power of God. The Biblical definition of the gospel can be found in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 that Christ died, was buried and arose on the third day according to the Scriptures. The statement “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek simply put means to the whole world. In Acts 1:8 notice the order *“Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* It would begin with the Jews then Samaria and then after Acts 10 would go into the uttermost part of the earth. The just shall live by faith comes from Habakkuk 2:4 is simply the principle that we live by our faith in the gospel. Notice Hebrews 11:6. The fact here is that man is utterly helpless to live without faith. God's eternal righteousness is revealed in the gospel and we shall live by faith in the Gospel.

## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR AN OVERVIEW OF ROMANS 1:1-17

### I. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS GIVING SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

1. List two main points of this chapter. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How was Jesus declared to be the Son of God? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What was Paul's attitude toward the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why did Paul want to see the Roman brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What was Paul ready to do? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. List three ways Paul describes himself? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. To whom did Paul say he was a debtor? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Why did Paul thank God for the saints at Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Where is the righteousness of God revealed? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. \_\_ What does the phrase "from faith to faith" mean in 1:17? \_\_\_\_\_

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II. DEFINE THESE TERMS:

1. Apostle \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Gospel \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Grace \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Faith \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Spiritual Gifts \_\_\_\_\_

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III. RESEARCH

Where can a Bible definition of the gospel be found? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### IV. THOUGHT QUESTION

How do you harmonize Romans 1:8 the fact that the Roman's faith being known throughout the whole world (1:8) with the fact that Acts 28:17-22 clearly indicates the Jews in Rome knew nothing of the church at Rome?

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