

## Romans 1:1–7

When you read these 7 verses what stand out? Questions? Cross-references?

How do you know what Paul meant?

1. Read the whole letter
2. Read all of his other letters
3. Learn Paul's lexicon
4. Look for the context
5. Look for Paul's structure

### What is context?

#### Literary

*Anterior:* This is the opening passage of the book with typical salutary material. It should be read with the closing section of Romans (16:25–27), as both highlight the contents of the gospel.

<sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

*Posterior:* These seven verses are followed by Paul's personal greeting, where he expresses desire to see the saints in Rome and reap some harvest – this will need to be explained. After verses 8–15, he returns to the power of the gospel before entering the content of the letter.

#### Historical

He is addressing a group whom he has never met, a church founded on the gospel, but struggling to be unified.

#### Biblical

The opening lines pick up multiple OT connections (Prophets, Son of David, and Obedience of the nations). They stress the gospel and the power of the resurrection on which that stands. All these theological realities depend upon the OT.

## What is the structure?

- How might we find the structure?

Repeated words

Conjunctions

Key Ideas

- What is the structure?

v. 1 Paul → The Gospel of God

vv. 3–4 The Gospel → The Lordship of Jesus Christ

vv. 5–6 Jesus Christ → Those in Christ

v. 7 Those in Christ → Receive the Spirit's Grace and Peace

Paul's Ministry

The Gospel of God → The Son

The Mission of the Son → EKK

The Church's Letter → HS Grace

## What do we learn in these four sections?

- v. 1 *Paul, a servant/slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God*

**Paul was the apostle's Roman name.** It was common for Jews in NT times to have a Gentile name alongside their Jewish name (in the apostle's case: Saul). Using his Roman name probably helped to facilitate his travels around the empire<sup>1</sup>

Cranfield, *Romans*, I, 49–50, says: 'Since Paul was a Roman citizen, the matter is rather more complicated. It is very probable that he possessed the three names characteristic of a Roman citizen, a *praenomen* or personal name, a *nomen* or clan name, and a *cognomen* or family name. It is probable that one of the two names given in Acts. 13:9 ['Saul, who was also called Paul'] was one of Paul's official *tria nomina*, and the other a *signum* or *supernomen*, an unofficial, informal name, additional to the three official names, such as was common at this time in the east. "Saul" in a Latinized form could have been the apostle's *cognomen*, and "Paulus" his *signum*. But it is much more likely that it was the other way round, that "Paulus" was his *cognomen* and "Saul" in its Semitic form his *signum*. That in his work as a missionary among the Gentiles he should have preferred to use one of his Roman names is readily understandable'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. G. Kruse, *Romans*, 37–38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## Servant

- **Where might Paul get the idea of slave / servant?**
- Isaiah 49:1–7 . . . Acts 13:47

Paul further introduces himself to his audience as *a servant of Christ Jesus*, literally ‘a slave of Christ Jesus’. He introduces himself in this way in only one other letter (Phil. 1:1), but he does speak of himself as a slave of Christ in Galatians 1:10. Elsewhere he refers to believers as ‘slaves of Christ’ (1 Cor. 7:22; Eph 6:6; Col 4:12). In the LXX the title ‘a servant/slave of the Lord’ is used of Joshua (Josh 24:30; Judg 2:8), Moses (2 Kgs 18:12), and Jonah (Jon 1:9), and the title ‘child/slave of God’ is used of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan 3:26, LXX 3:93) and Moses (Dan. 9:11). In referring to himself as a servant/slave of the Lord, Paul may have had in mind, in particular, the servant passage in **Isaiah 49:1–7**. In all these LXX references the expression appears to have honorific connotations: To be a servant/slave of the Lord is to have high status.<sup>10</sup> However, as Moo notes, ‘the connotations of humility, devotion, and obedience are never absent from the OT phrase and are surely primary here [in 1:1] also’.<sup>3</sup>

## Messiah Jesus

- **What’s the significance of Christ Jesus, not Jesus Christ?**

It clearly functions as a description of Jesus’ status—he is the Messiah (*Christos* being the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word for Messiah).<sup>4</sup>

## Apostleship

- **Why does Paul use apostolic title here?**

Two things were fundamental to Paul’s apostleship: he had seen the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:3–8), and he had been commissioned by him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (1:1–5; 15:15–16; Gal. 1:1, 15). By introducing himself as an apostle to his Roman audience, most of whom did not know him, Paul provides them with a good reason to give their attention to the contents of his letter: he writes as one who has been called and commissioned by God.<sup>5</sup>

- **Does anyone have authority to write like this today?**
- **How might churches influence other churches?**

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 39–40.

## The Gospel of God

- **What is the gospel?**

As an apostle, Paul's primary function was to proclaim the gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:17), one that he calls here 'the gospel of God', as he does frequently in his letters (Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thess. 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Tim. 1:11). The essential background to the word 'gospel' is found in the LXX. Although the noun 'gospel' itself (*euangelion*) is found there only once (in 2 Sam 4:10, where it means the reward given for good news), the cognate verb (*euangelizō*) is found twenty-three times, and uniformly means to bring or proclaim good news. Particularly relevant are passages where it is used in relation to proclaiming news of God's salvation (e.g., Ps. 96:2 [LXX 95:2]; Nah. 1:15 [LXX 2:1]; Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 61:1). *Euangelion* was also used in the emperor cult to refer to important announcements (e.g., the birth of an heir, or the emperor's accession). It may be, as some scholars have suggested, that Paul's description of the gospel as 'the gospel of God' distinguishes it implicitly from all other 'gospels', in particular those of Roman emperors.<sup>6</sup>

- **Where do we find definitions of the gospel?**

**1 Corinthians 15**

**Ephesians 2**

**1 Timothy 1**

**Titus 3**

- **What is included here . . .**

Promised Beforehand

Concerning the Son

Descended from David

Declared to be Son of God

In power . . . Spirit of Holy Spirit . . . resurrection

Jesus Christ, Our Lord

- **Who is the gospel for ??**

All People . . . For You

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 40.

## **Promised Beforehand . . . through the Prophets**

- **What does this tell you about the Old Testament?**

Romans 15:4

1 Corinthians 10:11

1 Peter 1:10–12

- **What does this tell you about the Gospel?**

Acts 13:32–33

Galatians 3:8

## **Concerning the Son**

- **How does the OT speak about the Son?**

John 5:39, 46

Luke 24:27, 44–49

- **What does this tell you about the Gospel?**

- **What happens when you read the Bible divorced from the Gospel?**

## **Descended from David**

- **What is the relationship between the kingdom of God and the gospel?**

Mark 1:14–15

Acts 8:12 – the gospel of the kingdom

Romans 1:4

## **Declared to be Son of God**

- What does this mean?
- Is the title Son of God only true of Jesus? Who else is a “Son”

Luke 3:38

Exodus 4:22–23

2 Samuel 7:9–14

- When does this occur?

**In power . . . Spirit of Holy Spirit . . . resurrection**

**Acts 2**

## **Jesus Christ, Our Lord**

- We come to know who Jesus is by means of his place in the story
- Jesus is not the Savior of your story
- Jesus is the Savior of the world’s story – Are you in his story?

## **How does learning the context of the gospel help you . .**

- In understanding salvation?
- In your evangelism?
- In your life?
- In church?

## **Who is this gospel for?**

- Paul – grace and apostleship
- Nations – Where does this language of the nations come from?
- Church at Rome

## Did you notice the Triune Nature of this introduction

1. The Gospel of God
2. The Person of Christ

- **Where is the Holy Spirit?**

<sup>7</sup> To all those  
In [en] Rome  
**Being loved** by God and  
called to be **saints**:  
  
**Grace**  
to you  
and **peace**  
from [apo] God our Father and  
the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Evidences for the Spirit?

1. Love poured out from God (Rom 5:3)
2. Saints = *hagios* = holy
3. Grace = this is the Holy Spirit
4. Peace = this is what the Spirit gives
5. What comes from F & S is the Spirit

## Other thoughts or questions?

### Applications . . .

1. Here is a place that defines the gospel
2. It tells you how to read the Bible
3. It calls you to look to Jesus
4. All that follows flows from this reality