

# CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY JUNE 7, 2026  
ROMANS INTRO & 1:1-7

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## SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL



Today we start Romans and Romans is all about the gospel. **Romans 1:1 & 15:25-27**. The very first verse of the book and the very last section of the book are about the gospel, as you can see on the slide. This book is about the gospel.



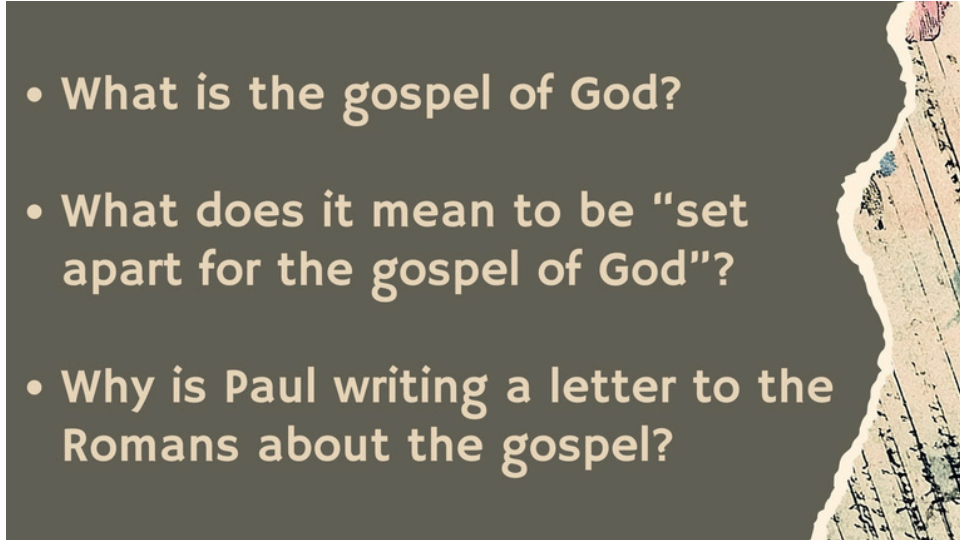
There are things you put in the back seat—things just along for the ride. Think about what is in your back seat right now: old shoes, empty drink bottles, empty Chick-fil-A bags... random stuff.

Now think of the back seat as a metaphor for purpose—for the things that should not be in your front seat driving or directing your life. Back-seat things are hobbies, pleasure, entertainment, even casual relationships.

Those things may belong in the back seat. The gospel does not. The gospel will never be satisfied with the back seat.

The apostle Paul in his letter to the **Romans 1:1 (NASB)** “tells us that he (Paul) was set apart for the gospel of God.” That one statement tells us what is driving Paul’s life—the gospel. It is not in the back seat; it is out front, setting the direction. Paul is so convinced that the gospel is the answer not only to salvation but to life itself, that everywhere he goes, he leads with the gospel and teaches the ways of Jesus.

All of this brings up questions for our study in Romans:



Those are the questions we are going to answer today. **Romans 1:1-7**

As a child growing up in Brazil, my dad always drove, and when he drove, we felt secure because he knew where he was going. Wherever we were headed we got there.

That is the question underneath **Romans 1**: what was driving Paul’s life? And the answer is clear—Paul was set apart for the gospel of God. The gospel was not in Paul’s back seat; it was setting his direction.

The apostle Paul is in Corinth when writing this letter to the church in Rome. It’s probably the winter of 57 into 58. That’s twenty-two years since Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus – a meeting that radically changed his life.



The reason Paul is traveling and in Corinth we already know from **verse 1** Paul was “set apart for the gospel”. That Paul is in Corinth is because he was set apart for the gospel. That Paul is writing a letter to the church in Rome is because Paul was set apart for the gospel.

This is how Paul was set apart for the gospel. **Acts 9:15-16 NASB**

Here is the context. Soon after Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus,

A disciple named Ananias delivered this message to him: Paul was God's chosen instrument—handpicked for a purpose—to bear the name of Jesus before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel. Picture Paul carrying the name of Jesus everywhere he went.

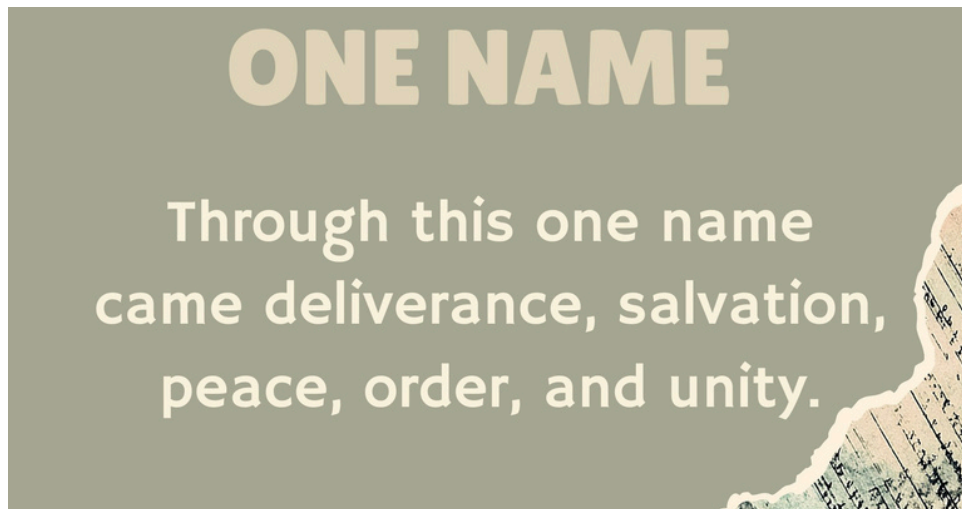
Who are these "Gentiles, Kings and Sons of Israel"? From Paul's Jewish perspective "Gentiles" were everyone else that were not Jewish or a "son of Israel".

So Paul is chosen by God to bear the name of Jesus to both Gentiles and Jews. One name proclaimed to both groups means this one name is sufficient for all peoples, all races, all ethnicities. Do not miss that: one name sufficient for all. That principle governs everything Paul does, including this letter to the Romans.

And the one name is also proclaimed to "Kings". Gentiles and Jews is about race and ethnicity - no one falls outside those two categories. But throwing "kings" into the mix is about "social strata".

Social strata determined what privileges you had in life. In Paul's world, kings stood at the top; slaves stood at the bottom. But Paul carried one name to them all: Jesus.

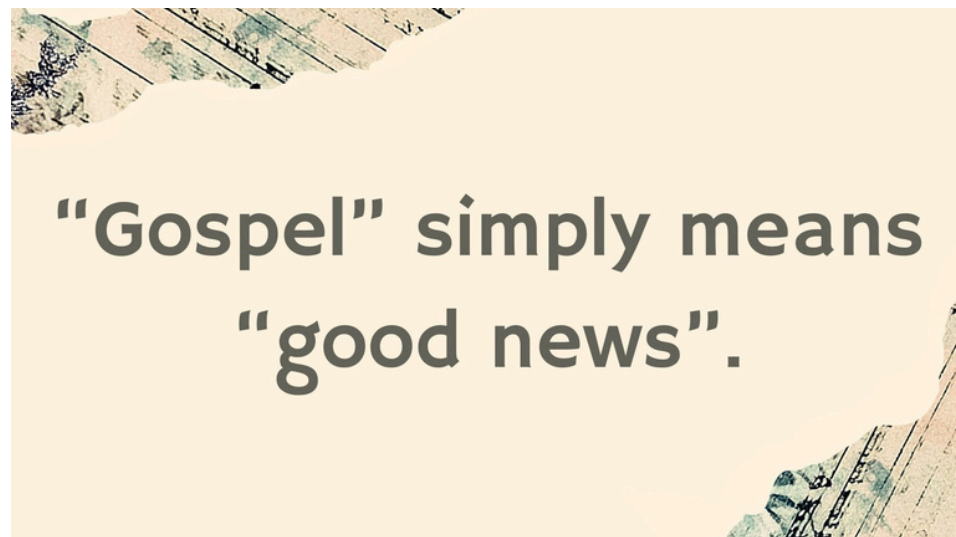
One name for every race, nation, tongue, and class—from kings to slaves. What is implied is this:



And that matters because unity under one name—Jesus—is exactly what the Christian Jews and Gentiles in Rome needed.

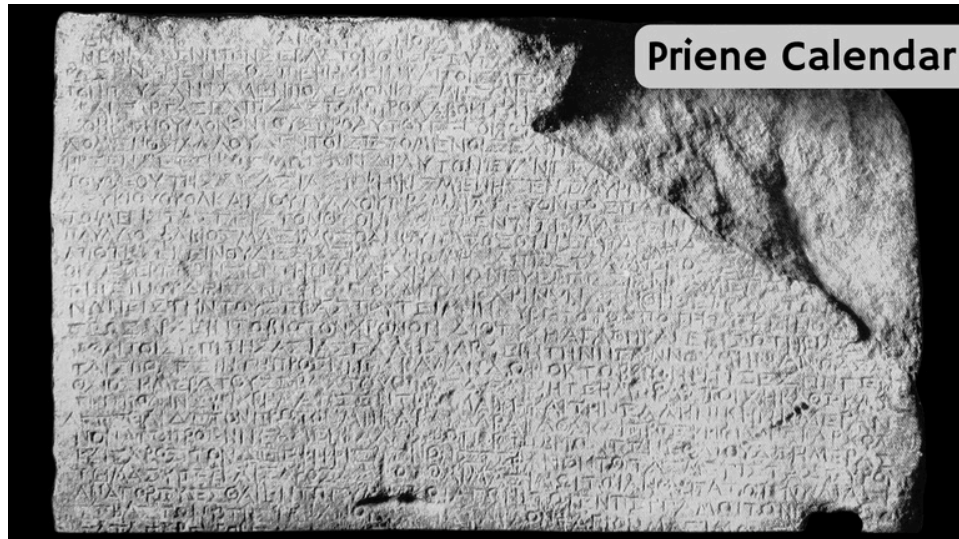
Now if we are going to understand what the impact of Paul "bearing the name of Jesus" to Jews - Kings and Gentiles mean we have answer the question, What is the "gospel"?

Our English translation for the Greek word "Gospel" simply means "good news". Hold onto that. Simple is good.



Now let me give you context to define what “gospel” or “good news” meant in Paul’s day. To do that, I’m going to read part of an inscriptions that was a Roman proclamation of Caesar Augustus’ Birthday announcement from 9 BC.

Listen carefully. "Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he (Augustus) might benefit humankind, sending him as a SAVIOR, both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things... since he, Caesar, by his appearance (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, ... the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the **Good News** for the world..."



In **verse 1** Paul also refers himself as an “apostle” of God which simply means “one who is sent”.

That’s a lot of definitions from **verse 1** that clarify Romans, so let me review quickly before we move on.

- **Slave/ bondservant: one who chooses to serve their master for life.**
- **Christ: Messiah (the anointed one, prophesied one)**
- **Jesus: YHWH / Jehovah is Savior**
- **Apostle: One who is sent**
- **Gospel: Good News – a royal proclamation of a new king and kingdom – new way of living.**

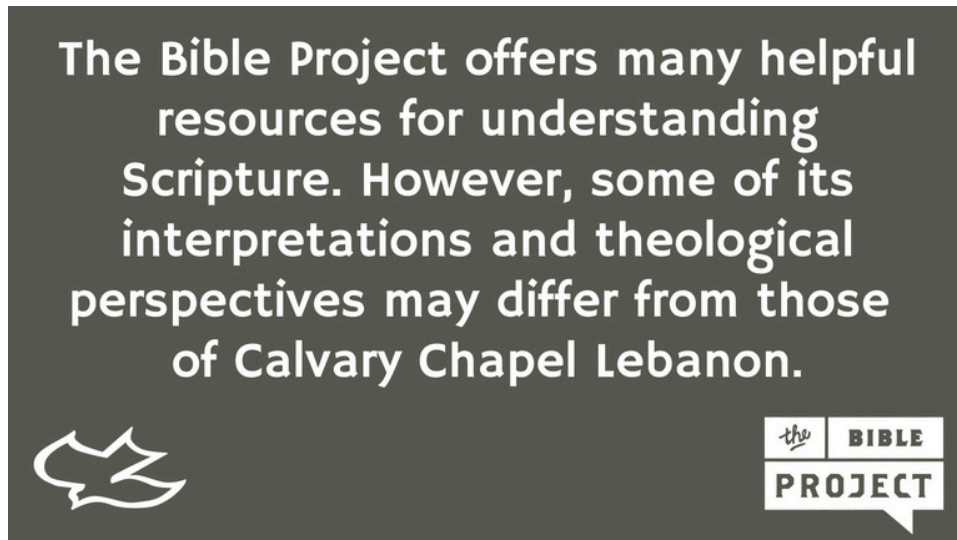
**Verses 2-4** Jesus is the one the Old Testament prophesied about, he is the Messiah, the descendant of David. And he is the one that was proven to be the Son of God when he was resurrected from the dead by the power of Holy Spirit.

In **verse 5** Paul tells us a little more of what it means to be “set apart for the gospel of God”. He says, READ. This explains why Paul did his missionary journeys, why he was in Corinth and why he was writing to the church in Rome - to share the gospel about Jesus, so the gentile will believe and obey him.

In **Verse 6-7** Paul uses language of “called” to describe the Romans who accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and brings up the issue of predestination - which we will get into in later chapters.

So what is it about Rome that Paul, the slave of Jesus the Messiah, Paul sent by God, who is set apart for the gospel of God, writes a letter to?

Let's watch this video to find out. The 2nd part of the video...



The church in Rome had division between Jews and Gentiles and Paul writes an elaborate extensive explanation of how the gospel brings divided people together. And in that he teaches us beautiful things about salvation, grace, righteousness, justification etc.

And that's what the book of Romans is all about.

**Let close with these thoughts.**

Today we saw that Paul chose to be a lifelong servant of Jesus the Messiah. He was sent by God and set apart for the gospel—to carry the name of Jesus, one name to Jews, Gentiles, and kings, and to teach those who believe in Jesus what it means to live under His rule.

So let's go back to our opening line: The gospel will never be satisfied with the back seat. It does not come into your life to be one more interest, one more hobby, one more religious label. The gospel comes as a royal proclamation that Jesus is King.



So I will ask you plainly: What is driving your life? If the gospel is in the back seat, it will not stay there. Jesus does not ask to ride along; He comes to reign.

And when He reigns, He does more than save isolated individuals. He makes sinners right with God, and He makes one people out of divided people. Jew and Gentile, slave and free, insider and outsider—one name, one King, one gospel.

And when Jesus is given the front seat, everything else finally finds its proper place.



**WHEN JESUS IS GIVEN THE  
FRONT SEAT, EVERYTHING  
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# BONUS

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## CONTENT:

**5:1. Date of Letter to the Romans:** Bible.org. Dan Wallace. <https://bible.org/seriespage/romans-introduction-argument-and-outline>

**5:1 Gospel in Greek.** For you bible scholars, the greek term is “euangelion” - yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on εὐαγγέλιον. It is where we get our word “evangelical”, and “evangelist”.

**Isaiah & the gospel: Isaiah 40:9-11** note “good news”. The prophet several hundred years later prophetically announces the “good news” that Israel’s divine King, the creator of all, was going to come in person and become the new King of Israel - which was a royal and future hope.

**Captives set free as part of “gospel”:** An Old Testament citation for captives being set free when a new King and Kingdom started is Cyrus the Great who released the Jews (captives) to return home to rebuild. **Ezra 1:1-4, 2 Chronicles 36:22-23.**