

## Romans: The Opening Salutation

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**Text:** Romans 1:1-7

**Romans:** [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

**UBS 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Paragraph Topic:** Salutation

**Central Idea of Message:** The gospel of grace and peace in Jesus Christ is available to all.

**Introduction:** The city of Rome was founded around 753 B.C., and, by the time of Paul, its population hovered near 1 million people (*Open Bible* 1128).

The Book of Romans was written by Paul, probably from Corinth, about A.D. 57 (Robertson 4:321). The letter was sent to Rome through a courier named Phoebe (Witmer 2:436), a female servant of the Lord who was from Cenchrae, which was an eastern seaport of Corinth (Rom. 16:2).

In Romans, Paul presents his conception of righteousness demanded by God for both Gentiles and Jews. His purposes were to address the range of man's sinfulness (1:18-3:20), the provision of salvation through faith in Christ (3:21-8:39), Israel's destiny, election, and rejection of the gospel (9-11), to give a call to Christian commitment and spell out its implications (12:3-15:13), to face the question of the status of Gentiles in the church, and to establish Rome as a missionary base in the West, being anxious to win the Roman Empire for Christ, the center of the world's life.

Moreover, while justification by faith is the key concept in Romans, it is my opinion, influenced much by commentator Douglas Moo, that the *gospel* itself is the primary, broad, overarching *theme* of Romans, with justification by faith being, perhaps, the most pivotal component of the gospel (cf. Moo, *New International*, 29).

In this opening message we will look at the author, the gospel, the son, and the saints.

### I. **The Author: Paul** (v. 1)

- A. Paul: Roman (Latin) name
  1. Previously known as Saul of Tarsus
  2. Trained by Rabbi Gamaliel (got his PhD!)
  3. Formerly Saul was (cf. Boa 1)

- a) Pharisee: separated, isolated, segregated
  - b) Accomplice to murder (Acts 7:58)
  - c) Ridiculer (Acts 8:1)
  - d) Persecutor (Acts 8:3)
  - e) Chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:16)
- B. But now a bond-servant of Christ
- 1. Describes his attachment to Christ as his willing "bond-servant" as opposed to a slave, which "could suggest an unwilling attachment" (Harrison, *Expositor's*, 14)
  - 2. **Δουλός**: "proudest title of the prophets" (cf. Jer. 7:25; Amos 3:7; Barclay 14)
    - a) Purchased
    - b) Self-surrendered
    - c) Humility
    - d) Submissiveness
    - e) On level ground with his readers
    - f) One who has made the interest of another the all-including and determining factor in life (cf. McBeth 20)
  - 3. Stated that he belonged to Christ and placed this ahead of mentioning his apostleship (Wuest 2:12)
  - 4. **Paul's idea of Christian service has no element of drudgery, but is, rather, the expression of love and free choice**
- C. A "called" apostle
- 1. Apostle
    - a) Ordinarily an "accredited missionary" (cf. Moo, *New International*, 41)
    - b) Indicates authority (cf. Moody 163)
    - c) One sent forth such that nothing stands in the way of fulfilling the task given by God
  - 2. Immediately verifies his apostolic message
  - 3. "Called" is the one essential element for qualification as an apostle
    - a) Invited by God
    - b) Divinely summoned to the ministry
    - c) Apostolic ministry was not his idea
    - d) Same calling and authority of the "twelve"
  - 4. Paul is a messenger who derived his authority from his sender (cf. Moody 163)
- D. Set apart for the gospel of God
- 1. As the servant of Christ, Paul was constrained to carry out his divinely appointed task
  - 2. God has a plan for each of us too!

3. **Paul had a divine Master, a divine ministry [office of apostle], and a divine message (cf. Mickelsen 1183)**
4. Distinct apostolic ministry
  - a) Evangelize Gentiles
  - b) "Chosen not for special honor but for special responsibility" (Barclay 15-6)
5. **While Paul's commission as an apostle was preordained, this in no way conflicted with his freedom of will in acceptance, for "God's foreordination and man's freedom of will never conflict" (McBeth 22)**
6. The same is true for us in life's choices today

## II. **The Gospel** (vv. 2-3)

- A. The gospel was promised beforehand (v. 2)
  1. Through prophets
    - a) Not limited to the writing prophets only
    - b) Included all who proclaimed the good news
    - c) **Prophets critiqued kings, kingdoms, and morals through the lens of God's word and did so on behalf of God**
  2. Communicated through the Scriptures
    - a) Not new!
    - b) **The good news [gospel] of God to man was found by Paul in the Old Testament!**
    - c) **The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that God has come down to man**
      - (1) Life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
      - (2) The kingdom of God has come in part and is coming in full and you and I can be in it!
      - (3) This is not just good news, it is great news!
- B. The gospel concerned God's son (v. 3)
  1. Descendant of David (Matt. 1:1; Acts 2:30)
    - a) Through Mary (Luke 1:27)
    - b) Through Joseph, his "parental guardian" (Luke 2:4)
  2. According to the flesh
    - a) The wording implies the presence of another nature (Faussett 2:223)
    - b) Reference to the nobility of his human lineage: legal heir to David's throne (2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 132:11; Luke 1:32)

- c) **"Was born" is a reference to Christ's humanity, signifying his entrance into a new condition (cf. Wuest 2:15)**
- d) Reference to his incarnation: none like him
- e) Christ is the object to which the promise referred
  - (1) The gospel is the incarnation
  - (2) The gospel is the resurrection
  - (3) The gospel is a person - Jesus Christ

### III. The Son (vv. 4-5)

- A. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God (v. 4)
  - 1. Mightily instated with power by the resurrection
    - a) The miracle of miracles (cf. Robertson 4:324)
    - b) Undeniably marked Jesus as God's Son
  - 2. Jesus Christ our Lord
    - a) Whose Lord?
    - b) Jews only? No!
    - c) Lord of all!
  - 3. He who had been forcefully established as the son of David is now mightily proclaimed as the Son of God!
    - a) **The resurrection is a monument to the deity of Jesus Christ**
    - b) This memorial stands as perpetual evidence of Christ's divine nature, power over death, affirmation by God the Father, and his ability to forgive and save, to name only a few highlights
- B. Jesus was God's agent of grace (v. 5)
  - 1. **God's part is to provide grace [undeserved love], man's part is to receive grace by faith and repentance**
  - 2. **Grace pleads the merit of Christ for those who have no merit of their own - which is all of us!**
- C. Jesus was Paul's summoner to apostleship (v. 5)
  - 1. Christ himself called Paul into apostleship
  - 2. Christ commissions all of us today to be his witnesses
  - 3. Christ still calls people today to vocational ministry as preachers, missionaries, student pastors, children's ministers, worship leaders, and more - and he might be calling you
  - 4. **One task of every Christian is to promote the obedience of faith**

- a) For Paul, primarily among Gentiles [talk about eating crow for a former legalistic Pharisee!]
    - (1) Like a KKK leader getting saved and sent to preach the gospel to black people!
    - (2) Like a BLM leader getting saved and sent to preach the gospel to white people!
  - b) True believers obey for the sake of Christ
  - c) This is obedience which springs from faith by the act of assent or surrender (Robertson 4:324)
5. Paul's calling into apostleship was to facilitate world redemption by targeting non-Jews living in Palestine, Asia, and Europe (cf. John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9)
  6. **Peter was the apostle to the Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles as God saw to it that none were excluded from getting access to the gospel!**
  7. The word of God was entrusted to Paul, and through his proclamation faith was born in many a Gentile and Jew

#### IV. **The Saints** (vv. 6-7)

- A. The called of Jesus Christ (v. 6)
  1. **"Saint" means consecrated to God, called to a life of holiness, set apart from the world of sin and for relationship with God and is a designation of status, not necessarily behavior**
  2. **The "called" of Jesus Christ are those responding affirmatively to his summons, which goes out to all**
  3. Only the risen Christ can turn a sinner into a saint, that is to say a villain into a victor!
- B. All beloved of God in Rome (v. 7)
  1. Faith in Christ sets boys, girls, men, and women apart as being one of God's "beloved"
  2. **The righteousness of Christ is immediately imputed [given, ascribed, infused] to those who repent of sin and place faith in Jesus for forgiveness of sin and rescue from sin's grip and consequences**
  3. **While all must choose to respond to God's grace, nowhere is any redemptive credit given to man (cf. McBeth 34)**
  4. Beloved in Rome

- a) Addressing those in Rome constitutes an explicit denial of exclusion of Gentiles
  - b) The rainbow God showed Noah was not a Jewish rainbow, it was the symbol of God's promise to all of mankind
  - c) Admission of inclusion: Jesus is good news for all
5. Grace and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
- a) This peace is known only through experiencing the grace of God (cf. MacGorman 22)
    - (1) **Grace is favor and peace is order (cf. Moody 165)**
    - (2) Peace with God, self, and others
    - (3) To look for peace elsewhere is to experience frustration
    - (4) **God wants you to have his peace and he is eager to bestow his grace (cf. MacGorman 22)**
    - (5) **Grace applied always precedes peace received**
  - b) God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ
    - (1) Mention of God denotes the ability to give the grace (cf. McBeth 34)
    - (2) Mention of Father signifies the disposition to give grace (cf. McBeth 34)
    - (3) Mention of Lord Jesus Christ suggests the mediator through whom the gift of grace came (cf. McBeth 35)
    - (4) The juxtaposition of these two names in the same sentence echoes the divine nature of Jesus
    - (5) No other name except Jesus is worthy even to be placed in the same sentence with the words "God our Father"
    - (6) **God is the fountain of all favors!**

**Conclusion: Have you responded affirmatively to the grace of God through faith and repentance such that you are now experiencing his peace? If not, why not today?**