

## Romans 1:7-32

Paul's salutation to the church at Rome covers the first 7 verses of Romans Chapter 1.

Last week we only managed to cover 6 of these 7 verses.

However, before we press on to V 7, a short review might be in order.

Romans 1:1 **"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."**

Paul immediately introduces himself as a **"servant"** or bond slave of Jesus Christ, and then he calls himself an apostle, which is *one sent*.

Or, in another words, he was an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

And, finally, he identifies his specific commission in life.

From the time of his conversion, he had been **"separated** (or set apart) **unto the gospel of God."**

Yes, as we learned in last week's lesson, Paul was God's chosen vessel, set apart to proclaim God's good news.

And as you know, this good news was the fact that **"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

All this we gleaned from the very first verse of Romans, and we still had five verses to go.

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In verses 2-6, we were introduced to Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of Holy Scripture.

He is the seed of David, which means He is a real man, but, at the same time, He is the Son of God, and He is also the risen victor over sin and death.

So having introduced himself in the context of his Master, Paul then goes on to acknowledge the Christians to whom he was writing.

V 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."**

Saints, as we see them in the scripture, are not those individuals that the Roman Catholic Church has venerated to that exalted position.

No, saints are simply the believers, members of the body of Christ.

The Greek word used here is "hagios," which is closely related to another Greek word "hagiazō," which means to sanctify.

So a saint is an individual who has been set apart by God for a particular purpose.

So we shouldn't conclude from Paul's salutation that the believers at Rome were super Christians.

No, this wasn't the perfect church, nor had they obtained the status of saints by their own efforts.

And not only is there some room here for misconception, but there is also a small discrepancy in V 7 that needs to be cleared up.

V 7 ---"To all that be in Rome, beloved of  
God, called to be saints."

If you look carefully, you will notice that  
the little words "to be" are in  
italics.

This means that they were added by the  
translators, and are not actually in  
the original text.

And as you will remember, this was also the  
case in V 1, where we read that Paul  
was "**called to be an apostle**" (or an  
ambassador).

Here again the little words "to be" were in  
italics.

So Paul was not called "to be" an apostle,  
he was "**called -- an apostle.**"

Apostleship was not a process he was working  
on.

God had made him an apostle on the road to  
Damascus.

In the same way, the Christians at Rome, and  
all Christians, for that matter, are  
**"called - saints."**

It's not a position we are striving to  
obtain. It is a status conferred upon  
us because of Christ.

Hebrews 10:10 **"By the which will we are  
sanctified (or set apart) through the  
offering of the body of Jesus Christ  
once for all."**

Yes, when we were added to the spiritual  
body of Christ, we were also  
sanctified, or made saints.

In other words, we were set apart for God's  
specific purposes.

It is our position in Christ, but it should  
also be our daily practice.

Unfortunately, our practice does not always match our position.

In fact, someone had said, *To dwell above with the saints in love, oh that will be glory! But to dwell below with some saints I know, now that's a different story.*

Apparently that wasn't the case with the saints at Rome.

V 8-12 **"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.**

**<sup>9</sup> 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;**

**<sup>10</sup> Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto**

you.

<sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

<sup>12</sup> That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

The daily life of the Christians in Rome was not an easy one, and there were many adversaries.

However, these adversities had only increased their faith.

In fact, V 8 tells us; their faith was

**"spoken of throughout the whole world."**

And down through the ages, the real enemy of the church has been comfort, not adversity.

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Actually, Paul had never met the Christians at Rome.

However, as a faithful shepherd, he was guarding them from afar by fervent prayer, and he was looking forward to the day when he could visit them personally and help them in their faith.

We see that brought out in V 9-11 **"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;**

<sup>10</sup> **Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.**

<sup>11</sup> **For I long to see you, that I may**

impart unto you some spiritual gift, to  
the end ye may be established;"

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--- "that I may impart unto you some  
spiritual gift." That was Paul's deep  
desire.

Yes, more than anything, he was committed to  
the building up of the body of Christ.  
And, by the way, that is the principle work  
of every teacher and preacher of the  
Word of God.

V 12 "For I long to see you, that I may  
impart unto you some spiritual gift, to  
the end ye may be established;

<sup>12</sup> That is, that I may be comforted  
together with you by the mutual faith  
both of you and me."

Even though Paul had been so greatly used of  
God, and even though he would be a

spiritual giant in their midst, he was not puffed up.

No, he wasn't coming as some exulted spiritual leader, but rather he said, I am coming "-- **that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.**"

And he also wanted them to know that he was eager to come.

V 13-15 **"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.**

<sup>14</sup> I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

<sup>15</sup> So, as much as in me is, I am ready

**to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."**

How careful Paul was to avoid any appearance of favouritism.

The educated Greek, the unwise barbarian-- all were his responsibility.

No, he was not avoiding the Christians in Rome. He had only lacked the opportunity.

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V 16-17 **"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.**

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

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Psalm 19:1 tells us, **"the heavens declare the glory God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."**

I'm sure we have all looked at a magnificent building or a grand piece of furniture and thought about the craftsman behind such a product.

These accomplishments are a testimony to his handiwork.

Well, the earth and the starry heavens, with their order and great expanse, speak of their Creator.

The sunrise and sunset give testimony to His handiwork, and the magnificence of the heavens declares His glory.

But where do we see His power?

Well, great storms do that, don't they?

Psalm 77: 17-18 says **"The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.**

**18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook."**

Certainly great storms manifest God's power to destroy, as they did in Noah's day, but where is His power to save?

Where is the power to enable God, Who is completely righteous, to save a completely unrighteous sinner?

How can He justify the unjust?

Well, the good news is that Jesus Christ is God's power to do just that.

Romans 3:26 **"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: (that's Christ's righteousness) that he (that is God)**

**might be just, and the justifier of him  
which believeth in Jesus."**

Yes, the good news is that because Jesus  
paid our sin debt on Calvary, God has  
the power to save.

And that's why Paul could say, in V 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."**

And why is it God's power to justify the  
sinner?

Because, as V 17 tells us, **"therein is the  
righteousness of God revealed."**

Yes, the perfect righteousness of His Son  
has been revealed and made available to  
the lost sinner, making him acceptable  
to God, --- **"for it is the power of God  
unto salvation to every one that**

**believeth; to the Jew first, and also  
to the Greek."**

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So Jesus is the remedy, but do we all have  
the *disease*?

Well, yes, we do.

In fact, the rest of this chapter, all of  
Chapter 2 and most of Chapter 3, have  
been set aside by the Holy Spirit to  
make it abundantly clear that everyone  
has sinned, and because of that sin, is  
under the judgment of God.

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First of all, we will look at all of  
mankind, except God's Chosen People  
Israel.

This, of course, would be the Gentiles.

V 18 **"For the wrath of God is revealed from  
heaven against all ungodliness and**



**unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."**

Is God being completely fair when He is angry with mankind?

Granted, mankind is ungodly, and even unrighteous, but the vast majority of them have no knowledge of God's inspired Word.

Yes, for one reason or other, great multitudes still have no access to the Bible.

However, according to V 18, absolutely everyone does hold **"the truth."**

What does that mean?

How could they **"hold the truth"** when they have never heard the Word of God?

Well, V 19 answers that question.

They **"hold the truth"** --- **"Because that which may be known of God is manifest**

**in them; for God hath shewed it unto them."**

Oh, how has He done that?

How could God show Himself to mankind when He is absolutely invisible?

Is man responsible for what he cannot see?

Well, yes, in a way he is.

Let me explain.

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If you were standing in a storm, and all the tree branches were bending and waving before your eyes, and your coat was blowing out behind you, would you have any excuse for not believing in the wind, just because you couldn't see air?

Of course you wouldn't.

And V 20 says, "**For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are**

clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

Yes, God's creation, that is "**the things that are made,**" makes it abundantly clear that God exists, and that He is an all powerful being.

Only a totally biased person could miss the point.

After all, we are standing *on*, looking *at*, and living *in* His creation.

And every day, with our improved powers of investigation, we are literally surrounded by miracles large and small.

And speaking of small miracles, let me read some excerpts from an article in the

Creation magazine titled-----



# The hummingbird—God's tiny miracle

by Denis Dreves

“Throughout North and South America lives one of God's most amazing creatures, the hummingbird.

There are more than 300 species of this beautiful minute bird, with its iridescent plumage.

Hummingbirds range in size from the tiny bee hummingbird, which is only about the length of an adult's little finger, to the giant hummingbird, which may reach 22 centimetres (8.5 inches). There are nine species in North America.

Most North Americans are familiar with either the ruby-throated hummingbird, east of the Rocky Mountains, or the rufous hummingbird, west of the Rockies.

Probably the best-known characteristics of the hummingbird are its extremely rapid wing-beat (50-80 beats per second) and its amazing ability to manoeuvre.

It can hover, it can fly backwards and sideways, and it can fly at speeds of more than 90 kilometres an hour (55 miles per hour).

All this work, of course, uses an enormous amount of energy. 'To keep up their blistering lifestyle, hummingbirds, of both sexes, burn up huge amounts of calories—the equivalent [for humans] of 1,300 hamburgers a day, washed down with 60 litres of water, used mainly for cooling purposes. 'Were we to operate at their energy level, our hearts would beat 1,260 times a minute, our body temperature would rise to 38.5 C, and we would burst into flames.'

Of course we humans were not designed to operate that way. But the hummingbird shows excellent evidence of careful design for its remarkable lifestyle.

God has equipped the hummingbird with a needle-like bill which penetrates deep into flowers to extract nectar. If the corolla of the flower is too long, the bill can pierce it at the base to gain access.

The hummingbird is also equipped with a long, specially designed tongue which is curled up at the edges to form two troughs (which look like a number 3 on its back) to hold the nectar. The long tongue curls up and retracts to the back of the head. The bird takes 13 licks per second.

However, even these features would not give the hummingbird the ability to gather enough food if it were not for the unique design of its wingbeat, which allows the bird to move forward to pierce the flower,

hover until it gets enough nectar, and fly backwards to remove its bill from the flower.

When a hummingbird arrives at a flower, it stops abruptly and hovers in front of it. It does this first by tilting its body at an angle of about 45 degrees. The wing-beat can now be back and forth instead of up and down. In most birds, the up-stroke of the wing is just a recovery stroke to get the wing back into position for the next down-stroke. But the hummingbird has power in both strokes, up and down, and when hovering, back and forth. Its wings can also swivel in all directions from the shoulder.

Powerful breast muscles are required for this kind of action, so it is not surprising that the hummingbird's breast muscles make up one-third of its total body weight.”

Romans 1:20 tells us: **'For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse'**—if they do not believe. Job 12:7 and 9 says: **'Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee . . . who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?'**

The hummingbird is a very good example of the evidence for God as Creator. --- End of quote.

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Yes, it is hard to imagine how mankind can be so arrogant as to miss the point.

With the microscope and the telescope, they can investigate "**the things that are made**" as never before.

But, in spite of the fact that they are literally surrounded by God's creation, a creation that makes Him "**clearly seen,**" they continued to ignore Him, and so "**they are without excuse.**"

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So how does intelligent, logical, perceptive man, sitting in the midst of all this evidence, continue to ignore the Creator?

For many of them, the answer is found in vs.  
21 to 23---

**"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

**<sup>22</sup> Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**

**<sup>23</sup> And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."**

So if you can't ignore the evidence, you can always attribute it to a god of your own liking.

Even Israel did that --- Exodus 32: 2-4 **"And Aaron said unto them, Break off the**



golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

<sup>3</sup> And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

<sup>4</sup> And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

The whole thing seems inconceivable, doesn't it?

However, nowadays we are too educated to attribute God's wonderful creation to an idol of wood or stone.

No, with our modern tools of investigation, we can look more deeply into the

wonders of creation than we have ever done before, and we can come up with a sensible conclusion.

And what is our conclusion?

Actually, things weren't created at all!

They just made themselves!

Over billions of years, of course.

Oh surely, we **"are without excuse!!"**

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The rest of this chapter could easily be labelled, Man's Downward Path.

V 24-25 **"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:**

<sup>25</sup> **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."**

V 21 says **"when they knew God, they glorified him not as God."**

So in spite of the evidence, they gave up the idea of a God.

And as a result, V 24 tells us that **"God also gave them up."**

And who did He give them up to?

Actually, to the cruellest enemy of all.

He gave them up to themselves.

V 26-27 **"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:**

<sup>27</sup> **And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."**

The Scripture says **"God gave them up,"** or turned them over to their own **"vile affections."**

And what were those **"vile affections?"**

Well, God doesn't actually give them a name. He simply called them **"vile,"** and then He described them.

So without jumping to any preconceived conclusions, we will simply look at the text.

First of all, this activity was a result of mankind's own desires.

Although God gave them up to it, it was man himself, not God, who conceived it.

We gather that from the words in V 24 -

**"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts."**

Secondly, God's actions in giving them over to their own desires was a form of judgment.

Actually, they were being judged for their denial of His existence.

We see that in verses 25-26 **"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.**

<sup>26</sup> **For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections:---"**

Thirdly, these **"vile affections"** involved their bodies.

V 24 **"to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."**

And fourthly, this activity was described as unnatural.

We see that in V 26 "-- **their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.**"

And again in V 27, "**And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman.**"

Actually V 27 does at least two things--- It tells us that man's use of the woman is natural, and that the practice described here abandons that natural use.

So what exactly was V 27 describing?

Again, the Scriptures are very specific.

It was "-- **men with men working that which is unseemly.**"

So a mere reading of the text makes this situation, and God's attitude toward it, perfectly clear.

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So, let's get back to the original focus of this section, that is, the downward path of the Gentiles as they reject God.

You see, these "**vile affections**" were only one of the possible consequences of denying God's existence.

The fact is, when God is taken out of the picture, the floodgates of man's sinful nature are flung wide open.

V 28-32 "**And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;**  
<sup>29</sup> **Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,**

30     **Backbiters, haters of God,**  
**despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors**  
**of evil things, disobedient to parents,**  
31     **Without understanding,**  
**covenantbreakers, without natural**  
**affection, implacable, unmerciful:**  
32     **Who knowing the judgment of God,**  
**that they which commit such things are**  
**worthy of death, not only do the same,**  
**but have pleasure in them that do**  
**them."**

Sounds like the evening news, doesn't it?  
And throughout the ages, man, by his very  
nature, has been the enemy of God.

And did you notice V 32---"**Who knowing the  
judgment of God.**"?

They're not doing these awful things because  
they are unaware of the consequences.  
They know "**the judgment of God.**"



Of course, as we have already noted, large areas of our population still do not have the Bible.

They still don't know that Jesus has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

They need the life-giving message, and it's our job to tell them.

However, even without the written Word of God, they know that God exists.

And they have always known.

Long before Christian missionaries arrived, God had already sent out His own messengers.

V 19 **"--that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.**

<sup>20</sup> **For the invisible things of him**

**from the creation of the world are  
clearly seen."**

Yes, they know God exists because of  
creation, and because of their God-  
given conscience, they also know that  
God judges sin.

V 32 tells us that -- **"Who knowing the  
judgment of God, that they which commit  
such things are worthy of death, not  
only do the same, but have pleasure in  
them that do them."**

So just like Eve, who stood in a garden of  
God's good gifts and was convinced that  
He didn't really love them, so these  
men, who should know better, have  
believed the lie.

And they go on in willing ignorance because  
the cost of belief is too high.

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Well, most of this lesson has been bad news,  
and there is still more to come.

In fact, we will not hear any good news  
until we get to Romans 3:21.

But the good news is coming, and it is  
sorely needed, and it is the good news  
of Jesus Christ.