

## **Romans 1: 1 – 6**

In most of my lessons, I concentrate on a verse-by-verse study rather than an overview or outline.

However, this time before we begin the book of Romans, it might be helpful to look at the rest of the epistles as a whole, and see where this book fits in.

To do this, I'm going to draw from the writings of Sidlow Baxter.

Mr. Baxter says that all scripture is written for us, but there are 9 epistles that are written about us.

By that he means the Church of Jesus Christ. These 9 epistles begin at the book of Romans and end with 2nd Thessalonians.

We will be studying Romans, the first book of this first section.

The second group begins with 1 Timothy and finishes with the book of Philemon, and they are the pastoral or personal epistles.

Collectively these 13 books form a section that is very important to the church.

The next 9 epistles, that is Hebrews to Revelation, were first written to the Hebrew Christians of that day.

However, like any other scripture, they were also written for our admonition.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

And not only has Mr. Baxter given us an excellent overview of the New Testament epistles, but his outline of the book of Romans is also worth noting.

He calls Romans a particularly foundational book, and then he lays it out in three main sections.

Chapters 1-8 are doctrinal, telling us how the Gospel saves the sinner.

Chapters 9-11 are national in scope, showing us how the Gospel relates to Israel.

And finally, chapters 12-16 are practical, telling us how the Gospel bears on our conduct.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Also, I would like to quote some notable scholars concerning this book.

Coleridge called Romans "The profoundest piece of writing in existence."

Martin Luther called it - "The chief book of the New Testament--- It deserves to be known by heart, word for word, by every Christian."

C.A. Fox, writing about a man named  
Chrysostom, said "Chrysostom used to  
have it read over to him twice every  
week by his own express order."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So we have a very wonderful book before us,  
and we are privileged to have the Holy  
Spirit as our teacher.

And not only that, but we have His promise  
that **"where two or three are gathered  
together in my name, there am I in the  
midst of them."**

How fortunate and well equipped we are as we  
begin our study of the Book of Romans.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

Not only does this very first verse tell us  
a lot about Paul, but it also  
introduces us to the subject of this  
book, which is "**the Gospel of God.**"

And as you probably know already, the word  
Gospel means good news.

And certainly, to a lost and dying world, it  
is the best news they could have.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

However, this good news had been creating  
some real problems for the Jews.

At the time of Paul's writing of this book,  
the Gospel had been spreading  
throughout the Roman world for about 25  
years.

It was inevitable that the proliferation of  
this new doctrine would create some  
momentous questions among the Jews.  
And the first one was quite disturbing.

If, under the Gospel of God's grace, the Gentiles now enjoyed equal privileges with the Jews, then what about the Abrahamic covenant, God's promises to Israel?

You see, the early church was almost entirely made up of Jews, so it was not unreasonable for them to consider this new Gospel as an extension of God's promises to Israel.

However, the inclusion of the Gentiles put everything in a new light.

Second question: What about morals?

If God was dealing with man on the basis of grace rather than law, wouldn't there be a breakdown of morals?

Thirdly: What about God's unchangeable promises to Israel concerning their future?

Did this new Gospel indicate that God had  
cast off His Chosen People?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

These supposed problems needed to be  
addressed, and in Romans Chapter 9 and  
Chapter 11, they were.

Eventually we will be getting to these  
chapters, but for now, we better begin  
at the beginning.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

At this point, Paul knew exactly what his  
life's work would be, but he hadn't  
always known.

Oh, he thought he knew, but up until the  
time when he met Jesus on the road to  
Damascus, he had been misguided.

As a Pharisee of the strictest order, he had been totally convinced that his duty before God was to stamp out Christianity.

However, God stopped him dead in his tracks, and **"suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:"**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Knowing instinctively that he was in the presence of God, he said **"Who art thou, Lord?"**

And I'm sure he was completely shocked by the answer!

**"I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest."**

So rather than serving God, he had been fighting against God.

Yes, on that dusty road, he suddenly came to the realization that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.

And that's exactly the message that we are confronted with in the Gospel of John.

John 1:1-3 **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**2: The same was in the beginning with God.**

**3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."**

Yes, Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I believe that was also the time that Paul was converted.

And the first words of this new Christian were **"what wilt thou have me to do?"**

Yes, Paul immediately accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior, becoming His bond slave for life.

And Paul begins this book with a clear declaration of the fact that he is "**a servant**" or bond slave of Jesus Christ.

And as you perhaps know, a bond slave is a servant that has voluntarily chosen to serve his master.

Yes, Paul had become a servant by his own free will, and, actually, that should be the commitment of every Christian.

No, Jesus doesn't force us to be His slaves. We must offer ourselves freely.

And that has always been His way of doing things.

He presented Himself to Israel as their Messiah, but He didn't force them to believe that He was their King.

He even rejected Satan's suggestion that He cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple to prove once and for all that He was the Son of God.

And so we find Him at the end of His ministry, and at the end of His miracles, lamenting over His people: **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem" --"how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"**

No, they would not, and He wouldn't force them.

And He won't force us either.

Just like the apostle Paul, we must willingly accept Him as our Lord and Savior.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As we have already noted, Paul knew what his life's work would be --- **"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."**

That's clear enough, isn't it?

However, in the original text, the two little words **"to be"** are not actually there.

They have been added by the translators.

Some of our Bibles make note of that fact by putting them in italics.

So, an accurate translation of this verse would be **"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle."**

And by the way, the word apostle means "one sent."

So Paul wasn't **"called to be an apostle"** -- he was "one sent" from the very moment

he met the Lord Jesus on the road to  
Damascus.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Now, in a great house, a servant can be many  
things.

He can be a cook, a gardener, or even have  
authority over other servants.

And it is also possible for him to obtain  
the elevated position of an ambassador  
or representative for his master.

Remember Abraham's servant, who was sent to  
Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac?

He was a servant, but he was also an  
ambassador.

He was there in Abraham's place to conduct  
Abraham's business.

Likewise in V 1, Paul calls himself an  
apostle, or one sent.

In other words, he was an ambassador for  
Jesus Christ.

So he was a bond slave and an Ambassador all  
rolled up in one.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He also tells us that he was separated, or  
sanctified.

That means he was set apart for a special  
purpose.

In this case, he was --"**separated unto the  
gospel of God.**"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

All of us set apart certain things for  
certain purposes, don't we?

At work, I had a toolbox where I kept my  
needle nose pliers, wrenches, etc.

As a rule, I didn't let other people use my  
tools. They might use my needle nose

pliers as vice grips, or my wood  
chisels as screwdrivers.

And you ladies have your special things,  
too, don't you?

One day, when all of our cups were dirty, I  
brought my wife some tea in a plastic  
glass.

I couldn't see the necessity of washing out  
a cup when there were plastic glasses  
available, but my wife didn't quite see  
it that way.

I don't know why, but she doesn't like her  
tea in a plastic glass. She prefers it  
to be in a tea cup.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Well, Paul was God's special *teacup*, so to  
speak.

Remember what He told Ananias?

Acts 9:15 **"But the Lord said unto him, (that is Ananias,) Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"**

Yes, Paul was **"a chosen vessel."**

However, he certainly seemed like an unlikely choice, didn't he?

After all, at the time of God's choosing, he was the Christians' worst enemy.

It almost seemed that God was going to make something out of nothing. And certainly He could do that.

He did that very thing when He created the heavens and the earth.

But, actually, Paul wasn't such an unlikely vessel.

You see, not only does God choose His vessels carefully, but He also prepares them before hand.

In Paul's case, He had been in the process for many years.

So, in a manner of speaking, God doesn't drink His tea out of a plastic glass either.

In fact, long before God confronted Paul on the road to Damascus, He had been preparing him to bear His **"name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel."**

Actually, He had been preparing him from the time of his birth, and even by his birth.

You see, Paul was born a Jew, and he had grown up to be a strict Pharisee.

He had a delicate conscience and an intense faith concerning his Jewish religion. And because of that, he could fully realize the difficulties and questions that had arisen in the minds of his Jewish brethren.

However, not only had he been a devout Pharisee, but he was also Saul of Tarshish, born and raised in the middle of Greek culture.

They were the intellectuals of Paul's day, and he was completely familiar with their literature and culture.

And he was also a free born Roman citizen, living in a Roman world, and possessing the special privileges that would help him in the spread of the Gospel.

Yes, God had been preparing His chosen vessel very carefully to have the

closest personal connections with the three principal cultures of his day: Hebrew, Greek and Roman.

Truly Paul could say, **"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."**

Yes, he was God's special vessel to take the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to write the Book of Romans, and 14 of the other 22 epistles.

Of course, Paul wasn't actually the author of these inspired scriptures.

The Holy Spirit directed him word for word. But he wasn't just a typewriter either.

No, Paul was a chosen vessel who had personally struggled with the very problems that he dealt with in the Book of Romans.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The first 7 verses of Romans chapter 1 deal  
with Paul's personal greeting.

We will only get as far as V 6 in this  
lesson, but actually, his greeting  
includes V 7.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So let's begin at Romans Chapter 1 and V 1  
once again.

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

As I previously noted, the theme of this  
book is **"the gospel of God."**

In another words, its theme is *God's good  
news.*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Now, we all like good news, don't we?

I heard about a man who just loved baseball,  
and he wondered if there would be  
baseball in heaven.

One night he had a dream in which an angel  
told him, *I've got good news for you,  
and bad news. The good news is yes,  
there is baseball in heaven. The bad  
news is, you're next up to bat.*

So with our slightly warped sense of humour,  
the good news always comes first, and  
then the bad news completely  
obliterates it.

I suppose it's kind of our way of laughing  
at our troubles.

However, in the Book of Romans everything is  
reversed.

The bad news comes first.

In fact, it covers most of the first three  
chapters being summed up by Romans

3:23: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."**

Yes, God says in Romans 3:10 **"There is none righteous, no, not one,"** and that certainly is bad news.

However, we wouldn't go to the doctor unless we knew we had a problem, and the good news is, **"--- the Son a man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."**

That's the good news of the Gospel, and it completely obliterates all of our bad news.

I like God's way of doing things, don't you?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So let's go on. Romans 1:1-3 **"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy**

**scriptures) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."**

So, actually, Jesus Christ is the real source of God's good news.

And consequently, He is the real subject of the Book of Romans.

He is the **"Gospel of God."**

And that's not too surprising, considering the fact that Jesus is the subject of all scripture.

Remember what He said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus?

Luke 24:25-27 **"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the**

**prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."**

Yes, Jesus is the real subject of every book of the Bible, be it actual or in type.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

So He began at Moses. The 5 books of Moses are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Then He spoke about the prophets, books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so on.

In fact, in "**all the scriptures**" He showed them things "**concerning himself.**"

And if we really know how to look, and we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will find Christ in every book of the Bible.

For instance, Moses, Joshua, and David, are all types of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In its construction, the tabernacle in the wilderness is a picture of Christ.

And the sacrifices offered in that tabernacle speak of Christ's final and complete sacrifice.

Also the lamb, offered on the night of Passover, foreshadows **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."**

So it is not surprising that the subject of Romans, that is, **"the Gospel of God,"** is in reality our Lord Jesus Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

V 1-3 **"--separated unto the gospel of God,**  
<sup>2</sup> **(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)**  
<sup>3</sup> **Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh."**

Yes, Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.

And only a real man could die for man's sin.

An angel couldn't do it.

God, masquerading in human form (as the  
angels sometimes did), couldn't do it.

No, only a real sinless man could die for  
our sins.

And that man was Christ.

1 Corinthians 15: 21-22 **"For since by man  
came death, by man came also the  
resurrection of the dead.**

**For as in Adam all die, even so in  
Christ shall all be made alive."**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Romans 1: 3-6 **"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:

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

<sup>6</sup> Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:"

V 3 tells us that Jesus was "made of the seed of David."

Yes, He was a man.

However, V 4 tells us that He was "declared to be the Son of God."

And as we have already mentioned, that is the message of the Gospel of John.

So Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, "-- with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

And His resurrection is our assurance that  
our sins are gone.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

V 5 tells us that we have received grace,  
and how wonderful that is.

We are saved by grace!

In our daily walk, we are kept by His grace!

But we have also received something else.

Remember what it says ---"**By whom we have  
received grace and apostleship, for  
obedience to the faith among all  
nations, for his name.**"

Yes, we have also received apostleship.

Like Paul, who was "**called**" -- "**an apostle,**"  
we have received apostleship.

So then, we are also ones sent - "**for  
obedience to the faith among all  
nations, for his name.**"

And like Paul, each one of us is a "**chosen vessel.**"

Yes, we are! Not in the special way that Paul was, but in our own special way, we are "**separated unto the Gospel of God.**"