

The Book Of Romans
The Good News Of God Part 1a
Session 3

Romans 1:1 (NASB)

¹ *Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,*

We are still talking about Paul and his credentials for the ministry that God called him to execute. We talked about him being the right man for the job due to his background and his growing up years.

Tonight we want to talk about first of all his authority as an appointed one of God, and Apostle.

He was a called one of God

He was called as an apostle or appointed one.

He was appointed by God.

Paul, next establishes his authority for his ministry, basing it on the fact that he was called of God

He was called as an apostle. So his position was not one of his own choosing.

He did not volunteer for the office, nor was he elected by fellow believers.

He was divinely called by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Listen to these words given while he was still blinded from his miraculous encounter with Jesus on the Damascus Road.

Acts 9:10-16 (NASB)

¹⁰ *Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."*

¹¹ *And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying,*

¹² *and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."*

¹³ *But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;*

¹⁴ *and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."*

¹⁵ *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;*

¹⁶ *for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*

In relaying this message to Paul Ananias said

Acts 22:13-15 (NASB)

'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him.

¹⁴ *"And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth.*

¹⁵ *~'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.*

Later Paul says that the Lord had already given that message directly to him;

Acts 26:15-18 (NASB)

¹⁵ *"And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.*

¹⁶ *'But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness*

not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;
¹⁷ *rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,*
¹⁸ *to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'*

Paul also said to the Corinthian Believers:

1 Corinthians 9:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.*

God had given him a task he had never dreamed of and had never asked for, and he knew he would be in serious trouble if he was not obedient to his divine commission.

Listen to Paul's words about his calling:

Galatians 1:1 (NASB)

¹ *Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),*

Apostle translates "*apostolos*", which has the basic meaning of a person who is sent.

It referred to someone who was officially commissioned to a position or task, such as a n envoy or ambassador.

Cargo ships were sometimes called apostolic, because they were dispatched with a specific shipment for a specific destination.

PAUL'S POWER IN BEING SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:1c (NASB)

¹ *set apart for the gospel of God,*

Because Paul was called and sent by God as an apostle, his whole life was **set apart** in the Lord's service.

And note another thing, even a person who has been called by God to a special place of service cannot be effective if he is not also separated unto God for **the gospel of God**.

Although Paul himself had once been the most ardent of the self-appointed Pharisee's, he was now set apart divinely, not humanly.

God revealed to him that he had been set apart by God's grace even from his mother's womb.

Galatians 1:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ *But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased*

¹⁶ *to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,*

¹⁷ *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.*

What is the gospel here described?

The word *evangelion* gospel is used some sixty times in this epistle.

William Tyndale defined it as "glad tidings" in another place it is described as "good news"

The most important thing about the **gospel** is that it is **of God**.

Paul, wanted the Christians at Rome to understand that this good news he was bringing was not the good news of the favorable events concerning the emperor of Rome, but that his good news was of God.

God was the source, that he wanted to make clear. It is God's good news for mankind.

Now one cannot help wondering why God would condescend to bring good news to a world that rejects and scorns Him. No one deserves to hear it, much less to be saved by it.

The noted expository preacher Donald Grey Barnhouse told the fascinating legend of a young Frenchman who was dearly loved by his mother but in early manhood fell into immorality. He was greatly enamored of an unprincipled woman who managed to gain his total devotion.

When the mother tried to draw her son away from the wicked and debased association, the other woman became enraged. She railed at the young man, accusing him of not truly loving her and insisting that he demonstrate his commitment to her by getting rid of his mother.

The man resisted until a night when, in a drunken stupor, he was persuaded to carry out the heinous demand. According to the story, the man rushed from the room to his mother's house nearby, brutally killed her, and even cut out her heart to take to his vile companion as proof of his wickedness.

But as he rushed on in his insane folly, he stumbled and fell, upon which the bleeding heart is said to have cried out, "My Son, are you hurt?"

And Dr. Barnhouse said, "that is the way God loves"

Paul himself was living proof of god's great love and mercy. Though he had opposed Christ and persecuted the church, God had made him a Church's chief spokesman.

He could imagine no greater role than being set apart to God for the proclamation of His gospel, the good news of salvation in Christ.

Perhaps that is one reason he was so effective. Who knew better than Paul just how good the good news really was?

THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD PART 2

Romans 1:2-4 (NASB)

² ***which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,***

³ ***concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,***

⁴ ***who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,***

After introducing himself as the preacher of the good news of God in verse 1, Paul then tells of the promise verse 2, and the Person verses 3-4 of the good news.

THE PROMISE OF GOOD NEWS

Romans 1:2 (NASB)

² *which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,*

The gospel which originated with God, was not a divine afterthought, nor was it first taught in the New Testament. It does not reflect a late change in God's plan or a revision of His strategy.

It was **promised** by God **beforehand through His prophets in the holy scriptures**, that is, in what we now call the Old Testament.

Probably, and perhaps especially for the sake of his Jewish critics, Paul emphasizes in the very beginning of the epistle that the good news did not originate with him or even with Jesus earthly ministry.

He was frequently accused of preaching and teaching against Moses and of proclaiming a revolutionary message unheard of in ancient Judaism.

Acts 21:18-26 (NASB)

¹⁸ *And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.*

¹⁹ *After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.*

²⁰ *And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;*

²¹ *and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.*

²² *"What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.*

²³ *"Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;*

²⁴ *take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.*

²⁵ *"But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication."*

²⁶ *Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.*

Here however Paul makes clear that the good news he teaches is really old news of the Hebrew Scriptures now fulfilled and completed in Jesus Christ.

Paul's use of the word **prophets** refers to the Old Testament writers in general, all of whom were spokesmen for God, which is the basic meaning of **prophets**.

Moses, for instance, was the great lawgiver, yet he also considered himself a prophet.

Deuteronomy 18:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.*

Paul's reference to **the holy Scriptures** was probably to contrast the divinely inspired Old Testament from the many rabbinical writing which in his day were studied and followed more zealously than was Scripture.

In other words, although the rabbinical writings said little or nothing about the gospel of God, **the holy Scriptures** had a great deal to say about it.

They did not originate with men or reflect the thinking of men, but were the divinely revealed Word of the living God. Most Jews of that day were so accustomed to looking to rabbinical tradition for religious guidance that **the holy Scriptures** were looked on more as a sacred relic than as the source of truth.

Even after three years of intense teaching, Jesus had to chide some of His own disciples for failing to understand and believe what the **Scriptures** taught about Him.

Before He revealed His identity to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, He said to them,

Luke 24:25 (NASB)

²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"

And as He proceeded to teach them about His death and resurrection, He expounded Scripture.

It was a defective traditional Judaism that was revolutionary, man-originated, man-centered and that was not grounded in **the holy Scriptures**.

It was the proponents of that man-made perversion of Judaism who most strongly opposed Jesus. He denounced the religious devotion of the scribes and Pharisees as being hypocrisy rather than piety and their theology as being the false tradition of men rather than the revealed truth of God.

It is estimated that the Old Testament contains at least 332 prophecies about Christ, most of which were fulfilled at His first coming.

The Old Testament is filled with truths that predict and lay the ground work for the New.

Jesus taught nothing that was either disconnected from or contrary to the Old Testament.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."

¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

Throughout the history of the church Jews have resisted the gospel by arguing that to embrace it would be to deny their heritage.

On the human level that is true, because since long before Jesus' day, popular Judaism has been based more on human tradition than on divine revelation.

To become a Christian certainly demands denial of a heritage such as that. But for a Jew to embrace the gospel is for him to truly inherit what his scriptural heritage has always promised.

The Jews greatest heritage is the promise of God's Messiah, and Jesus is that Messiah, the fulfillment of that promise. Every Jewish prophet, directly or indirectly, prophesied of the ultimate Prophet, Jesus Christ.

Every Jewish sacrificial lamb spoke of the ultimate, eternal Lamb of God who would be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

Confronting that same issue, the writer of Hebrews opens his letter by declaring;

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NASB)

¹ *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,*

² *in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*

Peter also accentuated that same truth in his first letter;

1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB)

¹⁰ *As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries,*

¹¹ *seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.*

¹² *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*

The prophets spoke generally of the anticipated new covenant;

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NASB)

³¹ *"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,*

³² *not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.*

³³ *"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

³⁴ *"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NASB)

²⁵ *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.*

²⁶ *"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

²⁷ *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*

They also spoke specifically of the Messiah who would bring that covenant;

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ *For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ *There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NASB)

¹ *Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

² *For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or*

majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

³ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

⁹ His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Next time we will look at the person of the good news.