

INCREDIBLY GOOD NEWS!

Romans 1:1-17

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

No more important question has ever been asked!

Answer takes us to heart of the gospel.

It distinguishes message of God's Word from all other religions.

It points the way to our eternal destiny.

Confusion has always existed, even among "evangelicals"

We get fuzzy answers—sound biblical—but miss point.

EE question # 2: Some answer according to popular public opinion.

World's view: do good works—at least add something to please God & earn place in heaven.

"We can do it!" "I'd rather do it myself!"

That's why Romans is important.

Such teaching's spread widely even among God's people

Romans shows us where that leads

God has used Romans to change many lives:

Martin Luther read:

"Just people live by faith"—decided to trust Christ.

Before Luther, **Augustine** read Romans & was saved.

Rom.: only Bible book with **express purpose to explain the gospel.**

Paul wants us to understand: gospel presents ONLY WAY people come to God.

It's the power by which God saves;

for ALL who trust Christ.

That's why Romans is important.

Takes us back to roots—affirms what we believe & why!

WHO'S TALKING? *What do we know about author?*

Paul's background is important to understand Romans.

Paul's life story *demonstrates* struggle between works and faith.

–strict Pharisee

–became **leading persecutor** of the church

–**fervent Jew**–understood "*law of sin and death*"

EXPERIENCED RADICAL CHANGE of life.

Encounter with God corrected his old belief system.

He became a zealous supporter of this gospel.

Speaks from experience when he calls this **GOOD NEWS!**

Describes Israel's condition with understanding.

He's not an *outsider* on the attack!

From his earliest days he believed same things.

He wants them to find truth he discovered;

heart of old system: **Hab. 2:4**

"Just people live BY FAITH" –NOT by works!

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Following birth of church at Pentecost, God "calls out" Jews, Samaritans & pagans alike to become a new people: *the church*.

Salvation for all these is based on faith alone.

Persecution scattered believers, took good news everywhere.

Paul made 3 s. t. trips, to Turkey, Macedonia, & Greece.

During 3rd trip, Paul writes **Romans**.

He's never been there, but wants to preach God's Word there.

He plans to go to Jerusalem, and then Rome.

Anticipating his visit, Paul writes to prepare the way.

TWO PURPOSES:

1) Introduce self & inform them of plan to visit them.

2) Introduce his message: gospel–good news

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION 1:1-17

GREETING 1:1-7 Normal letter format:

Identifies writer (1-6), recipients (7a), gives word of greeting (7b).

Emphasis often reveals what motivates author to write.

In Rom., Paul expands description of author.

Main emphasis: declaration concerning gospel.

Introduces himself to saints at Rome 1-6

Wants to do more than *just* introduce himself.

1:1 *“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle & set apart for the gospel of God.”*

Tells us 3 things about himself:

(1) He’s a SERVANT of Christ.

Not *boss*; *he’s* a *slave* of Christ, Who is Boss

(2) He’s an official emissary of God

God called him as APOSTLE, one sent–official representative

In other words, **God's official spokesman.**

(3) He’s set apart for the gospel

–*gospel* distinguishes him.

We use “**gospel**,” without understanding its meaning.

Used to describe **good news**–happy announcement–

Headlines that bring joy to community.

We don’t read much news that we’d call “good news.”

“Gospel” describes decree ending captivity.

That's "good news." **Paul's message is better!**

Paul expands identification adding 5 vss. about gospel.

2 TRUTHS about "*good news*" he's preaching:

1. Promised beforehand by OT prophets.

1:2 "*the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures*"

NOT new message. He didn't invent it; nor did apostles.

God's plan didn't change. It's always the same.

2. This "good news" is about Jesus 1:3-6

Message revolves around Him

(1) Jesus is "God's Son." **3a** "*regarding his Son*"

Has same character as Father—"chip off old block".

He's just like God, *because He is God!*

Jews understand—react violently when He claims it

(2) Jesus is DAVID's Son **3b** "*who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David*"

—fulfills requirements for Messiah

(3) God raised Jesus from dead—authenticates His ministry **4** "*who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead...*

Though Jesus died; it didn't ruin God's plan.

Death destroys human plans; it's *basis* for Jesus' *triumph!*

Resurrection makes statement: "*Jesus is His Son.*"

That's why people try to prove it didn't happen.

(4) Through Jesus we receive God's grace **5-6** "*Through him we received grace & apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the*

obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. ⁶You also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ."

We're privileged to see people respond in faith

God gave Paul *and US* commission to preach good news to all people, to exhort them to trust Him.

Romans explains subject greeting introduces.

Recipients: Paul writes to saints tht God loves 7a "To all in Rome who are loved by God & called to be his holy people"

God's children, count on His love for us.

Logical result of God's love: that we be holy—we're called saints.

McGee: "2 kinds of people in the world: 'saints' & 'ain'ts!'"

We're not saints because of our *character*;
but because of our *faith*.

Difference between cause & effect, prerequisites & results.

Greeting 7b "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ

Paul wants us to enjoy God's grace & peace, provided in Christ.

Paul thanks God the whole world has heard about their faith in Christ 8 "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world"

Everybody has heard about it!

Paul prays to minister to them personally **9-10**

"God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ¹⁰in my prayers at all times; & I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you"

Paul prays for them all the time.

He wants to meet them.

3 DESIRES:

(1) To *STRENGTHEN* them by ministry among them.

11 *"I long to see you so I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong"*

(2) To be mutually *ENCOURAGED* **12** *"that you & I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith"*

(3) To reap a harvest among them **13** *"I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles."*

Paul tried several times but God hasn't allowed it.

His purpose: He wants fruit among *them*,
as in other places

To announce gospel to people in Rome also

Paul desires to proclaim gospel to all people 14-17

He has debt-to preach good news to all kinds of people

14-15 *"I'm obligated both to Greeks & non-Greeks, both to the wise & the foolish. ¹⁵That's why I'm so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome."*

To Greeks and to non-Greeks

Greeks were high-class people—the educated elite.

Gospel's for everyone, no class or cultural distinction

To wise and to foolish people

To Jews and pagans

To Romans To US! Paul has a debt to *ALL* these!

Do WE sense debt to people around us who don't know Christ?

Paul presents explanation, as if answering series of "why" questions:

"Why are you eager to preach the gospel in Rome?"

16a *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel"*

Because I'm not embarrassed or ashamed of the gospel.

Paul is not ashamed of this good news

"Why aren't you embarrassed by the gospel?"

THEME of letter: **1:16b** *"because it's the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: 1st to the Jew, then to the Gentile."*

It's power of God which makes salvation possible.

Power's important to Roman armies.

They boasted of power.

Romans force people to bow to authority,

but can't change lives

He comes with message powerful enough to change lives

Theme: gospel is *power of God* by which He gives salvation to everyone who believes

True for Jews **and** for Gentiles.

Gospel is only means of salvation for all people

Ramad, from India, belonged to gang of robbers. Burglarizing a house, he noticed black book with thin pages right to make cigarettes. He took it. Each evening he tore out page rolled it

around tobacco for a smoke. Noticing small words he began to read before rolling.

One evening after reading, he asked Jesus to forgive his sins & save him. Ramad the bandit became a follower of Jesus. For Ramad, God's Word became "the power of God for salvation."

Series of questions continues:

Why is gospel power of God for salvation?

Gospel Summarized: 17 *"For in the gospel the right-eousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that's by faith from 1st to last, just as it's written: "The righteous will live by faith"*

Gospel reveals righteousness of God received by faith.

O.T. established principle:

"The righteous live by FAITH!

=> Just people live by FAITH.

NO 1 fulfills law enough to establish his righteousness!

Righteousness required is supplied by faith.

This is "Good news!"

God provides this kind of righteousness in Jesus!

What we could never provide for ourselves

God has provided for us, through Jesus.

God's gift is received by trusting His Son.

Though *everyone* deserves condemnation, **people who trust**

Christ receive righteousness of God found in Him.

In 1915 man, **dying in prison hospital**, had spent his life in crime. Chaplain, wiping his forehead, whispered repeatedly, "The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin." Peace came on face of dying

man, as he trusted Jesus. His eyes closed and he went into presence of his Lord.

Chaplain walked out to chill of morning. **Newsboy** was shouting, "**Extra! Extra!**" Headlines announced the King just died. Queen sat at *his* bedside, comforting him from Scripture, reading promises of forgiveness through Christ. **Same sacrifice that brought pardon to *prisoner* procured peace for a king. There's no difference!**

How do YOU hope to find eternal life?

Religion tells us we have to earn our way; at least we have to help God

"It's up to you!" "Go for it!"

Problem: We all come to place where we realize we *aren't* making it!

Romans has incredibly good news!

God has provided what I could never provide

He provides only adequate way to salvation through His Son Jesus
Jesus Paid it ALL! *We can't add a thing!*

We must *stop* trying to do it ourselves, & trust the Son.

Are you trusting Him?

Trust Jesus & receive the gift of salvation God wants to give you.

Paul wants to share this good news;

he isn't embarrassed by the good news about Jesus;

it's the only way to obtain God's kind of righteousness

Only way anyone ever has, or will, satisfy God's demands.

If we really believe the only way anyone has ever "made it" with God is by trusting His Son, why don't we get excited about telling people?!!!

We're excited about "good news" in life—we have to tell SOMEBODY!!!

*We have **incredibly GOOD NEWS!***

Let's tell people about it!