
Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON II : PROLOGUE / THEME VERSES – CHAP I VERSES 1-17

OVERVIEW

This first chapter may be divided as follows:

- general introduction to the book of Romans — 1:1-17
- since justification can only be obtained by faith as declared in v 16,17, Paul shows how this is true in relation to the heathen — 1:18-32

We will address ourselves with the first portion this morning and consider the last half of the chapter next week. The first half of chapter one may be divided as follows:

- salutation — v1-7
- Paul's thanksgiving / desire to visit Rome — v8-15
- theme verses — v16,17

The main body of Romans is an exposition on Paul's gospel, bracketed by an opening (1:1-17) and a conclusion (15:14-16:27). The opening and conclusion has many similarities, including a strong emphasis on the gospel (the Greek words for *gospel* [εὐαγγέλιον, euangelion] and *to evangelize* [εὐαγγελίζωμαι, euangelizōmai] are used in the book of Romans fourteen times, nine of those times are in the opening / conclusion).

Paul's letters are different than what the first century readers were accustomed to receiving, according to Douglas Moo [*Romans*, pg. 40]. Most letters were relatively short with a very basic introduction, "A to B, greetings." Romans is a long letter, the longest of all of Paul's writings at 7,114 words (some commentators would differ with the conclusion that it is the longest of Paul's letters). Not only that, Paul's salutation is extended, the longest of any of his other epistles. Here's a comparison of the number of words in the original:

19 words – 1 <i>Thessalonians</i>	32 words – <i>Philippians</i>	65 words – <i>Titus</i>
27 words – 2 <i>Thessalonians</i>	32 words – 1 <i>Timothy</i>	75 words – <i>Galatians</i>
28 words – <i>Colossians</i>	41 words – 2 <i>Corinthians</i>	93 words – <i>Romans</i>
28 (or 30) words – <i>Ephesians</i>	41 words – <i>Philemon</i>	
29 words – 2 <i>Timothy</i>	55 words – 1 <i>Corinthians</i>	[Hendriksen, <i>Romans</i> , pg 27]

The length and theological orientation of Paul's opening is due to him introducing himself to a church that he had neither founded nor visited. It is also quite possible they had heard negative rumors of Paul which he would wish to correct.

TODAY'S LESSON IN A NUTSHELL

Quoting now from F. F. Bruce:

[verses 1-7] An ancient letter began with a simple salutation: 'X to Y, greetings,' Such a greeting forms the skeleton of the prescripts of most of the New Testament Epistles, variously expanded and given a Christian emphasis.

The salutation at the beginning of this letter takes a similar form: 'Paul ... to all God's beloved in Rome ... grace ... and peace.' But each part of the greeting is expanded: the sender's name, the recipient's name, and even the greetings.

[verses 8-15] Having thus introduced himself and his theme, Paul explains his present purpose in writing. News that he has received about the high and renown quality of their faith calls forth deep thanksgiving from Paul, and he assures them of their constant place in his prayers. The churches for which he had primary responsibility — those which he himself had founded — made heavy and continual demands on his time and attention, but he could remember before God other churches too, and not least the church of the capital. He tells them of his long-standing desire and prayer for the opportunity of visiting them; and now, after earlier hindrances, it appeared that his prayer was about to be answered. He hopes not only to impart a blessing to the Romans Christians, but to receive one for himself through his fellowship with them. And while he has no thought of asserting his apostolic authority in Rome, he looks forward to preaching the gospel there and making some converts in Rome as in the rest of the Gentile world. The preaching of the gospel is in his blood, and he cannot refrain from it; he is never off duty but must constantly be at it, discharging a little more of that obligation which he owes to the whole human family — an obligation which he will never fully discharge so long as he lives.

[verses 16,17] 'Believe me,' Paul goes on, 'I have no reason to be ashamed of the gospel I preach. No indeed; it is the powerful means which God employs for the salvation of all who believe — the Jew first, and the Gentile also. And why is this so? Because in this gospel there is a revelation of God's way of righteousness — a way of righteousness based on the principle of faith and

presented to men and women for their acceptance by faith. It was of this righteousness that the prophet said, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 67,71,73]

PAUL

● **A BONDSLAVE — Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ (v1)** — Servant = δουλός [doulos] Some prefer (some even insist) to translate this as *slave, bondsman*. There is some reason to support this since **the word carries the connotation of absolute, required submission to his master, thorough dependence upon his master, the master’s ownership and unrestricted authority over his slave. All of that may be applied in a much more exalted sense to the relation between Christ and believers. Negatively however, the word slave also carries with it the connotation with involuntary service, forced subjection and (perhaps) harsh treatment. For those reasons most translators avoid the word slave and translates this as servant, bondsman.**

Since Paul was a Hebrew this phrase may have been patterned after the familiar OT phrase “*slave, servant of Yahweh*.” It is applied to Israel in a general sense (Neh 1:6; Isa 43:10), sometimes to the prophets (2 Kings 9:7; 17:23), but more often depicts a particularly significant and outstanding “servant” such as Abraham (Gen 26:24), Moses (Num 12:7; Josh 14:7; 2 Kings 18:12), Joshua, (Josh 24:29), Elijah (2 Kings 10:10), Nehemiah (Neh 1:6), Isaiah (Isa 20:3), and often David (2 Sam 7:5).

Note Paul replaces “Lord” with “Jesus Christ,” indicating early in the epistle that **Paul regards Jesus as God**. “It has also been properly remarked, that as the expression, servant of Christ, implies implicit obedience and subjection, it supposes Divine authority of the Redeemer. That is, we find the apostle denying that he was the servant of men, rejecting all human authority as it regards matters of faith and duty, and yet professing the most absolute subjection of conscience and reason to the authority of Jesus Christ.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 15]

● **CALLED — called to be an apostle (v1)** This does not mean Paul was merely someone they “called” an apostle, as if one would call a person a carpenter, a lawyer, a homemaker, or whatever. An example of the word “call” being used in this sense may be found in Romans 2:17; 7:3; 9:25,26 as well as other places. Rather the sense is “*called to be an apostle, chosen, appointed*.” It would mean therefore that **God had chosen Paul to be one of His apostles, God was the One who determined Paul’s vocation. Paul did not apply for the job or seek the position; rather God selected him beforehand to do the work of an apostle.** Other scripture abundantly supports this teaching: “*Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God*” (1 Cor 1:1 NIV) “*Paul, an apostle – sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace*” (Gal 1:1,15 NIV) “As the immediate call of Christ was one of the essential requisites of an apostle, Paul means to assert in the use of the word κλητός [klētós = called one] that he was neither self-appointed nor chosen by men to that sacred office.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 15]

The word is also used again in this manner by Paul in the immediate context; see v. 6,7. The calling referred to there by Paul is not to a vocation, as God selecting and choosing Paul to be an apostle. In verses 6 & 7 the calling is in reference to believers as a whole being called, chosen, selected unto salvation. Paul uses the same terminology in several other places to refer to our salvation: 8:28-30; 9:7,11,24; and 11:29 in this epistle alone.

● **AN APOSTLE — called to be an apostle (v1) — The word “apostle” comes from a verb which means “to send, to send away on a commission, to dispatch.” The word could refer to anyone who is sent or by whom a message is sent; therefore an ambassador, envoy, messenger.** In classical Greek it could have referred to a naval expedition, and “*an apostolic boat*” was a cargo vessel. In later Judaism “*apostles*” were envoys sent out to collect tribute from the Jews in the dispersion. In the NT it takes upon itself a distinctly religious sense. In the widest sense it could refer to anyone sent on a spiritual mission and is thus used of the following:

- **both** Paul and Barnabas: “*Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people*” (Acts 14:14 KJV)
- Epaphroditus: “*Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.*” (Phil 2:25 KJV)
- Titus and the brethren: “*Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.*” (2 Cor 8:23 KJV)
- even Jesus Himself was called an apostle: “*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*” (Heb 3:1 KJV)

But the word is commonly used in a much more stricter sense. It is used in such a manner 10x in the Gospels, almost 30x in Acts, more than 30x in Paul’s epistles, and 8x in the rest of the NT to refer distinctly to Paul or the twelve disciples of Christ. “**In that fullest, deepest sense a man is an apostle for life and wherever he goes. He is clothed with the authority of the One who sent him, and that authority concerns both doctrine and life.**” The idea, found in so much present-day religious literature, according to which an apostle has no real office, no authority, lacks scriptural support. Anyone can see this for himself by studying such passages as Matt 16:19; 18:18; 28:18,19 (note the connection); John 20:23; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 2 Cor 10:8; 1 Thes 2:6.” [Hendriksen, *Romans*, pg 39] The characteristics of the apostles (the Twelve and Paul) are as follows:

- **they were chosen, called and sent forth by the Lord Jesus Himself, receiving their commission directly from him** — John

6:70; 13:18; 15:16; Gal 1:6 (possible exception: Matthias, Judas' replacement in Acts 1:26)

- **they were qualified for their tasks by Jesus, being an eye-witness to the resurrection** — Acts 1:8,21,22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8; Gal 1:12; Eph 3:2-8; 1 John 1:1-3
- **they were endowed in a special measure with the Holy Spirit, who led them into all the truth** — Matt 10:20; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-14; 20:22; 1 Cor 10-13; 7:40; 1 Thes 4:8
- **their work was blessed by God who confirmed their witness by signs and wonders** — Matt 10:1,8; Acts 2:43; 3:2; 5:12-16; Rom 15:18,19; 1 Cor 9:2; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 2:8
- **their office was not restricted to a single local church and was a life-time appointment** — Acts 26:16-18; 2 Tim 4:7,8

“As a strict designation, the word *apostle* is confined to those men selected and commissioned by Christ himself to deliver in his name the message of salvation. It appears from Luke vi. 13, that the Saviour himself gave them this title. ‘And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.’ ... **The apostles, then, were the immediate messengers of Christ, appointed to bear testimony to what they had seen and heard. ‘Ye also shall bear witness,’ said Christ, ‘because ye have been with me from the beginning.’ John xv. 27. This was their peculiar office; hence when Judas fell, one, said Peter, who has companioned with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. Acts i. 21. To be an apostle, therefore, it was necessary to have seen Christ after his resurrection, 1 Cor. ix. 1, and to have a knowledge of his life and doctrines derived immediately from himself. Without this no man could be a witness, he would only report what he had heard from others, he could bear no independent testimony to what he himself had seen and heard....** We accordingly find, that whenever Paul was called upon to defend his apostleship, he strenuously asserted that he was appointed not of men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ; and as to his doctrines, that he neither received them of man, neither was he taught them, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 15f]

through whom [Jesus] we have received grace and apostleship (v5) — Paul places the source of his calling as the Lord Jesus Christ, who “gifted” Paul with his calling as an apostle. “As it was of the utmost importance that Paul’s authority as an apostle should be acknowledged in the church, he here repeats the assertion that he received his office immediately from Jesus Christ, whose exalted character as the Son of God and our supreme Lord he had just declared.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 21] Literally “through whom” in the sense of “by whose instrumentality;” but it may be taken in the more general sense to mean “from whom.”

Several of the commentators make this following note: “Paul may have in view two separate things, but it is more likely that the second term explains the first: Paul has received the special gift of being an apostle.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 51] This is a figure of speech called a hendiadys where two nouns expresses one concept, with the nouns connected by ‘and.’ The sense would therefore be “the gift (or grace) of apostleship.” F. F. Bruce and William Hendriksen agrees with Douglas Moo on this.

hen-di-a-dys (hĕn-dī'-ə-dīs) — noun: a figure of speech in which two words connected by a conjunction are used to express a single notion that would normally be expressed by an adjective and a substantive, such as *grace and favor* instead of *gracious favor*. From Late Latin, from Greek hen dia duoin, *one by means of two*

● **SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL — separated unto the gospel of God (v1)** — ἀφορίζειν, *aphorizein* = “to limit off, to separate, to select from among others.” Used in the same sense in Gal 1:15: “But when it pleased God, who

separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace” (Gal 1:15 KJV) to mean “who singled me out, who chose me.” Paul uses the same word to

describe his calling as a missionary out of the church in Antioch: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (Acts 13:2) Some consider this to be merely a further definition of Paul’s “calling,” making “called” and “set apart” to signify basically the same thing.

Paul here refers to his appointment by God to his office **unto the gospel of God**, meaning God selected Paul to his office for the purpose of preaching the gospel.

for his name’s sake (v5) — This states the purpose for which all the preceding was done: for the honor and glory of Christ alone. **Paul’s office of the apostle, or for that matter, any office or gift provided by God to his people, is for the distinct purpose of glorifying Christ and not for the sake of those who have been gifted.**

CHRISTIANS

● **CALLED — called of Jesus Christ (v6), called to be saints (v7)** — “The word κλητός [klātos = called one, singular] is never in the epistles applied to one who is merely invited by the external call of the gospel. Οἱ κλητοί [hoi klātoi = the called ones, plural], *the called*, means the effectually called; those who are so called by God as to be made obedient to the call. Hence the κλητοί [klātoi = called ones, plural] are opposed to those who receive and disregard the outward call.... It is one of those designations peculiar to the true people of God, and expresses at once their vocation, and that to which they are called, viz. holiness.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 22f] “**Call’ and its cognates are used by Paul to express an ‘effectual’ calling. What is meant is not an ‘invitation’ but the powerful and irresistible reaching out of God in grace to bring people into his kingdom.**” [Moo,

Romans, pg 54] “Speaking by and large, the apostle rejoices in being able to state that Rome’s membership had not only been invited to embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but had also, by God’s sovereign grace, responded favorably to the invitation. Paul is speaking therefore about what is often termed ‘the effectual call’ (Rom 8:28,30; 9:24; 1 Cor 1:9,24,26, etc.)” [Hendriksen, Romans, pg 46]

These comments speak of the difference between what theologians describe as the GENERAL CALL of God and the EFFECTUAL CALL of God. While these two calls may appear paradoxical, they harmonize perfectly in the mind and will of God:

GENERAL CALL	EFFECTUAL CALL
given to all mankind without distinction	given to those whom God chooses
response relies upon the hearer and is often (always?) rejected	response relies upon the working of the Holy Spirit and is always effectual
<p>“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.... I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.... Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:35,47,51,54)</p>	<p>“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.... And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.... And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” (John 6:37,39,44,65)</p>
<p>“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt 11:28-30)</p>	<p>“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” (Matt 11:25-27)</p>

● **BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST — called of Jesus Christ (v6) —** The sense of this phrase is as follows: “the called who belong to Jesus Christ.” Wuest: “among whom you also are divinely summoned ones belonging to Jesus Christ.” (1:6 Wuest’s Expanded Translation) They are the people who were given to Jesus by the Father (see also Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 Cor 6:19,20):

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” (John 10:27-29)

“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.... I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.... I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.... Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (John 17:1,2,6,9,24 NIV)

● **SAINTS — called to be saints (v7) —** Note the sense is the same as Paul’s statement in verse one, that we are “saints by virtue of having been called.” This is not a future prospect, “those called with one day be saints.” This is a present-day reality.

The word “saint” itself is the same root word whereby we get our words “holy, holiness, sanctify, sanctification, separated,” etc. Its most basic meaning is that of being set apart for God’s use.

The usage of the word “saint” in the scriptures is entirely different than the conception commonly held among some Christians and non-Christians alike. A “saint” is not an unusually holy person, one whose life was unique and now that they are dead, are canonized by the “church” and recognized to be a saint. Rather the word is used throughout the NT to refer to all true believers in Christ Jesus. **If you are saved, you are right now a saint!** “Paul uses ‘saints’ at least 38 times to designate Christians (four other times in salutations), **the focus being not on behavior but on status. Christians are those who have been sanctified ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God’** (1 Cor 6:11).” [Moo, Romans, pg 55]

● **RECIPIENTS OF GRACE AND PEACE — grace be to you and peace (v7) —** grace = kindness, especially undeserved

kindness. It is therefore most often used to refer to the unmerited favor of God in the salvation of sinners. It is often used for the effect of that kindness, to mean a gift or favor. Paul uses it in such a manner in Rom 12:2; Eph 3:2,8. All the blessings conferred upon us as believers are called graces, or gifts: faith, love, repentance, and hope for example.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (v7) — Note here Paul places Jesus on the same footing as God the Father, proving Paul regarded Christ as truly God. **“God is called our Father, not merely as the author of our existence, and the source of every blessing, but especially as reconciled towards us through Jesus Christ. The term expresses the peculiar relation in which he stands to those who are his sons, who have the spirit of adoption, and are the heirs or recipients of the heavenly inheritance. Jesus Christ is our Lord, as our supreme Ruler, under whose care and protection we are placed, and through whose ministration all good is actually bestowed.”** [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 24] This answers once for all the question of “Lordship salvation.”

● **BELOVED — beloved of God (v7)** — This is the great distinction and blessedness of believers, that they are beloved of God. Not merely as Israel who was called out from the world and given external privileges, but believers are loved with that great love that while we were dead in sins, God made us alive with Christ (Eph 2:4,5). Someone made this distinction between the world and believers like this: “I may love my neighbor but my family is beloved.” God does love the world in a general sense but holds a special kind of love for those who belong to Him. **“As to the expression ‘beloved of God’ (or ‘loved by God’), a study of the book of Romans in its entirety reveals that for Paul these words indicate not only that God now loves the believers in Rome but also that he had loved them from all eternity (cf. Jer 31:3), and would never stop loving them (Rom 8:31-39). We know that this is the apostle’s view, for, as he sees it, God’s concern for his children is an unbreakable chain (Rom 8:29,30). It reaches from one eternity to the next. It is a love that precedes, accompanies, and follows their love for God. And, of course, even men’s love for God must not be viewed as an independent entity. Rather, ‘We love because he first loved us’ (1 John 4:19).”** [Hendriksen, *Romans*, pg 46]

I know the following to be a true story because I personally know the people involved and attended church with them when I was first saved. This young man and his girlfriend, both of whom were Christians, had dated for several years and were contemplating marriage. But conflict entered their relationship because they had allowed their relationship to progress in manners which did not glorify the Lord. This conflict increased until they eventually separated. The young man continued to love this girl however which presented problems since they both still attended the same church. After a particularly hard time in dealing with their separation, the young man got alone one night to pray. While crying out to the Lord for his heartache to cease, he prayed, “Lord, don’t you see how much it hurts to love someone and have them totally ignore me?” At this time the young man “heard” the Lord speak to his heart saying, “How do you think I feel?” In a single moment, the past few years of living for self passed before his eyes and he realized how much his selfish living had hurt his Lord.

That illustrates what our attitude should be to the Christian life. Many Christians have a prayer life and that is good. They make it a point to daily meet with the Lord and share requests and needs of themselves, others in their family, others in the church, their lost loved ones, etc. But if that all prayer is, as good as that is, it is missing the point. The object of our prayers should be fellowship with the One we love. Anything short of that is missing the main purpose of prayer. The same might be said of our daily devotions / bible reading (please don’t misunderstand this: God doesn’t “need” us ... but he does “want” us).

What about sin? Do we see the Lord as a great Judge and Lawgiver who rewards faithfulness and punishes iniquity? All of that is true but all of that still falls short of the scriptural revelation of God. The Lord is our heavenly Father. We need to view sin the same as we as parents view sin in our own children’s lives. As a parent, anything which enters our children’s lives as sin hurts our hearts. It is not the heart of an absolute ruler, demanding the children live obediently. Rather it is the heart of someone who loves his children and realized their sin will eventually lead to a heartache in their children’s lives. Therefore they want their children to live obediently and submissive to the Lord, not out of some abstract righteous reason but rather out of the desire for the best for their children. No parent worth their salt desires less for the ones they love. That is the same with the Lord: He hates sin in our lives, not as a great and majestic Ruler (although that is true) but rather as a loving heavenly Father who desires the best for His children. Any other view of God and sin falls far short of God’s character.

THE GOSPEL

● **DIVINE SOURCE — the gospel of God (v1)** — **“It comes from God; it speaks of God; it contains God’s message; it tells of God’s gift; it provides God’s guarantee; it is the Gospel of God from first to last.”** [Griffith-Thomas, *Romans*, pg 46] **“Romans is ultimately a book about God: how he acted to bring salvation, how his justice is preserved, how his purposes are worked out in history, how he can be served by his people.”** [Moo, *Romans*, pg 43]

● **PROMISED IN OT — which he promised afore (v2)** — “God did not invent the gospel to cover up disappointment over Israel’s failure to receive the Lord Jesus. Nor did Paul create the gospel, which was “his” (2:16; 16:25) in an entirely different sense.” [Harrison, *Romans*] The gospel Paul was to preach was the same system of grace and truth which had been predicted and partially unfolded in the OT. Paul brings this out repeatedly in his teaching because one of the strongest proofs of the divine origin of the gospel is the prophecies in the OT relating to the gospel. The links between the Old and the New testaments are constantly referred to by the apostles. See Rom 3:21; 4:3; 9:27,33; 10:11,20. **“In a manner typical of Paul’s emphasis throughout Romans, he draws a line of continuity between the new work of God in his Son, the content of the gospel and the OT. By adding the**

redundant 'ahead of time' to the verb 'promise,' Paul emphasizes the temporal sequence of promise and fulfillment." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 43f] "The Old is by the New explained, the New is in the Old contained. The New is in the Old concealed, the Old is by the New revealed."

by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures (v2) — prophets = all the OT writers, whether prophets in the strict sense of the term or merely teachers, historians

• **SUBJECT OF THE GOSPEL: THE DIVINE SAVIOR —concerning his Son (v3)** — This may be connected either with gospel ("the gospel concerning his Son") or with promise ("which he promised concerning his Son"). The sense either way is much the same. Hodge believes it best to connect "concerning his Son" with "promise," the sense therefore being *the personal object of the ancient promises is the Son of God.*

• **HUMILIATION VS. EXALTATION OF THE SAVIOR** — Verses three and four contains some unanswerable questions and good men differ in their interpretation. More detail of the controversies are touched upon at the end of this lesson, but it should be noted that the interpretations are not anything which effects any orthodox teaching. The differences have to do with the finer details of word meanings, how Paul is using the words, what exactly Paul was trying to get across, etc. I am going to consider these verses as a contrast between the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus (his humiliation) and the ministry of our Lord after his resurrection (his glorification).

Many of the newer commentators (including Douglas Moo, F. F. Bruce, William Hendriksen) states this probably originated as an old confessional which Paul altered to fit his particular needs. That these two verses are parallel clauses is evident by setting them side-by-side:

"who has come" (v3)	"who was appointed" (v4)
"from the seed of David" (v3)	"Son of God in power" (v4)
"according to the flesh" (v3)	"according to the Spirit of holiness" (v4)
	"from the resurrection of the dead" (v4)

who was made of the seed of David (v3) — i.e. the Messiah was to be born out of the lineage of King David as predicted in the OT and confirmed in the NT: 2 Sam 7:12,13,16; Ps 89:3,4,19,24; 132:17; Isa 11:1-5,10; Jer 23:5,6; 30:9; 33:14-16; Ezek 34:23,24; 37:24; Matt 1:1; 22:45; Luke 1:27,32,33,69; 3:23-31; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; 13:23; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 5:5; 22:16.

"who was come" = the verb used by Paul is not the usual verb to denote a birth, although it might be used in such a manner. Perhaps what Paul means to emphasize here is that the incarnation of our Lord was more than a mere birth, it was the eternal Son of God 'becoming' a human, i.e., a change of existence.

according to the flesh (v3) — by Paul adding and restricting his statement, he was naturally implying the supernatural character of Jesus. "Were he a mere man, it had been enough to say that he was of the seed of David; but as he is more than man, it was necessary to limit his descent from David to his human nature." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 18] That the word "*flesh*" refers to Jesus' humanity and not his body is clear from the context. It is not the Lord Jesus' flesh as opposed to his soul, but rather his human nature as opposed to his divine nature. Therefore note how others translate the verse: "*regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David*" (Rom 1:3 NIV)

declared to be the Son of God (v4) — declared = ὀρίξειν (*horizein*) means: (1) to limit or bound, or in reference to ideas, to define; (2) to determine, as in Lk 22:22; Acts 2:23; Heb 4:7; (3) to appoint or constitute, as in Acts 10:42; 17:31. In the other seven times the word is used in the NT it is translated as "*to determine, to appoint.*" The sense would then be that Jesus was "*appointed*" as the Son of God at his resurrection. More detail is given below, but let me add that this statement in no way undermines the eternal Sonship of Christ.

with power (v4) — In keeping with our parallelism, it may best be taken to mean the Son attained a new exalted status as Lord. Son of God from eternity, he becomes the Son of God "in power," able to save all who come to him.

according to the Spirit of holiness (v4) — possibly a reference to the Holy Spirit. Although the manner in which this is phrased is unique to the NT, it fits very well with OT Semitic references to the Holy Spirit which would be natural if this was an ancient confession.

Jesus Christ our Lord (v4) — All the names of God are precious to us. "**Jesus**" = Saviour because he saves His people from their sins, Matt 1:21. "**Christ**" = Messiah, the Anointed One, connects him with all the predictions and prophecies of the OT. He is the anointed prophet, priest, and king, upon whom all hopes center. "**Lord**" = often used as a term of respect, equivalent to our usage of the word "sir." But it is often used in the OT as a common substitute for the name Jehovah; in the sense of supreme Lord and possessor. "*We belong to him, and his authority over us is absolute, extending to the heart and conscience as well as to the outward conduct; and to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. He, then, who in this exalted sense is our Lord, is, as to his human nature, the Son of David, and, as to his Divine nature, the*

Son of God.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 21]

from the resurrection out of the dead (v4) — “The phrase is literally ‘in consequence of the resurrection of dead ones;’ the plural ‘dead ones’ is an instance of what grammarians call the ‘generalizing plural.’ Exactly the same phrase is used in Acts 26:23 of the resurrection of Christ. So here **it is Christ’s own resurrection that is referred to**, and not (as some have thought) his raising of Lazarus and others — still less the phenomenon described in Matthew 27:52,53. But Christ’s resurrection is denoted by a phrase which hints at the future resurrection of his people; his resurrection is the first instalment of ‘the resurrection of the dead,’ as is made clear in 8:11 (where those who are indwelt by ‘the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead’ have through that Spirit the assurance of their own resurrection). Cf. 1 Cor 15:20-23; 44-49.” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 69f]

The resurrection itself is the ultimate evidence that Jesus was the divine Son of God:

“Then the Jews demanded of him, ‘What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.” (John 2:19-21 NIV)

“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31 NIV)

“We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’ The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’ So it is stated elsewhere: ‘You will not let your Holy One see decay.’ For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:32-39 NIV)

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor 15:14-20 NIV)

cp also 1 Pet 1:3; 3:21; Acts 26:23. **“In these and many other passages the resurrection of Christ is represented as the great conclusive evidence of the truth of all that Christ taught, and of the validity of all his claims.”** [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 20]

“He was the Son of God in his pre-incarnate state (2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:6) and still so after his Incarnation (verse 3, ‘of the seed of David’), but it was the Resurrection of the dead that definitely marked Jesus off as God’s Son because of his claims about himself as God’s Son and his prophecy that he would rise on the third day.... The Resurrection of Christ is the miracle of miracles. ‘The resurrection only declared him to be what he truly was’ – Denney.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 324]

● **UNIVERSAL CALL OF THE GOSPEL — to call people from among all the Gentiles (v5 NIV)** — all the Gentiles or nations: nations = ἔθνεσιν, ethnesin — used often in the NT and almost always translated as either *nations* or *Gentiles*; 5x as *heathen* and once as *the people of Samaria*. It is the basis for our modern word *ethnic*. The office of the apostles was an universal office, one which was not restricted by area. Their commission was general. Connecting this with the preceding, Paul’s apostleship was to promote the obedience consisting in faith among all nations.

both to Greeks and barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, I am debtor (v14) — Paul was under obligation to preach to all classes of men. **“Greeks and barbarians” = all nations without distinction; “wise and unwise” = all classes without distinction.** Barbarians = means properly a foreigner, one of another language, cp Paul’s statement to the Corinthians: *“Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.”* (1 Cor 14:11 KJV) Therefore **“Greeks and barbarians”** is equivalent to saying **“Greeks and non-Greeks”** or all nations. It was not until centuries after Paul’s time that the word came to be used as a reproach.

● **THE GOSPEL PRODUCES OBEDIENCE THROUGH FAITH — unto the obedience of faith (v5)** — **“Paul saw his task as calling men and women to submission to the lordship of Christ (cf. vv. 4b and 7b), a submission that began with conversion but which was to continue in a deepening, lifelong commitment. This obedience to Christ as Lord is always closely related to faith, both as an initial, decisive step of faith and as a continuing ‘faith’ relationship with Christ. In light of this, we understand the words ‘obedience’ and ‘faith’ to be mutually interpreting: obedience always involves faith, and faith always involves obedience. They should not be equated, compartmentalized, or made into separate stages of Christian experience. Paul called men and women to a faith that was always inseparable from obedience — for the Savior in whom we believe is nothing less than our Lord — and to an obedience that could never be divorced from faith — for we can obey Jesus as Lord only when we have given ourselves to him in faith.”** [Moo, *Romans*, pg 51f] The NIV picks up on this when they translate the

verse, “to the obedience that comes from faith.” (1:5; NIV) **“The purpose for which Paul was appointed was to bring about obedience of faith. Such obedience is based on faith and springs from faith. In fact, so very closely are faith and obedience connected that they may be compared to inseparable identical twins. When you see the one you see the other. A person cannot have genuine faith without having obedience, nor vice versa.”** [Hendriksen, *Romans*, pg 45] There is a wonderful example of this found in Paul’s writing; note these two verses:

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.” (Rom 1:8 NIV)

“Everyone has heard about your obedience” (Rom 16:19a NIV)

PAUL’S GENERAL COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTION TO THE ROMANS

• **PAUL IS THANKFUL — first I thank my God (v8)** — “First” implies a series but Paul never comes to a ‘second’ or ‘next.’ Perhaps Paul is highlighting a point which he considers important. “Let me begin...” (1:8 NEB) The word Paul uses for thanksgiving gives the implication of repeated action: Wuest: “First, I am constantly thanking my God...” (1:8 Wuest Expanded Translation) This is typical of Paul’s letters.

through Jesus Christ (v8) — This is connected with “thank” in the sense that Paul thanks God through the mediation of Jesus Christ. We have access to the throne of God only by the merits of Christ Jesus, therefore any approach to God must be through Jesus Christ. See Rom 7:25; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17; Heb 13:15; John 14:13; 16:23,24. **This is unique to Paul’s letters: he typically thanks God in his introductions but only in Romans is it ‘through Jesus Christ.’**

• **PAUL IS PRAYERFUL** — Paul continually gives thanks to God for the Romans in his prayers, highlighted in v9,10: “God ... is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times” (1:9,10a NIV) The subject of Paul’s prayers relates to the Romans but has more to do with his own plans: he regularly prays that he might somehow come to them.

• **PAUL’S SERVICE IS SINCERE AND SPIRITUAL — whom I serve (v9)** — The word used for “serve” is always used in reference to religious service, either worship or the performance of external duties of a religious nature. Note this may be given to God or to the creation — the same word is used in verse 25 of those who worshiped and “served” created things rather than God. “I serve (λατρεύω, latreūō). Old verb from *latron*, hire, and *latris*, hireling, so to serve for hire, then to serve in general gods or men, whether sacred services (Heb 9:9; 10:2) or spiritual service as here.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 325]

with my spirit (v9 KJV), with my whole heart (v9 NIV) — Paul’s service is not merely outward show, insincere, external but is rather a service which comes from his innermost being. Paul serves the Lord with all his heart.

for God is my witness (v9) — Paul appeals to God in a reverential manner since he is the searcher of all hearts. This is not uncommon with Paul: 2 Cor 1:23; Gal 1:20; Phil 1:8. It is an act of worship and a recognition of God’s omniscience and omnipresence. Paul often uses the “witness formula” when he is concerned to attest to the truth of what he is saying.

• **PAUL IS SUBMISSIVE TO THE WILL OF GOD — Making request, if by any means ... by the will of God to come unto you. (v10)** — Note Paul’s submission to the will of God. Paul at this point was not coming to Rome, nor could he immediately do so. See Rom 15:25-29 which lays out Paul’s plans to go to Jerusalem with the monetary gifts. But his prayer was that the Lord may permit the trip to be undertaken.

“I might have a prosperous journey” (KJV). This is the typical translation concerning this word which means “to lead in the right way, to prosper one’s journey,” and figuratively, “to prosper.” In the passive voice it is translated “prospered, successful, favored.” But Hodge notes since Paul had not began his journey but was rather praying that he may even take the trip to Rome, the sense is more as **“I will be blessed, favored if the Lord wills that I take this journey.”**

I would not have you ignorant, brethren (v13) Paul often used this mode of address when he wanted to call attention to a particular point or assure his readers of anything.

that oftentimes I purposed to come to you (v13) — in Rom 15:23 he states he had desired to come to them for several years

and was hindered until now (v13) — In chapter fifteen Paul states he was ready to go to Rome now that he had accomplished his missionary work around Greece. It is possible the thing hindering Paul from visiting Rome prior to this was his ministry and apostolic labors, which left no time for a trip to Rome. These labors in that area coming to an end, Paul was now free to devote himself to a trip to the capital. It is equally possible however that it was the Holy Spirit’s guidance which had previously hindered any trip to Rome. This is especially spoken of in Acts 16:6,7,9 when Paul was forbidden to go to Asia by the Holy Spirit.

• **PAUL WANTED HIMSELF AND THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS TO BE MUTUAL BLESSINGS — for I long to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift (v11)** — Paul states here why he was anxious to get to Rome. He wanted to see them not merely for his own gratification but that he may impart some gift which would strengthen their faith. Spiritual gift = a gift derived from the Spirit, probably not those miraculous gifts mentioned in Corinthians since Paul avoids the plural; rather the ordinary gifts which are used to strengthen a church: teaching, exhorting, preaching. Included here too would be the fruits of the Spirit.

in order that ye may be strengthened (v11) — This would include an increased confidence in the gospel, increased religious feelings, increased faithfulness and obedience. This was a common burden on Paul’s heart: “*And sent Timotheus ... to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith*” (1 Thes 3:2 KJV) “*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, ... comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*” (2 Thes 2:16,17 KJV)

that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith (v12 NIV) — Paul makes this addition to expand and explain what he just said. Yes, Paul hoped to see the Romans to be a blessing to them, but he also knew and expected them to be a blessing to him. The faith of the Romans would not only comfort but strengthen the apostle, as his faith would do the same to the Christians at Rome. Paul was not merely saying what Erasmus called “*pious fraud*” but rather meant what he said. Paul returns to this thought as he closed the letter: “*So that by God’s will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.*” (Rom 15:32 NIV)

The same happens today in our circles. How blessed we are to be in the company of one totally given to the Lord. We are encouraged by each other’s faith. We are prompted to greater faithfulness by the presence of one such as Carson Fremont or Larry Armstrong or _____. Something stirs within our hearts and we depart asking the Lord to increase our own faithfulness.

The same may be applied to every meeting of the church body. We are exhorted and encouraged to continue on in the service of our Lord. If that be true (and it is), then how much do we miss when we neglect the assembly of the saints? How much do we detract from the potential blessing of others by our absence? It may be argued that the opposite of this principle is just as true: do we discourage and dishearten others by our apathy to the things of God? How does the Pastor feel when he pours his heart into a message only to find a dozen in attendance? How would the believers at Rome felt if Paul wrote and expressed little concern of their well-being or had little desire to even visit them? It works both ways.

An additional note on Paul’s comments here: “*What is remarkable about this section is a certain awkwardness on Paul’s part in stating his reasons for wanting to come to Rome. After mentioning his wish to strengthen the Romans’ faith (v11), Paul almost corrects himself, acknowledging that he anticipates a mutual benefit (v12). This note should not be seen as mere rhetorical flourish — as if Paul did not really believe that the Romans could contribute anything to his own Christian walk. Nevertheless, it is unparalleled in Paul’s other letters. Such hesitation to assert his authority (cf. also 15:14-17) may reflect his desire to tread warily in light of doubts among the Roman Christians about his message and ministry. But it is mainly attributable to his caution about ‘building on another’s foundation’ (15:20).... [Some] scholars think that the Roman Christians were suspicious of Paul because of his stance on the law and other related issues. This could well have been the case; but the evidence for this supposition is not strong.*” [Moo, Romans, pg 56]

THEME VERSES

“These theologically dense verses are made up of four subordinate clauses, each supporting or illuminating the one before it. Paul’s pride in the gospel (v. 16a) is the reason why he is so eager to preach the gospel in Rome (v. 15). This pride, in turn, stems from the fact that the gospel contains, or mediates, God’s saving power for everyone who believes (v. 16b). Why the gospel brings salvation is explained in v. 17a: it manifests God’s righteousness, a righteousness based on faith. Verse 17b, finally, provides scriptural confirmation for this connection between righteousness and faith.” [Moo, Romans, pg 63f]

for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ (v16a) — The “foolishness of the word of the cross” (1 Cor 1:18,23) would make for some degree of embarrassment about the gospel natural – particularly in the capital of the then-known world. Paul may even have been making this statement in the face of accusations that Paul’s gospel was antinomian or anti-Jewish.

for it is the power of God unto salvation (v16b) — Two things are said here concerning the gospel: it is powerful and it is from God (cp 1 Cor 1:18,24). It is through the gospel that God works unto salvation, that is, it is effectual to save. “The Greek word for ‘power’ (dynamis) has sometimes elicited the reaction that the gospel is dynamite! This is quite out of place, for the emphasis is not on blowing false religions out of the way or blasting a trail of success for the true faith or even on delivering people from habits they have been unable to shake off. Paul himself goes on to explain in what sense ‘power’ is to be understood. The stress falls not on its mode of operation but on its intrinsic efficacy. It offers something not to be found anywhere else — a righteousness from God.” [Harrison, Romans]

for every one who believes (v16c) — “*To ‘believe’ is to put full trust in the God who ‘justifies the ungodly’ (4:5) by means of the cross and resurrection of Christ. Though intellectual assent cannot be excluded from faith, the Pauline emphasis is on surrender to God as an act of the will (cf. e.g., 4:18; 10:9). Pauline (and NT) faith is not (primarily) agreement with a set of doctrines but trust in a person. Though not explicit here, another focus of Romans is the insistence that faith is in no sense a ‘work.’ Therefore, although we must never go to the extreme of making the person a totally passive instrument through whom ‘believing’ occurs — for Paul makes clear that people are responsible to believe — we must also insist that believing is not something we do (in the sense of ‘works’) but is always a response, an accepting of the gift God holds out to us in his grace (see especially 4:1-8). As Calvin puts it, faith is ‘a kind of vessel’ with which we ‘come empty and with the mouth of our soul open to seek God’s grace.’ ‘Believing,’ then, while a genuinely human activity, possesses no ‘merit’ or worth for which God is somehow bound to reward us; for salvation is, from first to last, God’s work.*” [Moo, Romans, pg 67f]

Both aspects of this portion must be emphasized: “*for every one*” — to all people without distinction, Jew and Gentile, Greek and

barbarian, wise and unwise; “*who believes*” — not is baptized, is circumcised, or who obeys the law, but every one who places their faith in Christ alone for salvation. “*We have here the two great doctrines set forth in this epistle. First, salvation is by faith; and secondly, it is universally applicable, to the Greek as well as to the Jew. The faith of which the apostle here speaks includes a firm persuasion of the truth, and a reliance or trust on the object of faith.... That faith, therefore, which is connected with salvation, includes knowledge, that is, a perception of the truth and its qualities; assent, or the persuasion of the truth of the object of faith; and trust, or reliance. The exercise, or state of mind expressed by the word faith, as used in the Scriptures, is not mere assent, or mere trust, it is the intelligent perception, reception, and reliance on the truth, as revealed in the gospel.*” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 28f]

to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (v16d) — “*First*” here cannot have the sense of especially, as if the gospel was specifically designed for the Jews, for Paul repeatedly states that is not the case (Rom 3:9,22,29; 10:12). “*First*” therefore must be a reference to time. “*To the Jews in the first instance, then to the Greek.*” Jesus said “*salvation was of the Jews*” to the Samaritan woman at the well. The Messiah sprang forth from the Jews and it was to the Jews that the gospel was first preached, but then the Jews who believed took the gospel to the Gentiles.

for the righteousness of God is revealed (v17a) — This righteousness is elsewhere said to be without law (Rom 3:21), a gift (Rom 5:17), not to be our own (Rom 10:3), and from God (Phil 3:9). Paul could have been meaning: (1) **an attribute**: ‘the righteousness of God’ = God’s justice and holiness. In this sense God as a righteousness, morally upright God is revealed. (2) **the status given by God**, i.e., the righteousness which God imparts judicially on all who believe. This was Luther’s interpretation and what filled his heart with peace. (3) **an activity of God**: in this sense, giving ‘righteousness’ a much broader meaning which is present in the OT, it could have the sense of ‘establishing right.’ In this sense it speaks of God intervening on behalf of his people. Paul would then be saying the gospel manifests ‘the saving action of God.’

Support for each of these three explanations may be found in other verses throughout the Bible. Some commentators believe these explanations all overlap and in a sense all three are correct in their own way. As one writer put it, **the ‘righteousness of God’ is ‘God’s salvation-creating power,’ a concept that embraces all three explanations.** Douglass Moo brings these concepts together by interpreting this as **‘the act by which God brings people into right relationship with himself.’** Like Luther, this is more of a status before God than an internal quality, justification rather than sanctification (although Paul later makes it clear that those justified will also be sanctified in their lifestyle – Rom 6). A. T. Robertson: “**A righteousness of God**” = **subjective genitive, “a God-kind of righteousness,” one that each must have and can obtain in no other way except from God.**

from faith to faith (v17b) — There are almost as many explanations of this phrase as there are commentaries! For example::

- God’s righteousness was ‘from the faith in the law to the faith in the gospel.’ (popular among early church Fathers)
- ‘the faith of the preacher and the faith of the hearer.’ (Augustine)
- ‘growth in faith in the individual, enabling the Christian to appreciate and enjoy more and more the righteousness of God’ (Calvin, others)
- ‘the first faith is God’s faithfulness, the second faith is the individual’s faith’ (Barth)
- some compare this with Rom 3:22, concluding ‘righteousness is received by faith and is for all who believe.’
- ‘our righteousness is attributed both to Christ’s faithfulness and to our own believing’
- others take it as an attack on Judaism, therefore ‘righteousness is both received by faith and has faith, not works, as its goal’
- comparing the only other close NT parallel (2 Cor 2:16): ‘this emphasizes faith and nothing but faith’
- ‘faith the starting point and faith the goal’
- ‘it is based on faith and addressed to faith’

as it is written, The just shall live by faith (v17c KJV, also NIV, NASB), or possibly connected in another fashion, He who through faith is righteous shall live (v17c RSV, also TEV, NEB) — a quote from Hab 2:4 and is used here, Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38. There are textual differences between Paul’s wording and the original text of Habakkuk: ‘*but the righteous one by his faith will live.*’ In Habakkuk, the verse quoted is God’s response to the prophet’s complaint about God’s seeming injustice and inaction. Hab 2:4 instructs the one who is already righteous how to face the difficulties of life and God’s providential dealings. Paul takes this verse and modifies it to show how one can obtain a right standing before God and therefore live eternally: literally 1:17 reads ‘*but the righteous one on the basis of faith will live;*’ therefore Wuest: ‘*And the one who is just, on the principle of faith shall live.*’ (1:17c, Wuest’s Expanded Translation)

But with all the differences between Paul and the exact quote from Habakkuk, the important thing still remains: **faith is the key to one’s relationship to God.** F. F. Bruce: ‘**It is he who is righteous (justified) through faith that will live.**’ [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 76]

APPENDIX: SOME THINGS ARE NOT AS CUT-AND-DRIED AS THEY SEEM

Embedded within today's lesson are a couple verses which are probably read over quickly by the most of us as we go through Romans. Underneath the surface however are questions of which the best bible scholars today cannot agree upon the answers. I would like to place a few comments here at the end of today's lesson for a couple reasons. First, I believe there are those in the class who enjoy studying such matters and are interested in some of the more "detailed" information behind the interpretation of verses. But secondly, I believe these comments may be of interest for everyone in our class for this reason: it shows that behind some verses throughout the NT there are controversies which cannot be easily answered. The lessons I would like us all to embrace from this appendix are these:

- Words have "circles" of meaning, and going from one language to another sometimes allows several interpretations. Let me give you an example. Consider our English words "home" and "house." For someone to translate these words into their language may allow the usage of a single word in their language since the words are very, very similar in meaning. But even though the meanings of these words overlap, a house may not be a home in every instance. Applying that to our present situation: going from Greek to English is not an exact science. Therefore there may be other interpretations (or nuances of interpretations) which are just as valid as my own personal belief.
- Not everything has a simplistic answer and we cannot take everything at face value only. To read through something (or should I say read *over* something?) and instantly believe one has all the answers to a given passage is an irrational assumption.
- In contrast to that, it is a sign of Christian maturity to understand there are complications in interpreting some Bible verses and therefore allowing others to disagree with perhaps pet interpretations.
- Another sign of Christian maturity is to know when to "stand-fast in the faith" and when to be gracious and allow others to disagree. For example, we should never accept a liberal interpretation of anything which we know to be core to the Christian faith: the deity of Christ, salvation by grace through faith, the inspiration of the scriptures, the trinity, heaven and hell, and so on. But for an example of the opposite, consider these verses, Romans 1:3,4. Good sound Bible scholars who hold to the authority of the scriptures takes opposing views on these verses. The mature Christian thing to do is to understand my view is not the only valid interpretation and the other person may have some valid points as to what Paul means in these verses. Therefore I know what I believe and why, but I also acknowledge a little room for error and am gracious to anyone who does not agree with me.

Some of the difficulties behind these verses:

- in what sense is "flesh" used?
- does the verb ὀρίζειν (horizein) have the sense of "to declare" or "to appoint"?
- does "power" modify "Son of God" or ὀρίζειν (horizein)?
- in what sense is "spirit of holiness" used?
- does "according to the flesh" and "according to the spirit" used as contrasting ideas?
- in what sense is ἐκ (ek = out of) used in verse 4 in reference to the resurrection?

Here are some comments concerning this passage:

- "*according to the flesh*" = a key theological term to Paul; used 21x by Paul denoting being or living according to the "*merely human*" with an emphasis upon the transitory, weak, frail nature of humanity. Sometimes the emphasis is quite negative, referring to sin; other times it is more neutral. It appears to be used in a neutral sense here. "*Flesh*" is therefore a reference to Christ's humanity.
- what is the meaning of "*declared, designated?*" Some think it should be translated "*declared*" (e.g. NIV) to have the sense "the resurrection declared that Jesus was the Son of God." While not impossible, there are a couple items which argue against such an interpretation. The first consideration is that the word is used seven times in the NT and is always translated as "*to determine, to appoint.*" Another consideration is that according to Douglas Moo, that word for "declared" does not appear to have been used in that manner in first century Greek. Therefore, the Son has been "*appointed*" Son of God by the Father by virtue of his resurrection.

Does that mean the eternal sonship of Christ is denied? No, that difficulty is removed by other considerations. For example, the idea the resurrection in some sense caused Jesus to be appointed Son has parallels in the NT: "*And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*" (Acts 13:32,33 KJV) "*We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: You are my Son; today I have become your Father.*" (Acts 13:32,33 NIV) This is a quote from Ps 2:7 which has to do with the Messiah accepting the reign from the Father. Note as well Rom 1:3,4 speaks of the eternal Son (v3) who is declared the Son (v4). Therefore this "appointment" of the Son does not have anything to do with a change in essence,

a change in who the Son is; rather, it is a change in status or function.

F. F. Bruce agrees, **“Paul does not mean that Jesus *became* the Son of God by the resurrection, but that he who during his earthly ministry ‘was the Son of God in weakness and lowliness’ became by the resurrection ‘the Son of God in power.’ Similarly Peter at Pentecost concludes his proclamation of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ by calling on ‘all the house of Israel’ to ‘know assuredly’ that God has made the crucified Jesus ‘both Lord and Christ’ (Acts 2:36).”** [Bruce, Romans, pg 68f] William Hendriksen agrees with this understanding of the word.

Prior to continuing, let’s consider an opposing view. While Charles Hodge agrees the word is best translated “*appoint, determine,*” he disagrees with the interpretation of Jesus being “*appointed*” the Son of God. His comments: Some use the word in the last sense to mean Jesus was appointed as the Son of God by or after his resurrection. But that is inconsistent with the scriptural teaching that Christ was the Son of God eternally, before the foundation of the world, Col 1:15. The correct sense is as our translators have taken it, that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection, in reference to the understanding of men. [Hodge, Romans, pg 19]

■ what is meant by “*in power?*” The phrase could modify either “*declared*” (declared with power to be the Son of God, NIV) or it could modify “*Son of God*” (declared Son of God in power). Moo believes the structure of the sentence favors the latter connection. What Paul is claiming is that the preexistent Son of God who entered human existence as the Messiah, was appointed on the basis of (or perhaps, at the time of) the resurrection to a new and more powerful position in relation to the world. By virtue of his obedience to the will of the Father (Phil 2:6-11) and because of the revelation of God’s saving power in the gospel (1:1,16), the Son attains a new exalted status as Lord. Son of God from eternity, he becomes the Son of God “*in power,*” able to save all who come to him. The transition from v3 to v4 is not a change from human messiah to divine Son of God; rather it is from the Son as Messiah to the Son as both Messiah and powerful, reigning Lord.

Hendriksen agrees with Moo that “*power*” probably unites with the immediately preceding words, “*Son of God.*” But Hendriksen adds that even if it modifies “*declared*” there is little difference in the sense.

Charles Hodge disagrees with their conclusions. Hodge believes it best to have “*power*” modify “*declared*” : This is not a reference to the miracles wrought by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit; nor is it a reference to “*the Son in power*” or “*the powerful Son.*” ***Rather the sense is that Christ was powerfully proven, powerfully declared, effectually proven to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.***

■ what is meant by “*according to the spirit of holiness?*” This apparently is parallel to the phrase “*according to the flesh.*” The views basically fall into three categories. VIEW ONE: flesh / spirit suggests a contrast between Jesus’ human / divine natures. By his human descent he is the “*seed of David,*” by his divine nature he is the Son of God. This is the position taken by some great expositors: Hodge, Haldane, Shedd. But to understand it in this manner requires us to take “*appoint*” to mean “*demonstrate, manifest*” which we have seen to be unlikely. It also gives “*spirit*” a connotation not used by Paul elsewhere. VIEW TWO: the “*spirit of holiness*” is the obedient, consecrated spirit Jesus manifested throughout his earthly life. The contrast therefore between v3,4 is between the external (outward, physical, seed of David) and the internal (inward, spiritual perfection which qualifies Jesus to be the Son of God in power). While Moo suggests this is possible and has less difficulties than the first view, it still places the contrast between flesh / spirit in such a manner that is very unlike Paul. VIEW THREE: the third view takes flesh / spirit as part of a larger salvation-historical framework, setting two eras against each other. Some expositors taking this view: Moo, Ridderbos, Vos, Murray, Bruce. The old era is dominated by sin, death and the flesh. The new era is characterized by righteousness, life and the gift of the Holy Spirit. ***The contrast is therefore as follows: in Jesus’ earthly ministry (his life in the realm of the flesh) he was the Davidic seed, the Messiah. While this is true and valuable, it does not tell the whole story. For Christians, Jesus is also (in the realm of the spirit) the powerful, life-giving Son of God. In Christ the “new era” of redemptive history has begun, and in this stage of God’s plan Jesus reigns as Son of God, powerfully active to give salvation to all who believe.*** The greatest objection to this interpretation is that “*spirit of holiness*” is never used of the Holy Spirit anyplace else in the Greek. However, Paul may be taking this directly from tradition / ancient Semitic language. For example, the Greek used here is a literal translation of the Hebrew “*Spirit of holiness*” found in Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10,11; and several passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls. [Moo, Romans, pg 44-50] In agreement with Moo is F. F. Bruce and William Hendriksen, although Hendriksen does not believe “*according to the flesh*” and “*according to the spirit of holiness*” are contrasting phrases.

Charles Hodge again takes an opposing viewpoint: these words sit in contrast to the preceding words, “*according to the flesh.*” As to the flesh, he was the Son of David, as to the spirit he was the Son of God. “*Spirit*” here is not the Holy Spirit; rather this refers to his divine nature or Godhead. That is why Paul wrote expressed himself in the manner in which he did, “*spirit of holiness*” rather than “*holy spirit*” to avoid ambiguity.

Another scholar disagreeing with Moo is A. T. Robertson, who states the spirit of holiness is not the Holy Spirit but Christ’s perfect spirit.

■ Concluding thoughts:

Many of the newer commentators (including Douglas Moo, F. F. Bruce, William Hendriksen) states this probably originated as an old confessional which Paul altered to fit his particular needs. That these two verses are parallel clauses is evident by setting them

side-by-side:

"who has come" (v3)	"who was appointed" (v4)
"from the seed of David" (v3)	"Son of God in power" (v4)
"according to the flesh" (v3)	"according to the Spirit of holiness" (v4)
	"from the resurrection of the dead" (v4)

"This parallelism, coupled with the presence of several words and phrases unique or unusual in Paul, raises the possibility that Paul is here quoting from, or adapting, an earlier tradition. Such use of traditional material is unobjectionable in itself, paralleled in other Pauline texts, and entirely appropriate as a means to establish some common ground with the unfamiliar Roman church. Nevertheless, we should be cautious about drawing exegetical conclusions from this necessarily uncertain hypothesis. The meaning of these verses, then, is to be determined against the background of Paul and his letters, not against a necessarily hypothetical traditions-history." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 45]

F. F. Bruce agrees, "Concerning his Son. This phrase, which expresses the subject-matter of 'the gospel of God,' introduces a short confessional summary (verses 3-4) which may have been as familiar to the Roman Christians as to Paul himself; it is likely, however, that Paul has recast its wording so as to bring out certain necessary emphases." [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 68]