



# A Study of Romans

## Romans 1:1–32



### Overview

In Chapter 1, the Apostle Paul introduces himself and gives his own sense of identity as a servant, and separated from others to carry out the divine will of God by spreading the gospel message of Jesus Christ. After reciting a confession of faith and complimenting the Roman church to which he was personally unknown, Paul concludes these formalities with a word of thanksgiving. He then quickly moves his discussion to evidence of God's creation for his existence, then to the corruption of religion by idolatry, and to the immorality of man by specifically calling out 23 attributes of man's debased mind.

#### 1. Greetings to the Saints in Rome (1:1-7)

- 1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*
- 2 *(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)*

- 3 ***Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;***
- 4 ***And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:***
- 5 ***By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:***
- 6 ***Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ***
- 7 ***To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

#### Key Points:

- Paul refers to himself as a slave to Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated to the gospel of God.
- Paul affirms that the gospel was previously promised in the text of the Old Testament.
- Jesus is of blood lineage to David.

#### Questions:

1. Why would Paul, an Apostle, identify himself as “a servant to Jesus” and “set apart” for the Gospel of God?
2. Paul states that Jesus is a royal descendent of David, but emphasizes that it is “in the flesh”. What are your thoughts about why Paul adds this caveat?

## **2. Words of Thanksgiving (1:8-15)**

- 8 ***First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.***
- 9 ***For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;***
- 10 ***Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.***
- 11 ***For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;***
- 12 ***That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.***

- 13 ***Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.***
- 14 ***I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.***
- 15 ***So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.***

Key Points:

- Paul reiterates that he is a slave (I serve in the gospel of His Son)
- Paul longs to meet with the Romans to impart a “spiritual gift” so that the Romans become “established” with the gospel of God.
- Paul desires to take the gospel to all Romans (Greeks and barbarians)

Questions:

1. What are your thoughts about why Paul had such a strong desire to travel to Rome?
2. Why would Paul refer to himself as “a debtor” to both Greeks and to barbarians, and to the wise and the unwise?

**3. The Power of the Gospel (1:16-17)**

- 16 ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***
- 17 ***For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.***

Key Points:

- Paul claims not to be ashamed of being a Christian
- Paul points out that Christianity is to be a faith of international and global proportion.
- God’s righteousness is revealed in the gospel that life is promised to those who are righteous by faith.

Questions:

1. What are your thoughts about why Paul makes the statement that he is “not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ”? Is this still an issue in today’s world?

#### **4. Idolatry: The Corruption of Religion (1:18-23)**

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;**

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

**20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:**

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

**22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,**

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

#### **Key Points:**

- The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, but so is God's wrath revealed from heaven
- God's wrath is provoked by wickedness, impiety, and by those who suppress the truth
- God has made Himself evident to everyone since creation, so there are no excuses for not glorifying Him and thanking Him.
- Idolatry is the exchange of the "glory" of God for an "lifeless image"

#### **Questions:**

1. No sooner than Paul writes a warm greeting, a longing to visit with the Romans, and a declaration of the righteousness of God, he immediately states that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. What are your thoughts about this sudden switch of emphasis?
2. Paul states that God should be known to all because He has made His presence evidently clear. What are your thoughts about his claim that the idolaters "became vain" and while "professing to be wise, they became fools"? Do you see this happening in today's world?

#### **5. Immorality: The Corruption of Life (1:24-32)**

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

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

- 26 ***For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:***
- 27 ***And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.***
- 28 ***And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;***
- 29 ***Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,***
- 30 ***Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,***
- 31 ***Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:***
- 32 ***Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.***

Key Points:

- Sexual impurity heads the list of immoral evils
- Deviation of God’s design for one’s own body is unnatural and shameful
- God “gives” and “hands” immoral people over to their immorality
- Those who practice immorality and those who approve of those who are immoral are deserving of death

Questions:

- 1 Sexual impurity headlines Paul’s list of those things which are not pleasing to God. What are your thoughts about why Paul emphasizes this form of immorality over all the others that he mentions?
- 2 Regarding immoral people, Paul writes 3 times that “God gives them up” or “God hands them over” to their uncleanness, vile passions, and debased minds. What are your thoughts about why God would “hand someone over” to sin?
- 3 Paul points out that those who rebel against God deserve death, but also “those who give approval of those who practice sins of godlessness also deserve death”. What are your thoughts about these verses as you see today’s world?

----- END OF LESSON -----

NEXT WEEK – read Romans 2:1-29

Covering: Just judgement of God; Doers of the Law; Law and True Circumcision