

# Romans 1:1-7 and Introduction

## Memory Verse:

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

## Outline:

1. Introduction to Romans
2. Paul's greeting to the church in Rome
3. Conclusion and application

## 1. Introduction to Romans

The Just shall live by his faith

Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV

“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; ***but the just shall live by his faith.***”

This is probably one of the most important verses in the whole of the Old Testament. It was written during the time when the nation of Israel was following the law of Moses. People had misunderstood the purpose of the law. The law is really just a picture or tool that God uses to show us who He is and who we are. God is good, just, and holy—we are not. Also, the message that the only way to God is through the Saviour that God had been promising to send has been around since the beginning of Creation. “*And I will put enmity between you [satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He [the Saviour] shall bruise your head [satan's total defeat], and you shall bruise His heel [Jesus' temporary suffering on the cross].*” (Genesis 3:15 NKJV)

This message of the substitutionary sacrifice, of us only having access to God through the death of another, the Messiah, was very clear. For a man to have his sin forgiven and gain access to God, an animal had to die. The man would place his hands on the head of the lamb as he confessed his sins. The animal then had to die, because the consequence of sin is death—“*The soul who sins shall die*” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20)—and the lamb had symbolically become sinful, taking on the sins of the man. The whole point of the law was that man is a sinner and needs forgiveness if he is to be accepted by God.

However, this message seemed to get lost. Instead, many Jews started to believe that they could achieve their own righteousness. In other words, they thought that they could be as righteous as God is—which means perfect. In effect, they were saying that they don't need God's salvation which was accomplished through the death of the Messiah on mankind's behalf. Obviously, they didn't have any clue about who God is (perfect) or who they are (sinful). They were blind. Paul summarised this well.

Romans 10:2-3 AMP

I bear [Israel] witness that they have a [certain] zeal and enthusiasm for God, but it is not enlightened and according to [correct and vital] knowledge. 3 For being ignorant of the righteousness that God ascribes [which makes one acceptable to Him in word, thought, and deed] and seeking to establish a righteousness (**a means of salvation**) of their own, they did not obey or submit themselves to God's righteousness [God's way of making people right with Himself].

### Who was Paul?

Paul was a pharisee, a very religious Jewish man. He lived in a way that emphasised his own goodness and righteousness and not God's. Paul was one of those who thought that being good simply meant conforming to some outward standard, and he ignored the darkness and blindness of his own evil heart. Paul lived at a time in History where the common teaching of the day was that God would accept you only if your were good enough, just like it was when Martin Luther was around in the 1500's.

### Martin Luther and the teaching of the Catholic church

Here is a quote from [christianstudylibrary.org](http://christianstudylibrary.org) regarding Martin Luther, the father of the reformation.

Luther was a deeply religious person; and from youth on, the question often arose in his heart, *Oh, when for once shall I become holy and do enough in order to receive the grace of God?* He sat under the penitential preaching of his day which was a continual preaching of hell and damnation [*penance is punishment inflicted on oneself as an outward expression of repentance for wrongdoing*]. Penitential preaching placed a heavy burden of guilt on the hearer from the curse of the law, but never lifted this burden with the grace of the gospel. This abuse of preaching goes a long way to explain why Martin Luther later almost separated the law from the gospel. The church taught that the wrath of God can only be propitiated [appeased] by man's good works, by holy living. His picture of God was that of an angry judge, like the picture he saw every Sunday as a boy in the stained glass window of the church of Erfurt. Here Christ was painted as in John's vision in Revelation, with a double-edged sword coming out of his mouth. He understood nothing of the grace and mercy of God for sinners.

The monastery offered peace for his tortured spirit. Even the vow to become a monk was comforting, for it was meritorious [deserving of reward or praise]. By it one brought the highest offering to God. Just as baptism symbolises a rebirth, so becoming a monk meant being born again to live a holy life before God.

If a monk did the very best he could do, then God would give him His grace as a reward.

Luther began to lecture to university students on the Scriptures, beginning with the Psalms in 1513. In Psalm 22, he was struck by the words, *"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"* What could this mean? Christ was forsaken by God, Christ suffered torment, but why should Christ have suffered such torments? Luther could understand why he should suffer as cast off from God, being the weak, sinful and undeserving man he was. But Christ was divine, pure, entirely without sin! The only answer was that Christ suffered in his place. Luther was discovering the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

Luther lectured in Romans from 1515 to 1516. Very soon came to these words in the first chapter:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' (Romans 1:16-17)

Listen to how Luther describes his conversion:

*I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, "the justice of God," because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. **My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage [satisfy] him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant.***

*Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.*

### The rewards for those who persevere in their study of the book of Romans

The book of Romans like mining for diamonds; the search for truth takes much effort, but is extremely rewarding. To come to a correct understanding and application We must dig deep, choosing to make time to meditate and chew on its passages again and again, day after day. A proper understanding of the book of Romans is the key that unlocks our understanding of the *Gospel of Grace*.

Peter says of Paul's writings, "And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him—<sup>16</sup> speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction." (2 Peter 3:15-16 NLT)

"The Book of Romans has life changing truth but it must be approached with effort and determination to understand what the Holy Spirit said through the Apostle Paul." (David Guzik)

John Calvin, another reformer, said of the Book of Romans, "When anyone understands this Epistle, he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scripture.

## 2. Paul's greeting to the church in Rome

Romans 1:1-7 NKJV

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God <sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. <sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, <sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

<sup>7</sup> To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**v 1 Paul:** Paul the apostle, previously known as Saul of Tarsus, wrote this letter or epistle to the church in Rome while in the city of Corinth, sometime between 53-58 AD. He was on his way to Jerusalem, where he knew that he would be arrested (Acts 20:23, 21:11), so maybe he wondered if he would ever make it to Rome (v 10). Therefore, this letter is very different to all the other letters Paul wrote to the other churches. Those were written to address various issues. The letter to the Romans is rather a full explanation of the gospel. Maybe Paul was thinking along the lines of, if I can't explain the gospel to them personally, then I'll do it by letter. Whatever Paul's reason for writing to the Roman church, I'm just glad that it was written.

**v 1 A bondservant of Jesus Christ:** A bondservant (Greek: *doulos*) is "a servant for love for life". This is Paul saying that his motive for following, serving, sacrificing, and suffering for Christ is love. He is Christ's servant because he wants to be, not because he has to be. Right from the start we start to see what a grace filled life looks like. The origin of the idea of a bondservant is found in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 15:16-17a NKJV

And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, <sup>17</sup> then you shall take an awl and thrust it through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever.

**v 1 Called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God:** An apostle is like a missionary, ambassador, one who is sent out, or messenger, and Paul's message is the gospel of God. The twelve apostles (Paul being the 12th) also had authority in the church like someone who held the office of prophet in the Old Testament. Others were called apostles but didn't exercise the authority that the original apostles did, rather, they were like modern missionaries today, reaching unreached people groups.

It's worth looking more closely at this question of "Are there modern apostles?", as the NAR (new apostolic reformation) movement is deceiving many people. These NAR churches are led by people who claim to be apostles and claim to have similar levels of authority to the original twelve apostles. See the article called "What is an apostle?" on the gotquestions.org website for a good discussion of this topic.

**v 1 Separated:** Separate means to exclude, appoint, set boundaries around, and set apart. Basically, believers are separated to serve God, which means that believers are also separated from the world. Like the Holy Spirit **separated** Paul and Barnabas from their previous work and separated them to the specific task of taking the gospel to Asia in Acts 13:2, so God has separated Paul in a more general sense to be a messenger of the gospel of God. This idea is mentioned in two other passages.

Acts 9:15 NKJV

But the Lord said to [Ananias], “Go, for [Paul] is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

Galatians 1:15 NKJV

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles

Application:

Did you realise that we are all ambassadors for Christ. Every believer is separated to the gospel of God, which means that we are also necessarily separated from the world. If we aren’t living the gospel, if we are not loving others the way Christ loves commands us to, then we must ask ourselves, “If I’m not separated to the gospel, then what am I separated to? What is my purpose in life if not to tell others about the good news about God’s plan of salvation?”

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NLT

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

<sup>18</sup> And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. <sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Our occupation or career is completely irrelevant in the light of eternity; it’s just a way to make a living. What matters is our hearts desire to be a witness for Christ (remembering that the true follower of Christ will be known by their love) and lead as many to Christ as God gives us the opportunity. My identity is not what I do as a profession, but who I am in Christ—I am a new creation, the old life is gone and the new life has begun. The old life was living for myself. The new life is living for Christ.

## The Gospel

**v 1 Gospel of God:** **God** is the focus of the Gospel. The gospel originated from God and is God's idea, not man's. The gospel is all about God; who He is and what He has done for us. **Gospel** means good news. In the book of Romans we are going to learn the good news about God—all that He is and all that He has done on our behalf. Be careful about sliding into a man centred or man focused gospel. Any works based gospel or prosperity gospel is a false gospel and is not the gospel of God.

**v 2 Which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures:** Here we see that the gospel is not a new invention, but rather God's plan of salvation that has been progressively revealed over the millennia starting at creation. The **Holy Scriptures** referred to here mean the Old Testament. Every believer should know their Bibles well enough to be able to share the gospel with someone using only the Old Testament. This is what Jesus did as he talked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:13-32).

**v 3 Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord:** The focus of the gospel is the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Without Jesus, there would be no gospel or good news. Christianity is not about being good, it's not about a system of belief, and it's not about religion. Rather it's about a relationship with God that is only possible because of Jesus and His substitutionary atonement.

1 John 2:2 AMP

And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world.

John 3:14-17 NKJV

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

The incarnation—God became a man and dwelt among us

**v 3 Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh:** Jesus, as prophesied, was humanly speaking a physical descendant of king David, of the tribe of Judah. Jesus was fully human, having taken on the body, soul and spirit of a human being. Jesus had a human nature just like ours.

**v 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:** The resurrection proves that Jesus was not just a man—He is also God—He has two natures, human and divine. If Jesus were only a man, He could not have raised Himself from the dead. *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."<sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of **the temple of His body**. (John 2:19 NKJV)*

Redemption required the death of a perfect human being. Because it was a man who sinned, it must be a perfect man who would be the payment for that sin.

Romans 5:15 NLT

But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one **man**, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other **man**, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2:14 NLT

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.

Remember that Jesus is fully man and fully God. On the cross, Jesus as a man or in His humanity died, but as the everlasting God, Jesus is eternal and therefore cannot die.

Micah 5:2 NKJV

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, *from everlasting [literally, from the days of eternity].*”

This is a wonderful truth, that God became a man, literally adding a human nature to His preexisting divine nature. God came to earth, taking on the form and nature of a human being, yet still fully retaining His deity—Jesus is *God with us—Emanuel*.

Matthew 1:20-23 NKJV

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> “*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel [Isaiah 7:14],*” which is translated, “**God with us.**”

Philippians 2:5-8 NLT

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. <sup>6</sup> Though he was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. <sup>7</sup> Instead, He gave up His divine privileges [not nature]; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, <sup>8</sup> He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

The effect of the gospel

**v 5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name:** The gospel is the good news that changes lives. It's not just a theory, not just an intellectual pursuit; it's the power of God to both save us from the penalty of sin (Romans 1:16) and transform us into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Romans 1:16a NKJV

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

2 Corinthians 3:18b NLT

And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

**v 5 Grace.** Grace is God’s undeserved, unearned, unmerited, and freely given favour towards us. Grace is receiving good things from God that we don’t deserve. Mercy is not receiving the punishment for our sins that we do deserve.

**v 5 Through Him:** It is only through Jesus (because of what He has done for us) that we have access to God’s grace or favour towards us. *“Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”* (Romans 5:2 NKJV). We must remember that without Christ we have nothing and are nothing. Jesus is our only source of power, love, hope, joy and peace.

Romans 5:13 NLT

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**v 5 Received:** Grace is always a gift must be received. A gift, by definition, is something that must be willingly accepted. The Greek word translated as “received” has the same meaning as the english word “receive”. It means: to take hold of, acquire, receive, accept, take, and take possession of. There is the initial receiving of grace for salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the *gift* of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Then there is the continued receiving of grace for **obedience to the faith**. Paul in his letter to the Galatians tells them that it is utter foolishness for the Christian to try to live the Christian life by their own strength.

Galatians 3:3 NLT

How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the [power of the Spirit], why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

**v 5 Received... apostleship:** This was Paul’s calling, his role in the church. The ability to do what God has called each of us individually to do is a gift from God.

Ephesians 4:7-8, 11 NKJV

But to each one of us grace was *given* according to the measure of Christ’s gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” ...

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself *gave* some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.



It's our responsibility to continue to depend on God's grace so we can fulfil our ministry, whatever it is that God planned in advance for us to do.

2 Timothy 4:5 NKJV

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Ephesians 2:10 NKJV

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**v 5 Among all nations for His name:** This is the extent of the gospel—the whole world needs to hear it.

Acts 1:8 NKJV

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**v 6 Among whom [the nations] you also are the called [invited] of Jesus Christ:** The gospel has already gone as far as Rome, thus they have been called or invited to receive the gospel.

Romans 5:6 AMP

And this includes you, called of Jesus Christ and invited [as you are] to belong to Him.

Romans 5:6 NLT

And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called [invited] to belong to Jesus Christ.

**v 7 To all who are in Rome:** The church in Rome were the recipients of Paul's letter. This church appears to have started spontaneously as there is no record of any apostle every going there to establish a church. Believers, some of whom Paul already knew (see Romans 16), had previously moved to Rome and started a church there.

**v 7 Beloved of God:** This is the status of every Christian—loved and accepted. We share the same level of acceptance as Jesus, because the Father sees us as being in Jesus.

Matthew 3:17 NKJV

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Ephesians 1:4-6 NLT

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup> So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who *belong* to his dear Son.

For believers, there is no sin still recorded on our account that needs to be paid for: Jesus paid it all. Thus why the Father sees each and every believer as being perfect, and why He is able to accept us into His presence.

Romans 8:1 NKJV

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 NLT

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

**v 7 Called *to be* saints:** This is another facet of our identity in Christ. The Greek word translated “**saint**” means: holy, set apart, dedicated, and pure. In God’s eyes we are saints. The original doesn’t contain the words in italics “*to be*”. Thus it should read, “**called saints**”. God already sees every believer as being a saint.

“You notice that the words ‘to be’ are put in by the translators; but though they are supplied, they are not really necessary to the sense. These believers in Rome were ‘called saints.’ They were not called because they were saints; but they became saints through that calling.” (Spurgeon)

### **3. Conclusion and Application**

Remember, we will act and live as we perceive ourselves to be. We have a generation of people who have been taught that they are no different to animals, so they act like animals, defiling their bodies with gross immorality and forfeiting their future.

For the believer, we can either see ourselves as a sinner (as we were) or a saint (as we are now in Christ). We can live according to our old identity, or our new identity.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Dogs eat chicken poo because they think it tastes great. Humans don’t because they think it tastes foul. Imagine that I start to believe that I’m a dog, and I start to develop an appetite for eating chicken poo—it would be totally out of character for me as a human to have a palate that loves to eat other animals dung. So it is when we sin. Sin is like chicken poo. The old nature loves it but the new nature hates it. When I see myself as being “in Christ” (I belong to Christ and am like Him), then I will live like I’m “in Christ”. Sinning is out of character for the believer—the believer should have not appetite for sin—saints are holy and perfect in Christ.

**v 7 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:** Grace comes first because there is no peace with God apart from what Christ has done for us. Praise God the Father and Jesus the Son for the **grace** and **peace** gifted to us.