

# Class 1

Romans 1:1–17

Paul, Rome, and Project Explanation

## Romans 1:1–17 (60 minutes)

### Raw Text (NRSV)

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

Rom 1:7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

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

Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 —hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

## Paul's Life

### 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle...

- Servant, called to be an apostle
  - Acts 9:4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
  - Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."
- It is commonly agreed that Paul wrote Romans in the mid to late 50s AD from Corinth, or somewhere nearby, as he was planning his final trip to Jerusalem to conclude his third missionary journey. His plan was to go on to Rome and thereafter Spain.
- Paul's Journey #3: Acts 18–21 (AD 52–55)
  - Mark Moore: Acts 18:23–21:17. Estimated: 2700 miles, approximately 4 years in duration. Planted no new churches as the record goes.
  - AD 55: 1 Corinthians: AD 55
  - AD 55–59: Romans: N. T. Wright, Romans commentary in The New Interpreter's Bible commentary series, p. 396)
- Paul's Final Years (AD 61–64)
  - AD 62 - *Acts written* -
  - AD 63–64: 1 Timothy: after his release from two years in AD 62 (see Acts 28)
  - AD 63–64: Titus: after 1 Timothy was written
  - AD 63–64: 2 Timothy: after Titus was written while he was awaiting his trial in Rome (2 Tim. 4:6, 9–18).
  - AD 64–64: "He then returned to Rome, where he was martyred in the summer of 64 A.D., in connection with the persecution instituted by Nero (2 Tim. 4:6)."
  - Nero died in AD 68
- *Oikumene*: Inhabited world

## Gospel

**1 ... set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,**

- What is the gospel?
  - *Euangelion* means “good news,” but not just any good news.
  - *Euangelion* “is a regular technical term, referring to the announcement of a great victory, or to the birth, or accession, of an emperor. (The first and third of these could of course easily be combined, if someone became emperor by means of a great military victory)\* (Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 43).
  - In 31 BC, following a period of civil war, the first Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, took the throne. An inscription from 9 BC describes it: “The providence which has ordered the whole of our life, showing concern and zeal, has ordained the most perfect consummation for human life by giving to it Augustus, by filling him with virtue for doing the work of a benefactor among men, and by sending in him, as it were, a savior for us and those who come after us, to make war to cease, to create order everywhere.; the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings [*euangelion*] that have come to men through him...!”[1][1] Found in Priene on the Asia Minor coast: *Priene Inscriptions*, edited by F. Filler von Gartringen, 105, 40.
  - In Jesus’ case: It’s all three meanings in a sense.
- John Piper, *God Is the Gospel*
- In essence the gospel is that Jesus is Christ, the King.
  - What we have to get right is that it’s a particular form of gospel that applies to the whole world, but it’s the climactic moment of a particular story.
  - Matthew Bates in *Gospel Allegiance* articulates a 10-fold articulation of the gospel.
- What it is in detail: Here’s a list from Matthew Bates’s *Gospel Allegiance* (test it with Acts 2, for example). Jesus the Messiah (see Romans 1 verse references in parentheses):
  1. Preexisted as God the Son, (v. 3)
  2. was sent by the Father, (v. 4)
  3. took on human flesh in fulfillment of God’s promises to David, (vv. 2–3)
  4. died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, (implicit in v. 4)
  5. was buried, (implicit in v. 4)
  6. was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (v. 4)
  7. appeared to many witnesses, (v. 4)
  8. is enthroned at the right hand of God as the ruling Christ, (v. 5)

- 9. has sent the Holy Spirit to his people to effect his rule, and (v. 5–6)
- 10. will come again as final judge to rule. (not here)
- You don't need to say everything all the time, but we ought to say a lot of it a lot of the time in our culture.

## Rome

**Rom 1:7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- Beloved
- Called to be holy
- "Grace" was for the Greeks (*yasas dikanes* today) and "peace" was for the Jews (*shalom*).
- "Lord" was an affront to Casar

## Genre

**Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.**

- This is a prayer.
- Praying at the beginning of a speech was common, even among pagans, in the ancient Greco-Roman world.
- Letters were meant to be read out loud.
- So is Romans more of a speech? Or is it a letter? I argue that it's both.
- Rhetoric:
  - Paul would have been trained in rhetoric where he grew up in Tarsus. We know this because he displays features in his writings that correlate to speech handbooks of the ancient world.
  - The three key elements of an ancient speech: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos.
  - ~There are five handbooks dated late (1st century or later). Now, in the *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, there's an article about this topic, cautioning against it, and here's my summary of it: Letter writing and rhetoric, therefore, should not be too quickly linked. Not only do the rhetorical handbooks contain few references to letters, but also the epistolary handbooks similarly fail to relate letter writing to the five traditional aspects of rhetorical practice (invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery) or to the three traditional species of rhetoric (judicial, deliberative and epideictic). This fact serves as an important caution against the all-too-popular practice of using Greco-Roman rhetoric as a hermeneutical key to interpret NT letters, especially the letters of Paul.[1] [1] Various, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press) 2000.
  - ~Epistolary critics are bias against rhetoric in his letters because it implies persuasion, but it's not at all grounded. Additionally, there is some evidence

that there is evidence towards rhetorical epistolary theory. For example, Demetrius uses apologetic and accusing as categories that go towards rhetorical elements of Paul's letters. Additionally, when you compare Paul's letters to regular letters, his are much different and much more like a speech.

- Epistle: Greeting

## Topic: Epistolary Criticism

- I. Introductory Salutation:
  - A. Sender
  - B. To Addressee
  - C. Greetings (*Chairein* in Greek; *Shalom* in Hebrew)
  - D. A Wish for Good Health, often with a prayer to a certain deity on behalf of the addressee
- II. Body of Letter:
  - A. Often begins with standard formulae
  - B. Comments are often brief and impersonal in tone
- III. Closing:
  - A. Final Greetings (includes people other than addressee)
  - B. Good wishes, especially for people other than addressee
  - C. Concluding greeting or prayer
  - D. Sometimes a date
- IV. Address on the reverse side of the letter (letter was usually folded)

## Back to the Prayer

**Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 —hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.**

- v. 8 Faith is from God. We thank him for this in ourselves and in others.
- v. 10 Asking God for in-person trips. Technology vs. in-person. A theology of incarnation.
- v. 12 Mutual encouragement of faith: Put our faith in the same room, and watch the power of God happen to build each other up.
- v. 13 The fruit of our labor is people, not numbers.

**Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”**

- Shame: not knowing what to do. Hiding ourselves.
- Gospel is God’s power for salvation.
- “Righteousness of God”: Can mean “righteousness” or “justice.” This has to do with God’s particular right-ness to his promises to the Jews through his faithfulness to fulfill covenant promises to Abraham and David. Let’s unpack this more next week.
- “Faith” (*pistis*): Can mean faith or faithfulness. Often, it’s a combination of the two: allegiance.
  - Jesus’ faithfulness
  - Our faithfulness
  - Double entendre for “will live by faith” from Habakkuk 2:4
- Habakkuk 2:4 (NIV): “See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous will live by his faith—5 indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest.”
  - Richard Hayes, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*: One verse rings the whole immediate context.
  - Habakkuk is writing a prophecy, asking God when he will set things right for the people of God facing the Babylonians. The Babylonians were terrible people: idol-worshippers and persecutors of the Jews. Habakkuk 1:17–2:3 helps.
  - Originally “faith” in Hebrew is “his faith/fulness”. Whose faith? God’s or the peoples? Paul’s answer: it’s both, but it comes from God’s setting things right for his people, who then emulate what he modeled through Jesus.

## Key Themes

- Obedience
- Faith
- Justification
- Gospel
- Jesus himself
- Sin and righteousness
- Jew and Gentile dynamics
- Works and faith
- Obedience of faith
- Life
- Unity
- Grace
- Love

## Main Theme of Romans

What do you think it is?

## What type of rhetoric is Romans?

- Three types: judicial, deliberative and epideictic
  - Judicial (aka Forensic): Factual conclusion about the past action (accusing or defending)
  - Epideictic: Ceremonial discourse for action in the present (praise or blame)
  - Deliberative: Imperative directives for the future action (support or opposition)
- I categorize Romans as deliberative, which means the main point is primarily about action, not facts. It can look to past events to make future recommendations. This type of rhetoric is common for politicians because they're trying to convince people of what's the best route of action for the polis.

## Main Point

What do you think it is?

Make a tentative conclusion now, rework it throughout the class and project—as the most important part of your work—and then come back to it at the end to make a conclusion.

## Housekeeping (20 minutes)

### Project plan

- Follow the “How to Read the Bible” guide

### Syllabus and Planning

- Syllabus: Memory passages, class schedule, and assignments
- Work each week: 3–4 hours
  - Plan to read 50 pages a week (2 hours of reading).
  - Plan to spend 1-2 hours on your project.
  - Email Chad by Thursday at 8:00 pm your assignment typed in Word or Pages to your file folder on Google Drive.

## Q&A (15 minutes)

### Topic Rhetorical Criticism

- I. Prooimium

- Purposes: to establish good will of the audience and to orient the readers to the basic issue to be addressed.
- Other names: proem, exordium
- II. Narratio (optional)
  - Purpose: give facts of the case
- III. Propositio/Prothesis (one thesis)
  - Partitio (multiple theses)
- IV. Probatio (main argument):
  - Addresses the theses in the same order as presented in partitio.
- V. Refutatio (optional)
  - VI. Self-Adulation (optional)
  - VII. Peroratio
    - Purposes: to make a final emotional appeal and to summarize the main speech points.
    - Other name: epilogue