

# Romans 1

## Romans 1:1-7

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Interaction

1. Paul uses an interesting parallelism in this section as follows:

Rom 1:1	a servant/slave of Jesus Christ	called “to be” an apostle
Rom 1:7	to the ones loved by God	called “to be” saints (Holy Ones)

This usage essentially encapsulates this pericope of Romans.

2. Paul describes himself as a “slave of Jesus Christ,” likely a result of his call detailed in Acts 9:1-30.
3. Summary of the Gospel

v2	Promised	promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures
v3	Son of God	concerning his Son [Jesus Christ]
	King of Israel	who was descended from David according to the flesh
v4	Messiah	declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness
	Resurrected	[accomplished] by his resurrection from the dead
	Glorified	Jesus Christ [declared to be] our Lord
v5	Savior	through whom we have received grace [salvation]
	Witness	and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith
	Calling	for the sake of his name among all the nations

4. The notion of the gospel having been promised beforehand serves as a potential thesis to the Epistle of Romans, particularly since Paul quotes the Hebrew Bible heavily throughout this Epistle.

<b>MESSIANIC PROPHECY</b>	<b>PROMISE</b>	<b>FUFILLMENT</b>
Come 69 x 7=483 years after the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem	Daniel 9:24-26	Matthew 2:1, 16, 19; Luke 3:1, 23
Be born of a Virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-2:1; Luke 1:26-35
Be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:1(2)	Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7
Be adored by great persons	Psalms 72:10-11	Matthew 2:1-11
Be the Son of God	Psalms 2:7; Proverbs 30:4	Matthew 3:17; Luke 1:32
Be the seed of Abraham	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:16
Be the seed of Isaac	Genesis 17:19; 21:12	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34
Be the seed of Jacob and the star out of Jacob who will have dominion	Genesis 28:14; Numbers 24:17, 19	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34; Rev 22:16
Be a descendant of Judah	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:2-3; Luke 3:33
Be a descendant of David and heir to his throne	2 Samuel 7:12-13; Isaiah 9:6(7); 11:1-5; Jeremiah 23:5	Matthew 1:1,6; Acts 11:23
Be anointed with the Spirit of God	Isaiah 11:2; 61:1; Psalm 45:8(7)	Matthew 3:16; John 3:34
Be sinless and without guile	Isaiah 53:9	1 Peter 2:22
Enter Jerusalem on a donkey	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11
Enter the Temple with authority	Haggai 2:7-9; Malachi 3:1	Matthew 21:12-24:1; Luke 2:27-38; 45-50; John 2:13-22
Be hated without cause	Isaiah 49:7; Psalm 69:5(4)	John 15:24-25
Be undesired and rejected by his own people	Isaiah 53:2; 63:3; Psalm 69:9(8)	Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58; John 1:11; 7:3-5
Be rejected by the Jewish leadership	Psalm 118:22	Matthew 21:42; John 7:48
Be plotted against by Jews and Gentiles together	Psalm 2:1-2	Acts 4:27
Be betrayed by a friend	Psalm 41:10(9); 55:13-15	Matthew 26:21-25; 47-50; John 13:18-21; Acts 1:16-18
Be sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
Have his price given for a potter's field	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:7
Be forsaken by his disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31, 56
Be struck on the cheek	Micah 4:14(5:1)	Matthew 27:30
Be spat on	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:30
Be mocked	Psalm 22:8-9(7-8)	Matthew 26:67-68; 27:31; 39-44
Be beaten	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:26, 30
Be executed by crucifixion	Psalm 22:17(16); Zechariah 12:10	Matthew 27:35; Luke 24:39; John 19:18, 34-37; 20:20-28; Revelation 1:7
Be thirsty during his execution	Psalm 22:16(15)	John 19:28
Be given vinegar to quench his thirst	Psalm 69:22(21)	Matthew 27:34
Be executed without having a bone broken	Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:21(20)	John 19:33-36
Be buried with the rich when dead	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
Be raised from the dead	Isaiah 53:9-10; Psalm 2:7; 16:10	Matthew 28:1-20; Acts 2:23-36; 13:33-37; 1 Corinthians 11:4-6
Ascend to the right hand of God	Psalm 16:11; 68:19(18); 110:1	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; 7:55; Hebrews 1:3
Bear the reproaches due others	Isaiah 53:12; Psalm 69:10	Romans 15:3
Be the one whose death would atone for sins of mankind	Isaiah 53:5-7, 12	Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 3:16; Acts 8:30-35

## **Romans 1:8-15**

<sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. <sup>9</sup> For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you <sup>10</sup> always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. <sup>11</sup> For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— <sup>12</sup> that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup> I want you to know, brothers, 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 well as among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup> So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

### **Interaction**

5. The idea of obligation to Greeks and barbarians, or as some translators say, non-Greeks, creates a sense of debt to all Humanity, especially coupled with “the wise and to the foolish.”
  - a. Ethic Greeks and non-Greeks
  - b. Greek speaking and non-Greek speaking
  - c. Educated and non-educated (sophisticated and unsophisticated)

## **Romans 1:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

### **Interaction**

6. Romans 1:16-17 has long been the cornerstone of all Reformed (and Protestant) thought regarding the promise of salvation through faith. In short, Martin Luther and other reformers based much of their theology of Justification on the idea that human beings receive salvation and become justified in God's sight when they put their faith in Jesus Christ [“Justification by Faith Alone”].
7. The “New Perspective on Paul” [“NPP”] has developed a challenge to the Reformed View of Justification, based on the complexity of the Greek language used to describe “from faith for faith” and the questionable quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 – “the righteous shall live by faith.” NPP advocates translate v17 as something like “the righteousness of God's faithfulness is revealed for faith,” as it is written, ‘the Righteous One shall live by [my] faithfulness.’” The NPP does not directly disagree with the Reformed view of justification by faith, but interprets salvation in v16-17 to have been achieved as a result of God's faithfulness, not man's faith. In other words, it is God's faithfulness which justifies, not man's faith. Although the difference seems subtle, the implications to systematic theology are profound.

## **Romans 1:18-32**

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

## **Interaction**

8. Paul begins to prove out his thesis by briefly describing all human history, which he deftly describes as a downward spiral of moral decay, beginning in dishonoring God and ending in a debased mind, where human beings actually think that evil is right.
9. Homosexuality is given prominence in v26-27. Although Paul condemns homosexuality on several occasions, here he describes its root cause: idolatry [v18-25].

How is this tied to idolatry? Since human beings have turned to idolatry, they are no longer able to recognize either God [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] or His Image, which is manifested in Human-beings, Marriage, and the Holy Community. Consequently, those given over to sin can no longer understand Marriage as God designed it: a Trinitarian Image of the Triune God reflected as a Trinitarian intra-relationship of man, woman, and the Holy Spirit. Likewise, they can no longer recognize the Holy Community: Christ, the believer, and the Holy Spirit. Instead, they turn to adulterous unions with the Unholy Spirit [the Spirit of Anti-Christ], which is exhibited within adulterous relations [including homosexuality] and false faith systems.

## Romans 2

### Romans 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. <sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things. <sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

### Interaction

10. Paul is directly referencing two of Jesus’ sayings. The first recalls the Parable of the Log, found in Matthew 7:1-5, which deals with the idea of judging others:

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> “Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

There is an interesting tension between judging others and helping relief others of their sin. How is this tension overcome?

Paul’s second Jesus reference describes God’s patience in action, which is demonstrated in the Parable of the Weeds:

Matthew 13:24-30 (ESV) <sup>24</sup> He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, <sup>25</sup> but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. <sup>27</sup> And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ <sup>28</sup> He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ <sup>29</sup> But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Based on this parable, some would argue for pre-destination, but others would argue for the “freedom of choice.” How might we resolve this tension with the Parable of the Sower?

## **Romans 2:5-11**

<sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For God shows no partiality.

### **Interaction**

11. What does it mean to store up wrath in the day of wrath (or to store up judgment for Judgment Day)?
12. Does God punish people for sins they do not commit? What do you think? Consider the following:

Revelation 22:12 (ESV) "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.

Matthew 16:27 (ESV) For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Nahum 1:2-3 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. <sup>3</sup> The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

13. What if someone hasn't "committed" any sin?
14. The idea of God rendering each one according to his works seems to counter the idea of Justification by faith alone, but rather God chooses people gives eternal life to those who "by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality." Is there tension here between faith and works? If so, how?
15. Do you think that God plays favorites? Does He favor one person over another?

## **Romans 2:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

## Interaction

16. Which “law” is Paul talking about?
17. How can God judge those who are not subject to the OT Law?

### **Romans 2:14-16**

*<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*

## Interaction

18. Some people mistakenly believe that only Israel was saved before the coming of Christ. We see numerous examples of Gentiles who respond to Israel’s ministry as a light to Nations, such as Naman the Syrian, Moses’ Father-in-Law, Lot, etc. What is the implication of this for those who have not heard the Gospel? Is it necessary for us to share the Gospel if people can be saved without hearing it?

### **Romans 2:17-24**

*<sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— <sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

## Interaction

19. Leah names her son “Judah” because she has decided to praise the Lord. Literally, to call oneself a Jew means to be one who praises God. How does this definition help shed light onto Paul’s argument?
20. Paul laments those who call themselves Jews yet sing their own praises. Why does he do this? What is the hypocrisy? Is this also applicable for Christians as well?
21. This hypocrisy devolves into outright injustice. Why?

22. Paul's final statement here is "*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.*" This harkens back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment? Why is this so troubling?

### **Romans 2:25-27**

*<sup>25</sup> For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.*

### **Interaction**

23. What is the difference between circumcision and baptism, if any? What are the similarities?

24. Paul brings up the concept of those circumcised and those circumcised in heart. What is the difference? Going back to the parable of the weeds, what is operative here?

### **Romans 2:28-29**

*<sup>28</sup> For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.*

### **Interaction**

25. What is the implication of this argument in terms of how we view the Church? Reformed theology admits to a distinction between the "visible" and the "invisible" church. What is the difference between the two? How can you tell the difference?

### **Romans 3:1-4**

*<sup>1</sup> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup> What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? <sup>4</sup> By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."*

### **Interaction**

26. In what context should we understand v1-4? What does Paul mean that some were unfaithful? What does Paul mean that God is faithful?

## **Romans 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) <sup>6</sup> By no means! For then how could God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And why not do evil that good may come?- as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

## **Interaction**

27. What issue is Paul addressing and to whom is he addressing this issue?

## **Romans 3:9-18**

<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, <sup>10</sup> as it is written:

*"None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." [Psalm 14:1-3]*

<sup>13</sup> *"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." [Psalm 5:9]*

*"The venom of asps is under their lips." [Psalm 140:3]*

<sup>14</sup> *"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." [Psalm 10:7]*

<sup>15</sup> *"Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> in their paths are ruin and misery, <sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they have not known." [Isaiah 59:7-8]*

<sup>18</sup> *"There is no fear of God before their eyes." [Psalm 36:1]*

## **Interaction**

28. Paul quotes Psalms 5, 10, 14, 36, and 140, as well as from Isaiah and Proverbs as his proof that there is no one righteous. It is useful to look at each of these quotes in their context. Let's examine Psalm 14 in its entirety:

Psalms 14 [ESV] <sup>1</sup> The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. <sup>2</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. <sup>4</sup> Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? <sup>5</sup> There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous. <sup>6</sup> You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge. <sup>7</sup> Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

Paul doesn't quote the entire Psalm, but his quote references it. How does it parallel to the argument that Paul has been developing thus far?

29. Quotes from Psalms 5, 14, 36, and 140 are actually quotes from Psalms that King David wrote. Other than quoting Scripture to help prove his point, could there be other reasons that Paul has chosen to quote David?

### **Romans 3:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

### **Interaction**

30. How does law reveal sin?

31. It seems as though Paul is talking about the Law given through Moses at Sinai. However, does the principle that law gives knowledge to sin also apply in laws given before Sinai? For example, what about law given to Adam and Eve, or even Noah? What are the implications of this concept to the Adam and Eve narrative (if any)?

### **Romans 3:21-26**

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

### **Interaction**

32. How does God justify?

33. How are we redeemed?

34. God's righteousness is revealed by His Justice and His Justification. What does this mean and why is it so important?

### **Romans 3:27-31**

*<sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. <sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup> since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup> Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*

### **Interaction**

35. It appears that the Gospel is for both Jew and Gentile? Before the Gospel, were Gentiles excluded from God's grace? Or, not?