

The Book of Romans
Introduction, Pt. 2
Rom 1:1-7

Rom 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. KJV

Introduction:

Last week we gave some background to this letter to the Roman church and began a discussion of the first two verses but it became necessary to cut the message short because of time. Today I want to re-visit those verses and see if we can fully develop them before we move on.

By way of introduction I want you to look at something that may help you someday in a theological discussion and which will help us today as we look at this text.

V.1 - Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,...

Rom 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, NASU

Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God- (from New International Version)

Greek: “Paul bondslave of Christ Jesus called commissioned separated concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ. ‘Called,’ ‘Commissioned (apostle),’ and ‘Separated’ have no connecting words as Paul originally wrote them. Each of them is a noun (formed from a verb) standing alone and describing him so we would do well to consider them each independently and not as incidentals.

Then, we have **the final prepositional phrase, “unto (or “for”) the gospel of God.”** There is something very interesting here because the preposition translated ‘unto’ or ‘for’ is one that is grossly misused by many religionists. It is obvious here that whatever this preposition means, it is showing relationship between those nouns and the gospel but not cause. In other words, Paul was not called, commissioned, and separated in order to obtain the gospel but in relation to it, connected with it.

Why am I making this point? Look at Acts 2:38.

- 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. KJV

There are religionists of several different stripes who will tell you that this *must mean* that Peter was saying that baptism is in order to obtain the remission of sins. This is by no means true. Several other passages in the New Testament prove that this was not the teaching of the early church. But understand this, their entire theology hangs on this word 'εἰς' translated as 'for' and being understood as 'in order to obtain' but that is simply not the common usage of it. Our text shows it being used to demonstrate a close relationship between ideas but not as one thing as being the cause of the other. File that away and keep it for some time you may really need it. :-)

Back to our text.

Called - Paul was indeed certainly called to be an apostle for he quotes the Lord Jesus as saying almost exactly that.

Acts 26:13-18

- 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.
14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.
16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;
17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,
18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. KJV

But in order for Paul to accomplish this task to which he was called, he needed to be called in another way as well.

Rom 8:28-30

- 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. KJV

It was necessary for him to be called to salvation, to a real relationship with Jesus Christ, to

sincere and profound repentance and to absolute trust in Him and in what He has done to save his people.

This is necessary for every person who ever comes into a saving relationship with the Living God, he must be called, personally and specifically, just as Paul was. “No one can come to Me,” Jesus said, “except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

It seems clear that his construction of the sentence intended that he be understood to be saying “called....unto (with relation to, in connection with) the gospel.”

Apostle - a commissioned one

An ‘apostle’ when used in this sense in the NT means something very specific. Understand that in his day just like in ours there were people claiming to be apostles and to have apostolic authority who were frauds.

2 Cor 11:12-13

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. KJV

And, it was necessary for the church to evaluate men as to whether they actually held that calling and that position in the church. Most did not.

Rev 2:1,2

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: KJV

There were people claiming to be apostles who were not, just as we see all of the time, who were called ‘liars’ by Jesus Christ himself.

The office of ‘apostle’ was a very profound and important one and I am indebted to Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones for helping me to think this true thoroughly.

There were certain things that were necessary to be true before one could call himself an apostle.

1. He must have seen the risen Lord so as to be an eyewitness of His Resurrection.
2. He must have been specially called and commissioned and empowered by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in possession of all of the spiritual gifts of the NT era.

Paul claimed all of that for himself, even though he was not actually present to see the Lord during the 40 days between Resurrection and Ascension.

He did, however, see Him with his own eyes at some point.

1 Cor 9:1

1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? KJV

1 Cor 15:4-8

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. KJV

Some suggest that he did indeed see Him during the event on the road to Damascus. He may also have seen Him during his time in the Arabian wilderness.

We have already looked at the passage in Acts 26 where Paul was called both to salvation and to be a special emissary of Jesus. There is no doubt but that this was a commission and one of the most unusual and extraordinary ones we see in scripture.

It is also obvious that he was commissioned “with relation to the gospel of God.”

Paul further made the claim that it was Jesus Himself who had taught him the gospel, not any man at all.

Gal 1:11-12

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. KJV

Somehow in his time of preparation between his conversion and the beginning of his ministry at Damascus he was personally taught the message he was to preach by the Lord through special revelation.

He furthered the claim in following words in the same passage.

Gal 1:15-17

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. KJV

If Paul had been taught by men, he could not have been an apostle. This was all a part of his claim to apostleship and the reason that no one sense him can properly be called an ‘apostle.’

Please remember the words that we read when we celebrate Communion together.

1 Cor 11:23-25

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. KJV

Even though he might have acquired this information from the other apostles or some of the saints who had been with Christ from the beginning he did not. This came to him through direct revelation.

In the passage we quoted from 1 Cor 15 a few verses back from what we looked at, he said this.

1 Cor 15:3

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; KJV

Paul demonstrated that he was in possession of all of the spiritual gifts necessary for one to be considered an apostle.

2 Cor 12:12

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. KJV

And, it is clear that Paul considered himself not only called as an apostle but specifically as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Rom 11:13

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: KJV

But even though the other 11 had actually been physically with Jesus and his encounters had been after-the-fact he did not consider himself one whit less than the others.

2 Cor 11:5

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. KJV

It was a hindrance to him because some people hesitated to accept him on that level because he was not of the original 12 and he had not been formally chosen by the original church at

Jerusalem.

Now, what does all of this matter to you and me? 3 things really.

3. All of those who claim to be apostles or to have direct apostolic authority are in error.

There is a religious organization, and I think you know which one I mean, which has as its head a man who claims to be a direct heir of both the authority and the apostleship of Peter from the First Century.

I submit to you that we have not one ounce of evidence that any of the apostles was able to pass his office on to someone else. In fact, if any man might be said to be qualified to be considered as such, look at Timothy. He was a man of superlative character, devotion, holiness and faithfulness.

Phil 2:19-21

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. KJV

He was a man among men in Paul's estimation and Paul had laid hands on him to ordain him to service, but it did not result in Timothy received the office of apostle.

1 Tim 4:14

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. KJV

I am certain that a lesser man would not have been ordained apostle either. Besides, the office required that a man be called personally by the Lord Jesus and have actually seen Him so as to bear witness to the Resurrection with his own eyes.

There is another religious organization calling itself a 'church' which has 12 men that head it up who claim the office of apostle. We reject their claim even more profoundly than that of the man in Rome. These guys have not even the hint of a connection with the early church and the original apostles. You and everyone else can safely reject their authority in spiritual things.

Finally, we have men who simply arrogate to themselves the title of 'apostle.' On the basis of the principles established by the original apostles as the qualifications for the office we reject their claims out of hand. They are simply frauds of the same order as those false teachers at Corinth and the ones that were rejected by the elder at Ephesus.

THERE ARE NO APOSTLES ALIVE! No one has the gifts of an apostle. No one is healing blindness or deafness; no one is restoring the use of limbs to the crippled and absolutely no one is raising the dead. The 'tongues' they claim to speak have been examined by linguists and

proven not to be languages at all but mere human babbling.

4. **You can absolutely count on the revelation received through the original apostles as the Word of God.**

It is as certain as anything spoken from heaven or said by Jesus while He was on earth.

God is not giving new information through anyone and certainly not through those who claim a position in the Church of Jesus Christ that does not belong to them.

When the Bible says “call no man on earth ‘Father’” that is exactly what it means. (Matt 23:9) No one has the right nor the authority to change the rules that have been laid down by heaven.

And, when as apostle says,

1 Tim 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. KJV

Those are not the prejudices of a man that can be safely ignored. They are to be treated as if they are the very words of God, for so they are.

And, when he says,

Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. KJV

You can carry it to the bank that it is the will of God to withdraw from such people and refuse to count them as ministers of the gospel of Christ.

The words of an apostle carry all of the weight of heaven. They will be among the books that are opened on the Day of Judgment in Heaven out of which all of humanity will be judged.

Then, the third noun Paul used to describe himself, *Separated....* and there is no doubt but that the ending phrase applies here, “*...unto the gospel of God.*”

Dr. Jones made an interesting observation here that it is quite possible that Paul was not merely using a proper word here to describe himself but was also somewhat making a word play.

You may or may not know that the word ‘Pharisee’ comes from the Hebrew from a root word which means.... “to separate” or “the separated ones.”

Whereas before in his ignorance and arrogance he had considered himself separated for the service of God, now it was really true. He had a task and a responsibility that made him alone among men regardless of who they were. If he was among unbelievers, he was separate from them as a believer in Jesus Christ. If he was among believers, even those closest to him, he was separate from them, their minister and not merely one of them. Even if he was among his equals, the other apostles, he was still different and apart from the having been called and commissioned differently. He was the apostle to the Gentiles in a way that was unique.

He could not live as other men, think as other men, or even serve God in the same way as others. He was separated, the one and only designated agent of Jesus Christ to the Gentile and ultimately to the European world. Of course the others could minister to Gentiles just as Paul could minister to Jews, and did, but his primary calling was unique, separate.... for the cause of and with relation to the gospel.

5. The Manner in Which the Apostles Operated.

There is a methodology to the publication of the gospel through the prophets and even though we do not have the time to plunge into it here, we must look at the history of the true people of God from Acts until the middle of the 19th century and realize that they operated within certain very real and genuine parameters.

The inventions of the last almost 200 years now have been out of step and out of harmony with the operation of the church and the publication of the gospel laid down by the apostles of the New Testament. We would do well to heed their example for it is the one given by God. The modern incarnation of the church under those who are seeking to promote themselves and grow wealthy through religion is a disgrace and a sham.

There is one other thing we might notice here and mention before we leave. The phrase “the gospel of God” leaves just a hint of a question in the mind. Of all the times the gospel is mentioned in the NT this phrase is only used seven times.

There are people who study the scriptures with the idea that every time a phrase is altered something different is meant.

I grew up reading men who taught that in the gospels the phrases, “kingdom of heaven,” “Kingdom of God,” and “Kingdom of Jesus Christ,” all meant different things. They obviously do not but are simply phrases used interchangeably.

Concerning the gospel, we have this one as well as:

gospel of His Son

gospel of Christ

gospel of peace

the gospel

Again, they are different words used to describe one and the same thing.

And we should not end without saying something about it. This book, especially the first nine chapters, is about this set of ideas called ‘the gospel.’

Paul will begin by making the case that man in his natural state is in trouble. Literally, he will begin the discussion of the gospel with the words, “for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven,” and he will go on to tell why. Man has not honored God as God demands and deserves.

The greatest and first commandment of all is to love God with all one’s heart, mind, soul and strength. Man without exception, left to himself, has not done that.

He has, instead, taken every opportunity to offend God by breaking all of the rest of His commandments and has proven that he is incapable of doing otherwise.

He is spiritually dead, he died to God when Adam sinned and can only be revived by the Work of Jesus Christ.

God's demand upon him is that he repent of his sins and believe on His Son and do so with his whole heart, something he cannot do apart from the help of God.

Therefore, any person of moderate intelligence and awareness should be overcome with his need of God's help and be seeking Him continually to grant the ability to repent and believe.

Do you have moderate intelligence and self-awareness? What are you doing about this 'gospel?'