

Romans 1:1-7

Rom 1:1-7 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God (2) which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, (3) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born 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) Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, (6) among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; (7) 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.

Questions On The Text

How does Paul describe himself?

Verse 1: He calls himself a bondservant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ. The Greek word *doulos* described a relationship where the slave belonged absolutely to the master. It implied total allegiance to the master, and that the master had complete authority over the slave.

He called himself an apostle by calling. Apostle is derived from the Greek word “to send” and implies being sent on a mission as a representative. It could accurately be translated as “ambassador”.

For what purpose was Paul separated?

Verse 1: The word “separated” means to be set apart for a specific purpose. That purpose was the gospel which literally means the “good news”. It’s the same word from which we derive our word “evangelism”. This word was already in use to announce the birth of an heir to the Roman Emperor, or the heir’s coming-of-age, or his accession to the throne.

When was the gospel first mentioned?

Verse 2: It was promised in the Old Testament through the prophets. See Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 as good examples.

What did the prophets predict?

Verse 3: The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who through line of His mother Mary and adoptive father Joseph, was a descendent of King David. See Isaiah 11:1-5 for an example.

What did the resurrection of Christ prove?

Verse 4: It proved that He was in fact the Son of God. Since death is the unavoidable outcome of sin (Rom 6:23), Jesus’ rising from the dead was proof that He had never sinned, and that death had no claim on Him. The only one, in the history of the world, who never sinned was the promised Messiah about whom it was predicted that He would rise from the dead. See Psalm 16:10 for that prediction, as well as Acts 2:30-32 for the apostles’ interpretation. This verse also shows the involvement of the power of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Christ.

How did Paul receive his apostleship and what was its purpose?

Verse 5: Paul received his apostleship through grace – the unmerited favour of God. He did not earn it. The purpose of his apostleship was to spread the faith among the nations. The faith was not merely to be known as head knowledge, but to be obeyed and therefore lived out experientially.

To whom was this letter written?

Verse 7: It was written to the church in Rome, about whom he makes two important observations.

First, they are “beloved of God”. “Beloved” is a plural word and the phrase could be translated as “God’s loved-ones”.

Second, they are “called to be saints”. The words “to be” are not in the original saints, so it literally says, “called saints”. The word “saint” has nothing to do with being canonised by the Roman Catholic Church; it simply means “holy one”. In Greek, saint, holy and sanctify, are all related words, coming from the same root. To be holy means to be set apart for a designated purpose; in this case, for God’s purpose.

The word “called” means to be summoned, so the overall thought in the phrase “called to be saints” is to be summoned by God and set apart for His purpose.

Further Questions For Discussion:

In what way have you been separated for the gospel?

How important was it that Christ was raised from the dead?

Paul received his calling as an apostle through grace. What calling have you received through the grace of God?

In what ways has God demonstrated that you are one of His loved-ones?

You have been summoned by God for a purpose that is unique to you. What is that purpose?