

## **Romans (1) Paul's Salutation (1:1-7)**

### **Introduction:**

Last Lord's Day we addressed the conversion of the Apostle Paul as recorded in the Book of Acts, chapter 9. Today we begin our series on this epistle (letter) to the church at Rome. This is the longest of Paul's epistles that we have in our New Testament. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Rome about 25 years after his conversion.<sup>1</sup> I suspect that we will be here for some time to come.

It is common at the outset of a study of a book of the Bible to state the purpose of the writer that moved him to have originally penned his document. In the producing of His Holy Word, our Bible, God would cause events to occur in churches and between people, while burdening one of His servants regarding those events, thus motivating them to write in order to address them. And then the Lord would enable His writers to pen the very words that He intended to record, preserving and commending those writings to His church as His abiding authoritative Word. But discerning the purpose that Paul had for writing this letter to the Romans is not an easy task; it is a complex matter. And so, we will forego a discussion at this point as to why Paul originally took pen in hand to write this epistle. When we arrive to different details in the epistle that touch on matters of Paul's purpose for writing, we will at that time address the pertinent issues.

We will discover in our study that this epistle is very theological in nature. It is not an easy letter to understand. It will require us to focus our attention carefully on these matters. Be not become discouraged or weary in this pursuit. It is through acquiring of knowledge of our Lord Jesus in the Scriptures and obeying Him as He leads us in the Scriptures, that we may experience growth in God's grace and experience the blessing of our new life in Christ. As we read in 2 Peter 1:3ff,

<sup>3</sup>His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, *through the knowledge of Him* who called us to His own glory and excellence, <sup>4</sup>by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”

Every Christian should be an eager and avid learner in the school of Christ. To the degree that we give ourselves over to this, we will reap great benefit. To the degree that we fail in this, we will encounter hardship that leads to ruin.<sup>2</sup>

Today we would like to begin to consider the opening words of the epistle in which Paul identified himself and addressed the recipients of his letter. This preface of Paul to his epistle is the longest of any that we have in all the other New Testament letters. This is also the only introduction of Paul that we have in the New Testament that was addressed to a church that Paul did not directly or indirectly found himself. This may be the reason for its length. In the opening of this epistle Paul is commending himself as an apostle sent by God with an authoritative message for this church. He shows forth his credentials in order to commend his message to the church at Rome. “From the inception of the letter Paul wants to persuade the Romans that his gospel is orthodox and worth supporting.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paul was converted a. AD 33 or 34. He probably wrote Romans in AD 57 while in Corinth.

<sup>2</sup> See Hosea 4:1-10 for the result of God's judgment upon Israel for rejecting knowledge of the Lord and His ways.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Baker Academic, 1998), p. 28. In Romans 16 Paul wrote of his desire to travel to Spain, because he desired to take the gospel to places where it

As we approach these opening words to this epistle, we should be aware of several important points. First, in this preface to his epistle, ***Paul shows himself to be an authoritative apostle that is making known the realization of the Old Testament salvation hope of Israel.*** God had called and commissioned Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles. He had authority and God had appointed him to bring God’s message to the church at Rome. Second, ***Paul shows forth Jesus, the Son of David, as the One through whom the promises of God to Israel have been, are being, and will be realized.*** Paul sets forth Jesus the Son of David as the true Israel of God, through whom is realized the Old Testament promises of God of blessing the world (Gentiles) through Israel.

In the OT Israel as God’s son (Exo. 4:22) was called to be a light for the nations, and the promises for Israel would be fulfilled through a Davidic king. Paul maintains, in this highly packed section, that the true Israel and the genuine Davidic king is Jesus the Messiah. God’s saving promises for Israel and the Gentiles have become a reality in him.<sup>4</sup>

Third, Paul shows that ***the promised age for Israel had arrived*** through the enthronement of Jesus Christ as the Son of David. The promised age of salvation had been inaugurated through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The new age had arrived, and the Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus Christ was the realization of God’s purpose in history. Fourth, ***all that God had been and was doing was for His own glory and for the glory of His Son, Jesus Christ.*** These are some of the major ideas set before his readers in these opening words.

Paul’s opening salutation includes the first 7 verses of this first chapter. Let us read these verses from the English Standard Version (ESV).

<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. (Rom. 1:1-7)

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## I. Paul’s Salutation (1:1-7)

The letters of the first century Hellenistic<sup>5</sup> world had a commonly used style. A writer of a letter would open with a salutation. Traditionally a letter’s salutation contained three elements, (1) the name of the person sending the letter, (2) the one(s) to whom the letter was sent, (3) and a greeting. All three

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had not previously been proclaimed. Some suggest, and Schreiner concurs, that Paul was commending his gospel to the church at Rome, in part, to secure them as a strategic base of operation and source of support for his mission to the western regions of the Roman Empire.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Roman Empire controlled the known world of the first century and the capital of the empire was the city of Rome. Latin was the language of Rome and therefore the language of law and politics. But the culture of the Roman Empire was still Greek in nature, which is commonly called “Hellenistic.” The universal language of commerce and the common people was Greek. The term “Hellenistic” itself is derived from ‘Hellen (Héllēn), which was the name the Greeks’ used to describe themselves. The Greek culture was spread widely through the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

common elements are contained in these first 7 verses. The first element is the first word of the epistle, in which Paul identifies himself.

## A. Paul introduced himself (1:1)

### 1. “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus” (1:1a)

First, take note that Paul refers to himself as “Paul” (Greek, “Paulos”). This was Paul’s Roman name. “Saul” was his Jewish name. You will commonly hear that he had changed his name from Saul to Paul upon his conversion. In fact, there are cultures today when someone is converted to Christianity they commonly change their names from a name associated with their pagan culture to a “Christian”, most often named after a biblical character. But Paul did not change his name, but rather, it appears that as Paul interacted with Gentiles in the Roman world, he used his Roman name rather than his Jewish name. It is an example of how he sought to remove all needless obstacles for the cause of the gospel, as he stated in 1 Corinthians 9:22, “I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

We then read that Paul introduced himself as “a servant of Jesus Christ.” After Paul first identified himself, he then identified his Master. He was a servant of Christ Jesus. His identity was tied up with his association to his master. He was not just “Paul”; he was Paul a servant of Christ Jesus.

The word translated “servant” is the Greek word *doulos* ( δούλος ). It is commonly translated “slave.” Paul identifies himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. We commonly see in this word the humility of the apostle Paul expressed before the people to whom he ministered. And certainly the Gentiles reading this epistle would have understood Paul’s description of himself in this way. Paul was indeed humble before the Lord. His former life, before becoming a Christian, led him to be a humble man once the Lord appeared to him to bring him salvation. Paul had formerly persecuted the people of Jesus Christ, as we saw last week. Paul described himself in this way, “formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent, but I received mercy” (1 Tim. 1:13). Because of his former ways, he was always ashamed and humble before the Lord. He would always consider himself as a slave, or a servant of Jesus Christ.

The idea of Paul acknowledging himself as a servant may seem to be incompatible with the state of liberty into which God delivers His people when they come to salvation. It was the Lord Jesus Himself that said,

<sup>31</sup>So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and ***the truth will set you free.***” <sup>33</sup>They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup>So ***if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*** (John 8:31-36)

Paul himself encouraged Christians to maintain their liberty. He wrote to the Galatians: “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). And also, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). And yet in spite of these statements about the Christian’s liberty and the need to retain this liberty, Paul describes himself as a *slave* of Jesus Christ. How then, does Paul reconcile the liberty that people have in Christ to the slavery unto Christ that he professes for himself? His “bondage” to Jesus Christ was a voluntary submission, in which he placed himself willingly into the role of a slave to Jesus Christ. He would have it no other way. His was a willing bondage.

There is an Old Testament provision in the Mosaic law that may help explain Paul's attitude and claim. In **Exodus 21:1ff** we read:

<sup>1</sup>“Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: <sup>2</sup>If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. <sup>3</sup>If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. <sup>4</sup>If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. <sup>5</sup>But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,’ <sup>6</sup>then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. (Exod.21:1-6)

Paul willingly submitted himself to assume the role of a slave of Jesus Christ.

But whereas the Gentiles reading Paul's epistle would have probably seen Paul's humility in the apostle's self-designation as “the slave (servant) of Jesus Christ”, the Jews who read this epistle would have likely had a different impression. The expression, “*a servant of Jesus Christ*”, is parallel with the Old Testament expression, “*the servant of Yahweh (Jehovah)*” or, “*the servant of the Lord.*” Here Paul had merely exchanged the name of “Jesus Christ” for “Yahweh” or the “Lord.” And so, the expression does suggest the idea of total devotion and service to Jesus Christ, but it conveys more than this. It suggests Paul as the authoritative spokesman, who writes in the authority of Christ Jesus; Paul was a servant of the Lord, an authoritative representative of the Lord.

This phrase [“a servant of Jesus Christ”], or parallels (e. g., “your servant”), is occasionally applied to Israel generally (Neh. 1:6; Isa. 43:10) and sometimes to the prophets (2 Kings 9:7; 17:23), but it more often depicts a particularly significant and outstanding “servant”: Moses (e.g. Josh. 14:7; 2 Kings 18:12), Joshua (Josh. 24:29), Elijah (2 Kings 10:10), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:6) and, especially frequently, David.<sup>6</sup>

And so, Paul's self-designation as “the servant of Christ Jesus” is on the one hand a confession of his submission to His Lord, but it is also a statement of *his apostolic authority*. He was representing Jesus Christ, speaking on His behalf, as a servant of the Lord.

After Paul first identified his *Master*, he then identifies his *office*.

## 2. “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, *called to be an apostle...*”

Paul describes himself as “called.” This, of course, speaks of Jesus Christ Himself calling him to be His apostle. But it was not only a calling to apostleship, but it was God's call of Paul from sin unto salvation in Jesus Christ unto His apostleship. As Paul described himself in **Galatians 1:5f**,

But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and *who called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles*, I did not immediately consult with anyone...

You may note that Paul regarded his call unto salvation was unto His apostolic office. His “calling” encompassed both his conversion and his commission.

When Paul described himself as called of God, he emphasized his own passivity and the sovereignty of God in His dealings with him. But in describing himself as called, he used the same

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<sup>6</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1996), p. 41.

language to convey the same idea of every Christian having been called of God unto salvation. If you are a Christian, you have been as certainly and specifically called by God unto salvation as was the apostle Paul. In fact, Paul makes a statement to this fact in this opening salutation to this epistle. We read in **verses 5 and 6**:

<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*,

Now, when Paul identified himself as an “apostle”, he claimed for himself to have the authority of Jesus Christ, who had called him and commissioned him to his office. The word “apostle” means one who is sent. When an apostle spoke or wrote, he did so as an authoritative representative of Jesus Christ. Paul was claiming to be an apostle, on which the foundation of the church was being built (cf. Eph. 2:20). He was asserting his apostolic authority as having been called by Jesus Christ, to the office of apostle of Jesus Christ, even as he was a trusted servant of Jesus Christ. In these first few verses of introduction, Paul commended himself before this church that he had never visited, as one who had written an authoritative epistle to them. He was adding authoritative weight to the substance of his letter to his readers of Rome.

### 3. “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, *set apart for the gospel of God...*”

The single Greek word translated as “set apart” speaks of the fact that God had set him apart unto the gospel. He was *called* from his sin *unto* apostleship for the purpose of being *set apart* for the gospel of God. Paul’s life was tied up in the service of the gospel.

The word “gospel” means “good news.” The word conveys different nuances of meaning depending on the context in which it is found. Sometimes the single word, “gospel” can imply the activity of preaching the gospel. Other times the word refers to the message of the gospel itself, the good news of God’s salvation from sin through Jesus Christ. Paul sometimes used the word “gospel” in a context to suggest that he was speaking of Christ Himself.

In saying that he has been “set apart for the gospel of God,” then, Paul is claiming that his life is totally dedicated to God’s act of salvation in Christ—a dedication that involves both his own belief in, and obedience to, that message well as his apostolic proclamation of it.<sup>7</sup>

Normally when we speak of the gospel, we refer to it as “the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Here, Paul refers to “the gospel of God.” When we speak of “the gospel of Jesus Christ”, we are referring to the good news *about* Jesus Christ; that is, about the salvation that He brings to His people. Here, when Paul wrote of the “gospel of God”, he was probably referring to the gospel that God had promised and had now brought to realization; in other words, the gospel that was *sent* by God.<sup>8</sup>

After Paul had introduced and identified the subject of the gospel, next we see that...

### B. Paul described this “gospel of God” (1:2-3a)

<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>2</sup>*concerning His Son...*

#### 1. The gospel of God, “*which He promised beforehand through His prophets*”

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<sup>7</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

The New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ was foretold by God through His prophets. Here the apostle is setting forth the idea of the promise and the fulfillment of God's purposes in history. He will show throughout his epistle a continuity of God's work in history, that is, the promises of God under the old covenant lead to the fulfillment of those promises in Christ under the new covenant. But not only is there continuity--the idea of a continuous work of God in history--but there is discontinuity as well. We will see soon, and also in later portions of this epistle, that the apostle sets forth salvation history as comprising two stages, even two ages. That which was before the arrival of Jesus Christ and the new age of fulfillment since the coming of Jesus Christ.

When Paul wrote, "*which He promised beforehand through His prophets*", the "prophets" should include all who foretold and anticipated the coming of the age of salvation. The "prophets", therefore, would include Abraham, Moses, David, as well as the leading writing prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others.

## 2. The gospel of God, "*which He promised... in the Holy Scriptures*"

This is the only place in all of Paul's writings where the full expression "Holy Scriptures" is used. There were four occasions when he used the term "Scriptures"<sup>9</sup>, but only here does he use the "Holy Scriptures." This gospel that he presented in this epistle was not of his invention, nor was it new and novel. Paul quoted numerous verses from the Old Testament throughout his epistle to persuade and demonstrate that his teaching was in accordance to the authoritative written Word of God.

Paul never conceived of his gospel as antithetical to or contradictory of the OT. He understood it to fulfill the OT in a way that surpassed the expectations of both Jews and Gentiles (see especially Romans 9-11). Indeed, Paul was thinking in particular of OT promises of a glorious future for Israel. The verb *εὐαγγελίζω* (euangelizein, to proclaim the good news) is used, particularly in the LXX<sup>10</sup> of Isaiah (Isa. 40:9; 52:7; 60:6; 61:1; cf. Nah. 2:1 LXX) to denote deliverance from Babylon and return from exile. Paul believes that the salvific promises made to Israel in the OT are now being fulfilled in his gospel.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. The gospel of God,... "*concerning His Son*" (1:3a)

Here is the substance of the gospel that Paul was called to and to which God had separated him. The gospel concerns God's Son. Here "His Son" refers to the eternal Second person of the Blessed Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God Himself. That Jesus is God's Son speaks of the unique relationship that Jesus Christ has with God the Father. We might consider the message of John 1:18 in the **New King James Version** reads, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."<sup>12</sup>

Now, when Paul referenced God's Son, he was, of course, referring to Jesus Christ. Verses 3 and 4 make that clear. But even as he wrote of God's Son in connection with the Holy Scriptures, there is an

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<sup>9</sup> These are Rom. 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.

<sup>10</sup> The Roman numeral LXX is a symbol for the Septuagint, which was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament that was commonly used by both Jews and Christians in the first century. The symbol LXX is used because it is the number for "seventy", thought to have been the number of Jewish rabbis who did the translation work, perhaps in Alexandria Egypt, in the second century BC.

<sup>11</sup> Understanding this and the implications refutes the teaching of classical dispensationalism (Scofield, Ryrie, etc.) that this church age is a parenthesis, not foreseen by the prophets.

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the **English Standard Version** reads differently, "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." The **New American Standard Version** reads: "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." And then the **New International Version** reads, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

allusion to the nation of Israel of the Old Testament, which was always regarded and treated as God's Son, which God had brought forth from Egypt. And so, when Paul sets forth Jesus as God's Son, he is declaring that God's Son, Jesus, did what God's son, Israel, had failed to do—show forth the glory of God to the Gentile world to the end that all the world would worship the true God of Israel.

The reference to Jesus as the Son recalls Israel's status as God's son... Jesus is the true Israel, but he is also the preexistent Son whom God sent into the world (Rom. 8:3). In other words, the term "Son" works at more than one level; it designates Jesus as the true Israel *and* as the Son who existed before the incarnation.<sup>13</sup>

Now, after he had introduced "His Son",...

### C. Paul wrote "concerning His Son" (1:3b-4)

<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,...

These verses are not easily understood rightly. First, recognize that there is a pattern of words here that are not readily recognized through our English translations. The way the grammar is structured, there are two statements conveyed in parallel with one another. It might be seen in this way:

...concerning His Son,

- (1) "who has been begotten from the seed of David according to the flesh"
- (2) "who was appointed the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness, from the resurrection of the dead."

The first statement describes the ancestry of Jesus as having descended from King David. The second statement tells of the exaltation and enthronement of Jesus Christ upon His resurrection from the dead. Let us consider these statements carefully.

#### 1. God's Son "*who was descended from David according to the flesh*" (1:3b)

Paul had first described the gospel as "concerning His Son", signifying the deity of Jesus Christ, then he described the Son becoming the Son of David according to the flesh. Here the apostle Paul began to describe Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the son of David, who would bring salvation to His people, ushering in the promised kingdom of God. This speaks of the human nature of Jesus Christ, as well as the legitimacy of his right to fulfill the role of the promised Son of King David. Jesus was the promised King, the promised Messiah, whom the remnant of Israel had anticipated to come and restore the kingdom of Israel/David, in which God's people would enjoy their salvation rest.

The promise of God that He would raise up a Son of David to rule over His people Israel is found in a number of places in the Old Testament. But the promise of God in **2 Samuel 7:12-16** and the declaration of **Psalms 2:7** are most pertinent here. God had said to King David:

<sup>12</sup>"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>He shall build a house

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<sup>13</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 38.

for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup>but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Sam. 7:12-16)

“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’” (Psa. 2:7)

## 2. God’s Son “*was declared to be the Son of God in power*” (1:4a)

Here we see the one descended from David is “declared to be the Son of God in power.” Some have argued that this declaration of God is God restoring to His eternal Son to His rule that He had before He had left His throne and descended into this world to assume our human nature. But this is not correct. The context is the Son in his human nature of Jesus Christ as the son of David. Upon the resurrection, God the Father declared David’s Son to be His Son, and subsequently enthroned His Son in heaven. In other words, although the Son of God left heaven and condescended to take upon Himself human nature, upon His resurrection, God exalted David’s Son to be His Son enthroned in heaven.

## II. Several points for our consideration

First, each of us as believers might ask our self, “Do I see my identity as a servant of Jesus Christ?” This is what it is to be a true believer. You should not say, “I am George, and I am an American first.” Or, I am Amanda, I am my own woman.” I am rick, and I am a father, or husband.” Christians should see clearly their identity in their union with, their association with their Savior and Jesus Christ. Having a clear sense of your identity will help you direct your thinking and your efforts to what is the priority of your life. May each of us be able to say with conviction and resolve as the apostle did—“I am Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.”

Second, let us set ourselves apart for *the gospel of God*. In all that we are and all that we do, let us have this aim in our lives, to further the gospel for the glory of God and the well-being of people. The Lord gives us different roles in which we live out our Christian existence. We are parents, church members, citizens within our community and nation, human beings within the human race. But in all of our roles, we should be principally about the advancement of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for this fallen world. We have the message that brings forth new life. People have ravaged themselves and have been cruelly abused by sin. We have a message that brings forgiveness and restoration, even joy and peace and righteousness into this sorry world which we face each day. The peace and joy that we enjoy should not be kept to ourselves. Let us separate ourselves unto the gospel that God has given us.

Third, let us affirm that all of the Holy Scriptures point to and find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David. Paul wrote of “the Gospel of God” “concerning His Son.” The gospel of God does not concern the modern state of Israel. The gospel of God concerns God’s faithful Son, not His unfaithful son. Let us not take glory away from whom it is do and give undue attention to that which once failed to accomplish God’s will. Paul will show in his epistle that God has a role and place for ethnic Israel (not national Israel), but it is only in their relation to God’s Son Jesus Christ, the reigning Son of David, that they will find realization of their hope.



Fourth, let us recognize that we are privileged to live in the days of fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets anticipated and proclaimed. Jesus Christ who was crucified and buried, whom God raised from the dead and exalted to sit at His right hand. The risen Son of David was enthroned on David's throne, and Jesus Christ is currently reigning over the kingdom which the prophets had foretold.<sup>14</sup> Peter declared this on the Day of Pentecost:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know--<sup>23</sup>Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;<sup>24</sup>whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.<sup>25</sup>For David says concerning Him:

‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face,  
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.  
<sup>26</sup>Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;  
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.  
<sup>27</sup>For You will not leave my soul in Hades,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.  
<sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the ways of life;  
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.’

<sup>29</sup>“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.<sup>30</sup>Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,<sup>31</sup>he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.<sup>32</sup>This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.<sup>33</sup>Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.<sup>34</sup>For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

‘The LORD said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
<sup>35</sup>Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’

<sup>36</sup>“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:22-36)

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<sup>14</sup> That this is a central truth in the gospel is clear. And yet, most evangelicals, that is, those being dispensationalists, deny this, saying that Jesus will not sit on David's throne until He returns and sits on a physical, political “throne” in Jerusalem over the political nation of Israel in a future 1000 year millennium. Christ is now seated on the promised and presently “restored” throne of David, which is nothing less than the throne of God from which the seated King Jesus reigns.