

Introducing Paul To Rome

Romans 1:1-4

Pastor John Miller

So what I want to do is begin reading, and I am going to read from verse 1 to 7. Follow with me in your Bible.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God...,” there’s the theme of the book in the very first opening verse, the good news of God. Then he says in verse 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.”

No one who has truly studied and knows the history of the church would dispute the claim that the book of Romans is one of the most powerful and influential books that has ever been written. It has been the tool used by God to bring about some of the most significant conversions in church history and revivals in the last 200 years. Just to name a couple, the famous Saint Augustine, one of the great theologians of the first century, was converted listening to a portion of Romans 13 being read. Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, was converted, and the Reformation resulted by his reading Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” The greatest revival in the church’s history was the Protestant Reformation, and it was the result of reading the book of Romans.

One of my heroes in church history is a man by the name of John Wesley. He is the founder of what is known as methodism. Today we have the Methodist church because of the ministry and the work of John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley was an English clergyman who came to America as a missionary. He wasn’t converted. He wasn’t saved. He was just religious. He came to America and was discouraged and disheartened. He returned to England frustrated. On the way back from America to England, he wrote in his journal these words, “Went to America to convert the Indians, but who will convert me?” A few days after he returned to England, he was invited to a meeting with a group of people known as the Moravians, a zealous group of believers and missionaries at that time. They gathered on a street in London called Aldersgate Street in a little church, and John Wesley, very discouraged and cast down, came into that church and sat in the back. The minister started to read from the preface of Martin Luther’s commentary to the book of Romans. He read the verse from Romans where it says, “The just shall live by faith.” John Wesley heard those words, and the Holy Spirit spoke to his

heart and he trusted Jesus Christ. Then he wrote in his journal, "I've trusted Christ, felt my heart strangely warmed." From that night, he was a converted man who went on to change the whole course of the nation of England and even the world today.

I found it interesting that John Bunyan, the man who wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* from a jail in Bedford Prison in England, was influenced to write that book, which by the way in 200 years has only been outsold by the Bible. (It's the most read book second to the Bible. If you haven't read it, you need to. It's called *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan.) It was the influence of the book of Romans on his life that led him to write that book. All Scripture, I believe, is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, yet I believe that some parts of the Bible are more profitable than others, not more inspired. Listen to me very carefully. Not more inspired, equally inspired, but not of the same value. If I were shipwrecked or a castaway on an island in the Pacific, and I could have only one book of the Bible, one book of the Bible, I would have the book of Romans. The reason I would pick the book of Romans is because everything theologically and doctrinally that comprises Christianity is taught and explained in the book of Romans.

Someone called Romans Paul's theological last will and testament. It's Paul's systematic theology. He pours everything he knows into one book. It's the book of Romans. Now, don't let the deep doctrinal and theological aspect of this book in the first eleven chapters scare you away. I'm going to try to make it as simple and clear as I can and not get too complex, but it is one of the deepest doctrinal and theological books of the Bible, the first eleven chapters. Then, at the end of the book, chapters 12-16 moves to a very practical section where that doctrine is put into shoe leather and we see it lived out in our daily lives.

The book of Romans is the most systematic of all the epistles. It is the first in the New Testament epistles because it traces the story of salvation from condemnation to justification to sanctification to glorification. We're going to learn all of those terms. Already you might be thinking, "I don't know, I shouldn't have come to this study on Romans. This is already like, you know, say something exciting. You haven't even told a joke yet, come on." If you want your life to be changed, you need to learn the book of Romans. Every Christian should learn the book of Romans. Every Christian should understand the book of Romans. Every Christian should live out the book of Romans. Don't be afraid of Biblical terms. You can't grow if you don't know. You can't enjoy what you don't know you have, so grow in your knowledge of God's Word. We're going to go into depth on what it means that the world is condemned and how God justifies guilty sinners, how God sanctifies His people, and how He keeps us secure to glorify us one day. Romans explains God's program for the Jews and the Gentiles and concludes with practical exhortations for the outworking of God's righteousness in the believer's life.

I really encourage you on Wednesday night to bring a notebook, a pencil and to take notes as we go through. Maybe you can go back on the website and listen again and take notes, but since we're starting the book tonight, and we're just getting our feet wet with the introduction, let me give you a little background to this book of Romans. First, the book of Romans has a theme. Every good sermon has a theme. Did you know the book of Romans is a sermon? It's systematically and thematically laid out more than any other book of the Bible. It is very logical.

It is full of “therefore” and “wherefore” from the beginning to the very end. I’ll never forget, I mean this, I’ll never forget as a young Christian the first time I studied the book of Romans. I felt like I was born again, again. It just absolutely blew me away! I had been raised in church, I had been around Christianity my whole life, but I’d never understood these important doctrinal truths. I’d never been taught through the book of Romans. So, since it is systematic, I want to give you kind of a bigger picture. (In just a moment, we’re going to put an outline on the screen. How many of you received your little outline when you came in tonight? Okay, those are going to be available in the connection booth for the next several weeks and months, and I want you to read the book of Romans with this outline in mind.)

The book of Romans has a theme, and the theme is given in chapter 1:16-17. Would you turn there with me. Most Bible scholars agree this is the theme of the book of Romans. Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ...,” there’s that key term, gospel of Christ, “...for it is the power...,” the dynamis, the dynamic, “...of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...,” again another theme of the book of Romans; faith and believing, and the good news of God, “...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek...,” or to the Gentile. 17 “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...,” wherein is the righteousness of God revealed? In the Gospel of which Paul is not ashamed. So he says, “...for herein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” The theme of the book of Romans, the just shall live by faith, which by the way is a direct quote from the Old Testament book of Habakkuk 2:4. I’ll talk about that more in a moment. So the theme is the righteousness of God taken from verses 16 and 17. How to be right with God, how to be right with yourself, and how to be right with others. That’s a summary of the book of Romans. I think that’s pretty important, right? How can I be right with God. How can I be right in my own self before God, and how can I be right with other people. Romans is going to tell us how we are right with God, ourselves and others. The text of Romans is there for us in verse 17, and Habakkuk 2:4, “The just shall live by faith.” Six simple little words, “The just shall live by faith.”

Now, write this down if you’re taking notes. Three times in the New Testament Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted. It’s quoted in Romans 5, Galatians and in the book of Hebrews. What I want to point out is in Romans, the quotation is used to convey the truth of the just or the righteous. In Galatians, the quote is used to talk about how we shall live, and in Hebrews the quotation is used for “by faith.” So, three times in the New Testament, though three sections, the just shall live by faith.

Now let me give you the purpose of the book of Romans. There are four things for which Paul wrote the book of Romans. First, to prepare himself for his visit to Rome. Paul was preparing the believers in Rome for his soon visit. What you need to understand is Paul had never been to Rome. He didn’t start the church in Rome. He wasn’t the pastor of the church in Rome. He’d never been to Rome, and Paul was going to Rome for the first time. Now it seemed that he knew some people there, but he’d never been there. All of us have that experience, you know somebody that lives somewhere where you’ve never been. If that somebody is in Hawaii, you need to go there. I have all these friends in Hawaii, and I hardly ever go visit them. I’m thinking, “What am I thinking?” I should call them up and say, “Hey, I’m coming to visit you.”

Paul had never been to Rome even though he knew people in Rome, but he's writing to prepare them. Secondly, to explain the gospel of grace. He wants to explain the gospel that he preached of the grace of God. Romans is about how God saves sinners by grace through faith alone in Christ alone. Thirdly, he wrote to the Romans to answer questions about God's plan for Israel. If God is saving Gentiles, then is God finished with Israel? Does God have a plan for Israel? We are going to read about that in Romans chapters 9, 10 and 11. Fourth, he wrote to the Romans to teach them, as believers, their duty toward other Christians and toward the state. So, we're going to learn about our relationship and duty to other believers and the state. The first eleven chapters are doctrinal, and chapters 12-16 are behavioral or practical. Paul's epistles are always laid out like that; doctrine and then duty, doctrine then duty. You might think, "Well, you know, that doesn't sound very exciting, and that's not very important." However, if you reverse the order you are in trouble. You don't know how to behave unless you know what you're supposed to do. You don't know how to behave unless you know who you are. You don't know how to live the Christian life unless you know what is the Christian life. You know that lots and lots of Christians are trying to live the Christian life, and they don't know what it is? They haven't got a clue what it is to live the Christian life. They think it's going to church on a Wednesday night and clapping their hands, putting money in the offering and then going home. That's not the Christian life. There is much more involved than just going to church, singing songs and doing that kind of thing. That's part of the Christian life, but that's not it in its essence.

Now, I want to make reference to this handout that I gave you tonight. This outline is, I believe, one of the best I've come across. There are many others. It's not inspired by God, but I think it does convey the main themes, outline and flow of the book of Romans. If you don't have a handout, you'll want to look on the screen where we have it nice and big. We're going to go through it in sections because before we go back to verses 1-7 tonight, (you're probably wondering if I'll ever get there, right?) I want you to see the forest. I don't want to rush right in and look at the trees. I want you to see the forest. So, if you've ever gone into a town to try to check it out, and you drive through the streets, you can't really see it. I remember years ago my first trip to Auckland, New Zealand. We're driving around, it's pretty. Then they took us up on top of a hill where you could look over the whole city of Auckland, New Zealand. Gorgeous! You could see the whole outlay, all the harbors and boats. It's just a beautiful, beautiful place. It wasn't until we got up on the hill and looked over on it or you flow over it. I also got to fly in a small private plane all over New Zealand and explore the islands, north and south. It was just amazing! It's important to get back and see the big picture. So, I want to survey that with you just real quickly in this outline.

The text of Romans is, "The just shall live by faith." (Follow with me in your outline or look on the screen.) The theme is, "The Gospel of God." The "Introduction," (1:1-17), and we're going to take two weeks looking at that. Tonight we will be looking at just the "Salutation," (1-7). Then it moves to the body of the epistle in what is called, "Condemnation - The Wrath of God Revealed," (1:18-3:20). Yes, we will be talking about something that you very rarely hear preachers talk about, especially on tv, and that is the wrath of God. You sure you can't wait to come back next Wednesday night and hear about that? Why is it that we don't hear that talked

about from the pulpit when it's in the Bible. God is love, God is righteous, and God is just, but God is also holy, and God will judge sin. God will judge sin. There's a sense in which the wrath of God is already being revealed in the world today. It's really an amazing section that will just make the hair stand up on the back of your neck as you read that. So, "Condemnation - The Wrath of God Revealed," (1:18-3:20). The question in that section is, "Is the world lost?" Are people lost without Jesus Christ? The answer is, "All the world is guilty before God," (3:19). He goes on to explain that "The Heathen or the Gentile world is Condemned," then, "The Moral man, the good man." "Well, I'm a good person. Good people get to go to heaven." They are also under the wrath of God and condemned. "The Jew, the religious man, is Condemned," and then "The whole World is Condemned." Now, what he's doing, he's setting us up for the good news. You can't appreciate the good news until you get the bad news. Many times we rush in and try to share the gospel with people and they think, "Well, I don't need that. Why do I need that?" Here's why you need that, because God judges sin and you're a sinner and the wrath of God will come upon you. So, we sometimes omit that in sharing the gospel, and a lot of people don't feel their need for the gospel. "Well, why do I need Jesus?" Because you're a sinner and you're under condemnation, and you're going to hell, and you will experience the wrath of God. This is why preachers don't preach on this subject, but it's in the Bible. We can't appreciate the good news until we understand our need for it. We need to need the good news, so we have to understand that we're lost without the gospel. So, he spends that section on condemnation. Then, "Salvation - The Righteousness of God Revealed," (3:21-8:39). The question is, "How does God save sinners?" The answer is, "In Christ Jesus," (8:1). We are going to look at "Justification, Sanctification and Preservation," (chapter 8), how God keeps His people.

Thirdly, it moves to, "Vindication - The Wisdom of God Revealed," (Ch. 9-11). The question is, "Why has Israel been set aside?" The answer is, "That He might have mercy upon all." We are going to look at "God's Sovereignty, Man's Responsibility, and God's Merciful Purpose." Then we move to, "Exhortation - The Will of God Revealed," (Ch. 12-15). This is the practical section of the book. The question is, "How should a saved man walk?" The answer is, "Be ye transformed." It is, "In relation to God, Self and Others; State; Weaker Brethren; and in relation to Ministry." Then the "Conclusion," (Ch. 16). "Recommendation, Salutations, Warning and Doxology." I've given you that so you can read through the book of Romans and you can study it yourself.

The author of the book of Romans is in chapter 1:1. We already read it, Paul. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." No one disputes the fact that Paul the apostle, first known as Saul of Tarsus, converted in Acts 9, is the author of the book of Romans. In verses 1-7, we are going to look at the salutation. In this opening salutation, (which is a longer salutation than usual, it is one sentence in the Greek, verses 1-7, and it is more theological, more personal) we see Paul's five views of himself, of his gospel message, of Christ, and of the believers in Rome. Notice it with me first of all in verse 1. How did Paul view himself? He says, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." Now, I have already tarried a little longer than I wanted to, giving you a little background to this book, so we're going to survey this, and we won't be able to go into too much depth, but I want you to notice this. First, Paul viewed himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, verse 1. Now, in your English Bible it is translated

servant. It is a Greek word, *doulos*. The word *doulos* means slave. Not just any kind of a slave, but it meant a bondsman. You say, "Well, what's a bondsman?" A bondsman was a man or a woman who voluntarily submitted himself to his master. "I will become your slave for life. You will own me. I become your property." So Paul saw himself as a slave. Now, again, some of you are looking at me like, "Man, you're not doing very good here tonight, Preacher Boy. You started off talking about the wrath of God, and then you talk about being a slave." It's a glorious, wonderful liberating thing to be the property of Jesus Christ. I once was the slave to sin. I once was the slave to self. I once was the slave to my passions. I once was the slave to my possessions. I once was the slave to my pride. Some of you are slaves to your lusts. Pornography has you bound, drugs, alcohol, greed, pride, undue self esteem, covetousness. So don't dismiss the idea of being a slave to Jesus Christ. To be a slave to Jesus Christ means you're free. Jesus said, "Whom the Son sets free is free indeed." Amen? It's the only way to be truly free, amen, is to belong to Jesus Christ. So Paul sees himself like Moses, the servant of God, Abraham, the servant of God, and Elijah, the servant of God. I am a servant of Jesus Christ. I am a slave. Notice he didn't introduce himself as the great theologian, Paul, or the great preacher, Paul, or the great missionary, Paul, or the great intellectual, Paul. This is how preachers like to be introduced today, as the great anointed man of God. I have been introduced sometimes where it has embarrassed me! People will be introducing me and I'm thinking, "Wow, that sounds so good I can't wait to hear me!" It's amazing!

Now what is true of Paul should be true of every one of us. A little insight here, all of these points on how Paul views himself applies to you and me as Christians. They all apply to you and me as Christians. How you view yourself will determine how you behave, you got that? How you see yourself, and you see yourself in your relationship to God, is going to determine how you behave. What it means to be a slave of Jesus Christ means you are His property. He owns you. You are not your own, so you can't just marry whomever you want and go wherever you want and do whatever you want, spend your money however you want, spend your time however you want. "Don't tell me what to do, I'll do whatever I wanna do, you know, I'm a self-made man that worships his creator," kind of a thing. How sad. As a Christian, you've been bought with a price. You belong to God. You are not your own, you are His. Your entire life should be, "Lord, what do You want me to do? How do You want me to live? Lord, I'm Yours. I belong to You." But, there's a good aspect to this "servant" of Jesus Christ ~ He has to take care of you. It's His responsibility. The master fed, clothed, protected and cared for his servant. So, God will take care of you if you trust Him. Paul says, "I'm just a servant of Jesus Christ. A bondsman, *doulos*. I belong to God. I'm His property. The same thing is true of every Christian. See yourself tonight as being owned by God. You are His property which means that you should live a holy life. You should live a sanctified life.

Notice he also viewed himself as being called an apostle. The word apostle means, one who is sent out or commissioned. He was sent out and commissioned to preach the gospel. I believe, in a secondary sense, every one of us as Christians are called to be apostles sent out and commissioned to preach the good news. Thirdly, he said, when I think of myself, I'm separated, verse 1, unto the gospel of God. So I'm separated unto the gospel of God. Paul was separated from his mother's womb, Galatians 1:15. Paul was separated on the road to Damascus from

the world, Acts 9. Paul was separated unto the work of the ministry with Barnabas as he was called to be a missionary. What has God called you to do? What has God separated you to be? What ministry and purpose has God for your life? Paul was set apart to preach the gospel of God. So, Paul saw himself as a purchased slave, called apostle, and separated unto the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe that God has called me to preach the gospel. I believe that God has called you to preach the gospel. I believe that God has called all of us, in our sphere of influence, to preach the gospel, and if not with words than preach it with your life.

The second thing we see in verses 2 and 3 is Paul's view of the gospel. He moves to the gospel, which he was called to preach. He mentions the gospel, verse 1, and now he refers to what the gospel is. How did Paul view the gospel? He says, "Which he had promised, (verse 2) by his prophets," referring to the gospel, "in the holy scriptures." The gospel, verse 3, "Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Now, note these things about the gospel. First, it's the gospel of God. We saw that in verse 1. We also see in verse 9, that it's the gospel of His Son, and then we also see in verse 16 that it is the gospel of Christ. Now the word "gospel" means good news in its simplest essence. Good news. So, before we can take the good news we gotta have the bad news, right? The good news is that God loves you and that God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for you so that you, guilty and condemned, can be forgiven and free. That's pretty good news! And, we have good news. It is not good views, it's good news! We're proclaiming a historic event; the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's the gospel of God. It means that its source is from God, not man. Its origin is from God, not man. I don't want to freak anybody out or offend anybody, but I guess I'm pretty good at doing that. You take every other religion, every other system, and I believe it is not from God, that its origin and source is man. You say, "That's a pretty radical statement." It is a radical statement, but it's a true statement. There's only one gospel that comes from God, it comes from heaven. You say, "Well, people that follow Islam, they believe that; and the people that follow Mormonism, they believe that; and Buddhists believe that their truth is given to them by God and they follow the teachings of Buddha. What makes you think that Christianity is so unique and so exclusive?" I'll get there in just a second, but it is this. God came from heaven through the womb of a virgin, became a man, walked on earth, opened blind eyes, cleansed lepers, calmed the sea, raised people from the dead, died on the cross, was buried, rose Himself. Underline the word "Himself." Jesus rose Himself from the grave and conquered sin and death, which no Mohammad, Buddha or Confucius did. Joseph Smith didn't do that. No one has done that! You say, "Well, what's so unique about Jesus?" He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death on the cross, rose from the dead and physically, bodily ascended back into heaven, and He's alive right now seated at the right hand of God the Father. I'd say He's quite the heavyweight, wouldn't you? Granted, you can say, "Well, I don't believe those things." Well, do your own homework. Is the Bible reliable? Do we have enough manuscript evidence to believe the Scriptures? Is there archeology that supports the Bible? Is there fulfilled prophecy? Has there been changed lives when people believe in Jesus Christ? I would say "Yes! Yes! Yes! A thousand times, yes and more!" You have to be willing to open your eyes and to look at the truth of the claims of Christ and the claims of Christianity. What you are going to learn from the book of Romans is Christianity is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ, and

He is the good news! He is the redeemer! He is the savior! When Paul preached the gospel, he preached the good news about Jesus Christ and how He can save sinful man, but its source and its origin comes from God. It's not just made up concocted stories of a manmade religious system.

Secondly, I would say his view of the gospel in verse 2 is that it was promised by the Old Testament prophets. Again, it's not new and because it's not new it's true. It's not, "I have a new revelation! I met with an angel. His name was Moroni, and he showed me these golden tablets. It's a new revelation! I got a new book. It's called the book of Mormon. It's for the people in the western world," and all these stories that Joseph Smith concocted. It comes from God. It's confirmed by the prophets in the Old Testament. It's not new. All the way back in the book of Genesis 3:15, the first messianic prophecy, the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent and that his heel would be bruised, but he would bruise the head or authority of Satan on the cross. That was a prediction of the death and victorious conquering of Jesus over sin and over Satan, all the way back in Genesis 3:15. You already read Habakkuk 2:4. Isaiah 53 describes the good news of how God would send His Son to die for our sins, and then in type all through the Old Testament, more than I could mention, more than we could refer to. Did you know that Noah's ark is a picture and a type of Jesus Christ? It's not just a cool little boat with a rainbow and a giraffe sticking his head out. Jesus Christ is our ark of safety from the wrath of God. There was only one door in that ark. Jesus is the way, the truth, the life and no one comes to the Father but by Him. Only those who went into the ark were saved, and all those that did not go into the ark were destroyed. That ark is a picture of Jesus Christ. When Moses struck the rock in the wilderness and water gushed out, that rock was a picture of Jesus Christ. When Moses made a serpent of brass and put it on a pole and they lifted it up in the camp. When they were bitten by snakes and were going to die, God said that if you just look at the serpent of brass on that pole, you'll be healed, (which is the medical image of the snake on the pole taken from the book of Numbers where Moses erected that serpent). In John 3, when Jesus was meeting with Nicodemus where he said how can a man be born again? Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." And that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believe, they had to look in faith. We have to look in faith at Jesus lifted up, who died on the cross to pay for our sins and destroy the works of Satan. So this gospel that you and I have and that we preach, the same gospel that Paul preached, is not new. It was all through the Old Testament verbally predicted and in type. The sacrificial systems were all pictures of Christ.

I love in verse 3, it centers in the person of Jesus Christ. Notice, it says, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Who does the gospel center on? Who is the gospel about? Jesus Christ our Lord, "His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Isn't it interesting that there is so little preaching today, not only on the wrath of God but on the person of Jesus Christ. There's a lot of preaching on how to be successful, how to make a good marriage, how to be happy, how to have a great outlook on life, how to have a nice car and a Rolex watch. There is so very little preaching on the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is not central to a lot of preaching today, yet you take Jesus Christ out of the gospel, guess what? You have no gospel. It concerns His Son Jesus Christ. Notice the reference there in verse 3, "Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus the Son

of God, the messiah who is Jehovah the Lord. Christ is the sum and He is the substance of Christianity.

Since Jesus is the sum and the center of the gospel, it's source comes from God, Jesus is the sum and center of the gospel, Paul moves in verses 3 and 4 (I hate to do this) but we will cover that. We're going to cut it short and wrap it up, otherwise we'll be here all night and the Sunday school will get mad at me and I'll be in big trouble. I really thought we could get through at least seven verses. What a great note to stop on, right, Jesus Christ? I want you to look at verses 3 and 4. It's my third main point tonight, Jesus is the center of the gospel. So what does he say about Him? He says, "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." So, mark this. Notice His names, Son. Jesus Christ is the Son, the second person of the triune Godhead from all eternity. Don't ever let anyone tell you that there was a time when Jesus Christ did not exist, that He was begotten in the sense of created by the Father and came into existence. It's not so. He is the eternal Son. His name Jesus, Yeshua, means God is salvation. He was given that name by the Angel Gabriel to both Joseph and Mary at His birth.

Then, Christ is the Old Testament equivalent of Messiah. He is the anointed one. The word "Lord" is the equivalent of Jehovah or Yahweh. In Philippians 2, Paul said at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That's pretty clear. This is why the gospel centers on Jesus Christ. You take Jesus out of the gospel, you listen to somebody preaching on the radio or on television or from the pulpit and there's no Jesus in the message, and it has to be the Jesus of the Bible, then you're in big trouble. Remember when we studied 1 John here on Sunday morning and John said, "If they deny Christ and the doctrine of Christ, they are anti-Christ? It's not the spirit of God. So we find here that He's the Son eternally, that He's the savior, that He's the messiah, and that He's the Lord, the one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Two very important things about Jesus I want you to see in verses 3 and 4. You first see His humanity. You might want to write that down. In verse 3 His humanity is described in "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Now, He wasn't made the Son of God, but He was made flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary. This is His humanity. The Old Testament promised that the messiah would come through the lineage and the seed of David. Jesus Christ fulfilled those promises. Lastly, we have there His deity. Notice it in verse 4. It says that He was "declared to be the Son of God." Now, I'm reading from the King James Bible, and I'm not sure what translation you have, but in my King James Bible there are two italicized words between declared and the Son, the two words "to be." And declared to be the Son....I believe it's best if those words are omitted. They are italicized to show you they are not in the original, so it would read, "And declared the Son of God," not, made the Son of God. He didn't become the Son of God. He was declared the Son of God. It's what He is in His essence. Those are very important points. He is "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the

dead.” Now the word “declared” is very important. The word “declared,” now this will sound a little freaky at first, but the word “declared” actually has the idea of horizon or to horizon off. We get our word horizon from it.

Now, I like open space. I like vistas. I love going to Albuquerque, New Mexico and being able to see 80 miles on a clear day when you leave the airport and look down. You see 80 miles and it's clear, or going out into the high desert here and seeing a great distance. I love the ocean because it's open. It's wide. You can stand on the shore and just see nothing for hundreds of miles, you know, open ocean. I love to get out on the ocean on a boat and lose sight of the land seeing nothing but water around me. I love that! When you're out on the ocean and you see the horizon, or you're out on a hill and you see horizon. What does the horizon do? The horizon separates the sky from the land or the sky from the sea. It separates off. It sections off. This word is given “declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.” This word is saying, as a result of His resurrection from the dead, He is horizoned off, sectioned off. He is declared to be the Son of God. He is separated from everyone else. Jesus Christ, the only one who died and rose again from the dead. When He rose from the dead, He rose in a glorified, immortal body never to die again. He's sectioned or horizoned off to be the Son of God.

You know one of the greatest proofs and indications that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (which is a claim to deity, He is God in the flesh) is His resurrection. It horizons Him off from everyone else. Buddha didn't rise from the dead. Confucius didn't rise from the dead. Bless his little heart, Joseph Smith didn't rise from the dead. Guru Dev didn't rise from the dead. Krishna didn't rise from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead. I've been in Moscow's Red Square, and I've visited the tomb of Stalin. They have an inscription over Stalin's tomb (people wait for hours to look at Stalin's remains in the tomb there), “He was the world's greatest leader.” It actually says, “He was (past tense) the savior of the world,” but his bones are still lying in his casket. I've been to Jerusalem. I've been to Gordon's Calvary. I've been to the garden tomb, and there's a sign at the tomb there. You know what it says? It says, He is not here ~ He is risen! Now again, you can say, “Well, I don't believe that. I just don't believe that.” Well, study the evidence.

Do you know in 2000 years no one has been able to disprove the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All the theories, the swoon theory that He just passed out, He just had loss of blood and they put Him in a tomb with 100 pounds of ointment and wrapped Him in cloth, that it just revived Him, and He somehow bounced over, rolled away the stone, overtook the Roman guards, hopped down the street and appeared to His disciples as the risen savior and changed the world! Or, the disciples stole the body, knew it was a lie and they all went out and died for what they knew to be a lie. Who would die for what they knew to be a lie? “Hey, I got a great idea! We're gonna steal the body, we're gonna hide it, we're gonna come up with the thing called Christianity, it's called the gospel, and we'll go around and preach, and they'll beat us up and they'll hate us and they'll behead us, they'll club us and stone us and they'll boil us in oil, and we'll all die! Sounds like a good idea, who wants to join?!” I don't think so. I mean, on and on. “Well, the Romans stole the body.” The Romans were looking to stop Christianity. Had they

stole the body, they could've put it in an ox cart, paraded it down Main Street, Jerusalem, and Christianity would've been killed right there. There would be no Christianity.

Do you know why there is Christianity today? Because of an empty tomb, because they could never find the body of Jesus Christ, and because they watched Him physically, bodily ascend back into heaven, and He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." That's the good news that Paul is going to write about in this book of Romans. It comes from God, it's about the Son of God, and it's the gospel of God that we don't need to be ashamed of. It's the power of God unto salvation, and whether it be to the Jew first or also to the Gentile, God changes lives by the good news of Jesus Christ. It's God's power for salvation. I'm actually really only halfway through my study for tonight, so let's pray.