

## Paul: His Mission

Today is the third lesson on Romans 1:1. The focus is on the word “gospel.”

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

Two weeks ago, it was observed that Paul characterized his ministry in three ways: He identified his master (Jesus Christ), his office (apostle) and the purpose of his mission (the Gospel). Apostle is the second characterizations of his ministry.

### **I. His Master**

This aspect of Paul’s introduction to Romans was covered last week. Slave of Christ Jesus. As unbelievers, we were slaves to the sin nature. As believers, we have a choice to be slaves to Jesus Christ through the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit or to revert back to our sin natures. Our choice. As slaves, some say we are “controlled” by the Holy Spirit. Recently, I feel this word may be too strong. We can choose not to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. One pastor suggests the Holy Spirit “influences” a believer. I feel this word is too weak. For lack of a better word, I prefer the Holy Spirit “guiding” us. We can choose to follow or not.

### **II. His Office**

**1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of**

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**healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.**

**1 Corinthians 12:29 All are not apostles, are they?**

Remember that the mission of an apostle is determined by the authorizing agent. The “twelve” were authorized directly, face-to-face by Jesus Christ. There were events that qualified someone to be an apostle: familiarity with the life of Jesus on the earth, witness to the resurrected Jesus and His face-to-face sending. The purpose of the apostle was to found churches, write Scripture and direct the building of the early Church. Scripture is complete. New churches are now founded and built up by local pastors. There is no need for apostles. And that spiritual gift was discontinued with other “temporary” gifts.

**III. His Mission.**

Paul was “set apart for the gospel of God. This was his life mission as a Christian. Let us read of Saul’s “conversion.”

**Acts 9:1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,**

**Acts 9:2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.**

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**Acts 9:3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;**

**Acts 9:4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”**

**Acts 9:5 And he *said*, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,**

**Acts 9:6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”**

**Acts 9:7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.**

**Acts 9:8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.**

**Acts 9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.**

There is another account in Acts chapter 26:

**Acts 26:9 “So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.**

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**Acts 26:10 And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.**

**Acts 26:11 And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.**

**12 “While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,**

**Acts 26:13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.**

**Acts 26:14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’**

**Acts 26:15 And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.**

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**Acts 26:16 But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;**

**Acts 26:17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,**

**Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'**

Donald Coggan wrote a book on Paul, "Paul: Portrait of a Revolutionary." While there are many on the person of Paul, this one tries to look at Paul from Paul's perspective. What did he see. Perhaps, what did he think? Let me quote from it to give you a feel of what happened to Paul on the Damascus road.

"The conversion of Paul has very frequently been taken as the classic example of sudden and dramatic spiritual change. Indeed, in some circles it has almost been assumed that unless, to a lesser or greater degree, there has been some parallel to such an alleged and dateable event, a measure of doubt must be cast on the reality of a man's religious discipleship. It is, therefore, a matter of some importance to look closely at the conversion of which - rightly - theologians and artists have made so much in the course of subsequent history."

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“"Sudden and dramatic spiritual change." We may certainly use the word "dramatic" of the events of the story told thrice in the Acts of the Apostles' and referred to, obliquely, by Paul several times in his letters. But a very large question-mark should be placed against the description "sudden". There are many factors which indicate that there had been a considerable period before the great event, during which there was a build-up of inflammable material which needed only the divine spark on the Damascus road to set it alight. Let us look at some of this material.”

“There must always be an element of doubt about the first factor, but it is of such importance that it must at least be considered. It revolves around the question: had Saul seen Jesus? There are those who categorically dismiss the question and deny the possibility. I cannot be among their number. We are not certain of the exact chronology of the life of Jesus nor indeed of Paul. But we know enough of both to make it appear more than likely that they were contemporaries pretty close in age to one another. We know that Jesus had a ministry in Jerusalem the Fourth Gospel would indicate that that southern ministry was longer than a reading of the Synoptic Gospels would suggest though even in them there are hints of such a ministry: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... *How often* have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings but you would not let me.” There were undoubtedly visits paid by our Lord to the capital, including preaching and teaching visits, between that first memorable journey as a boy of twelve which Luke records and the final visit for the passion and crucifixion.”

“We need not doubt that young Saul of Tarsus, son as he was of devout Jewish parents, would also have visited the Temple at Jerusalem probably several times before he went there to undertake serious study at the feet of Gamaliel - study which may have involved him in some years of residence. Put these two series of probabilities together, and is it not possible, indeed highly likely, that the young teacher from Galilee and

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the young Pharisee from Tarsus would have looked into one another's eyes, and that Saul would have heard Jesus teach? And who could so see and hear without some deep impression being made? That the impression may have elicited resistance is, at the moment, neither here nor there. The important point is that an impression was probably made on Saul at an age when such impressions go deep and have about them an element of permanence.<sup>1</sup>”

**Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;**

**Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”**

GotQuestions.org explains why Paul was called the Apostle to the Gentiles.

“Paul calls himself “the apostle to the Gentiles” in Romans 11:13. It’s not as though Paul never preached to the Jews—on the contrary, his custom was to preach first in the synagogue when entering a new city (Acts 17:2). And it’s not as though the other apostles never preached to Gentiles (see Acts 10). But in a real sense, Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles was unique. Paul’s mission was to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles: “He chose me to be a servant of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles and to do the work of a priest in the service of his good news. God did this so that the Holy Spirit could make the Gentiles into a holy offering, pleasing to him” (Romans 15:16, CEV).”

**Galatians 2:7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the**

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Coggan, Paul: Portrait of a Revolutionary, New York: Crossroad, pages 33-34

**uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised**

**Galatians 2:8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),**

**Galatians 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.**

Let us go back to the text of Romans 1:1

**Romans 1:1 ... set apart for the gospel of God.**

**Set apart.** This has a nuance of being appointed for and dedicated to a particular task. This word is used in Acts, of Paul and Barnabas, when the Holy Spirit “separated” them for Paul’s first missionary journey.

**Acts 13:1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

**Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set**



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**apart (our word) for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”**

Now from the Septuagint (LXX) there are echoes from when God “separated” the sons of Israel to be His people.

**Leviticus 20:26 Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.**

This is an interesting passage concerning “separation.” The word in Hebrew for “holy” is a word related to separation. Israel was to be holy (separated) to God and separated from the peoples (Gentiles).

Robby Dean says, “The idea behind the word aphorizo is primarily that which is separate or separated for some purpose, the idea of being appointed. It is that he is detached from the world and attached to or united to the cause of the gospel.<sup>2</sup>”

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Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles:

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When Robby Dean was teaching on Romans 1:5, he said, “We recognize then that when Paul says, “through whom we have received grace and apostleship”, apostleship, the focus of apostleship, is to carry out the great commission of Matthew 28:19, 20. That is the mission of the apostles—to teach the gospel, the command to believe on the Lord Jesus

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Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles by God’s choice. The Lord Jesus declared that He had a specific mission for Paul: “This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15). Paul had been set apart from birth and called by God’s grace so that he might “preach [Christ] among the Gentiles” (Galatians 1:15–16).

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles because the bulk of his ministry was spent in pagan lands planting churches among the Gentiles. Paul was the first to preach the gospel on European soil. His three missionary journeys took him far from Jewish lands to Gentile areas where Diana, Zeus, and Apollo were worshiped, to Cyprus, to Athens, to Malta, and eventually to Rome. He desired to preach in Spain as well (Romans 15:24), but it’s unsure if he ever made it that far.

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles because he was under obligation to serve in Gentile lands. Paul’s testimony was that “this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ” (Ephesians 3:8). Peter preached (mainly) to the Jews, and Paul was commissioned to preach (mainly) to the Gentiles: “God had given me the responsibility of

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Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31), and then the mandates related to the spiritual life that come after salvation.<sup>3</sup>”

Commentators and even Herman Mattox have said that the book of Romans is about the gospel. Herman identifies Romans chapters 1-5 as being directed at the unbeliever. They are justified by faith. But when we come to chapters 6-8, Paul is talking about believers and the spiritual life. So this leads us to understand the gospel, which means “good news,” not

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preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews” (Galatians 2:7, NLT).

Paul was well-qualified to be the apostle to the Gentiles. He was well-educated, being thoroughly trained in the Mosaic Law under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) and having received a classical Roman education in Tarsus. He had the ability to argue his point from Jewish Law (Galatians 4:21–31) and to illustrate it from Greek literature (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12; 1 Corinthians 15:33). Paul’s training as a Pharisee (Philippians 3:5) allowed him access to synagogues everywhere, and he also held the privileges of Roman citizenship, which opened doors of opportunity throughout the Roman world (Acts 22:3, 25–29; 28:30)..

The Lord specifically chose Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles to show that salvation is offered to all people. Ephesians 3:6 speaks of how Christ brings together both Gentile and Jew: “And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus” (NLT). May the Lord continue to reach people everywhere for His glory, and may we display Paul’s willingness to go wherever God calls us.”

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just believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved, but that salvation continues in the life of the believer. Remember the three phases of salvation?

## Three Tenses of Salvation

Phase	Justification	<u>Sanctification</u>	Glorification
Tense	Past	<u>Present</u>	Future
Saved from sin's:	Penalty	<u>Power</u>	Presence
Scripture	Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5	<u>Philip 2:12</u>	Rom 5:10

### Three Tenses of Salvation<sup>4</sup>

Chafer analogy from He that is spiritual

#### “I. An ANALOGY

“THE BIBLE TREATS our deliverance from the bond-servitude to sin as a distinct form of salvation, and there is an analogy between this and the more familiar aspect of salvation which is from the guilt and penalty of sin. In the first five chapters of the letter to the Romans we have presented our salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin into justification and security through the redemption that is in Christ. Beginning with

<sup>3</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-005b/read>

<sup>4</sup> <https://slbc.org/sermon/soteriology-001/>

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chapter six, a new question is raised: "Shall we [who have been saved into safety] continue in sin?" The major portion of three chapters, as has been stated, is then devoted to a statement of facts and conditions of salvation from the reigning power of sin in the daily life of the child of God.<sup>5</sup>

“Gospel is the Old English translation of the Hellenistic Greek term εὐαγγέλιον, meaning "good news"; this may be seen from analysis of ευαγγέλιον (εὖ "good" + ἄγγελος "messenger" + -ιον diminutive suffix). The Greek term was Latinized as evangelium in the Vulgate, and translated into Latin as bona annuntiatio. In Old English, it was translated as gōdspel (gōd "good" + spel "news"). The Old English term was retained as gospel in Middle English Bible translations and hence remains in use also in Modern English.<sup>6</sup>

The word “gospel” comes from Old English gōd + spel = good news which is just a translation from the Greek. When we say gospel we are using Old English. Why not just translate it into Modern English, “good news.” What is the good news?

### Three phases of salvation

- Phase 1: Point of salvation at the point of belief. Saved from penalty of sin.
- Phase 2: Being saved from the power of sin.
- Phase 3: Saved from the presence of sin [in eternity].

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5 <https://lewisperrychafer.org/Spirituality.pdf>

6 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel>

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Robby Dean has an interesting comment on Paul's use of "salvation" in Romans 1:16:

"...it is the power of God for salvation." This is where this verse gets really interesting. So often we think of "gospel" in a narrow sense that Jesus saved: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved," in the sense of saved from the penalty of sin. Yet that is a very narrow use of the gospel and even though Paul uses the word "gospel" in that sense many times, many many times he also uses the word gospel as he does here to refer to the entire body of Christian doctrine and the Christian message. And that is how he uses it here. That salvation here is not getting saved or delivered from the penalty of sin, salvation here has to do not only with what we often refer to as phase one salvation or justification, in Romans it is never a synonym for justification. Not once. And yet where most of us read Romans and we read verses like Romans 6:21 [For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life] we think isn't it a great salvation verse. It is a great salvation verse but it has nothing to do with justification. That is not the gospel. Paul quit talking about how to get justified at the end of chapter five. Romans chapter six is talking about how a justified believer lives and experiences the fullness of life. So when he is talking about "the wages of sin is death" he is talking about the believer who is living in carnality and operational death (living like an unbeliever) and not experiencing the fullness of their spiritual life; so when he is saying the wages of sin is death he is talking about divine discipline and carnal death in the life of a believer. But the "free gift of God" he is talking about there is eternal life but meaning the quality of life. That is a hard thing for American evangelicals to understand because we have been taught and have heard so many sermons about eternal life that we think of eternal life as unending life in heaven. But it may surprise you that eternal life doesn't mean that ever in the first epistle that John wrote."

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Paul uses this word “salvation” to describe our deliverance from the power of sin in our spiritual life (phase 2) and ultimately deliverance from the presence of sin in glorification in phase three. The next time we have the word SOZO used is in Romans 5:9 NASB “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood [past tense], we shall be saved [future tense] from the wrath {of God} through Him.” We can be justified by we are not saved. Paul never uses the word SOZO or salvation in Romans to refer to phase one justification. He makes a distinction between the two. Justification was the topic of the last half of chapter three and chapter four. By the time he is getting to the wrap-up in chapter five he has moved beyond the discussion of justification and is transitioning to chapters 6, 7 and 8, which is the spiritual life.<sup>7</sup>”

Up to this point, I have presented various pieces of information concerning “the gospel” and “salvation” without connecting them together. Let’s attempt to do that.

Herman has a pamphlet which is out of print currently called the “Gospel for Christians.” It is about living a life of faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. L. S. Chafer, in his book on spirituality (He That is Spiritual), explains that living the Christian life is like an analogy of our original faith in Jesus Christ. Douglas Moo in his commentary on Romans says that the book of Romans is about “the gospel.” He says:

“What, then, is the theme of the letter? The gospel. The word “gospel” and the cognate verb “evangelize” are particularly prominent in the introduction (cf. 1:1, 2, 9, 15) and conclusion (15:16, 19) of Romans—its epistolary “frame.” And this is the word that has pride of place in Paul’s statement of the theme of the letter: 1:16-17. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel...” True, Paul goes on to speak of the interplay of salvation, the interplay of Jew and Gentile, and justification by faith; and each has been

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<sup>7</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-008b/read>, In a couple of places I went back to the audio to correct the transcript.

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advanced as the theme of the letter. But they are all elaborations of the main topic of these verses, the gospel. And we require a them as broad as “the gospel” to encompass the diverse topics in Romans. Moreover, as we have seen, Romans grows out of Paul’s own missionary situation; and the gospel Paul preaches would naturally be the focus of attention in any letter that arises from such a situation. Romans is Paul’s summary of the gospel that he preaches. But because he writes this summary in a context charged with uncertainty and controversy over the gospel’s relationship to the OT—especially the torah—and its embrace of both Jew and Gentile, he nuances his summary with constant reference to these issues.<sup>8</sup>”

So how would be best to characterize this gospel that spans the Christian experience, from initial faith on Jesus into eternity?

Do you remember the analogy one pastor said of the Millennium and eternity? The Millennium is the “front porch” to eternity.

So, perhaps, we can characterize initial salvation to the front porch of eternal salvation. An unbeliever should only see the front porch. The issue is faith on Jesus Christ for salvation. Too often, the unbeliever sees a Christian trying to live a good Christian life and thinks that is what provides for salvation. Many different “Christian” organizations submit that initial faith is just a lotto ticket to salvation. One must be “good” to not lose salvation. Hence an unbeliever can be easily confused. But salvation is believe in Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. We believe in eternal security. Once saved always saved. Now this does not mean we have license to sin. NO!!! Once saved, we are now in the family of God. As a result, we get spanked by God to get our attention to run back to walking by faith.

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8 Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp 29-30



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There is a poignant story once told by R. B. Thieme Jr. about a man who was a born again Christian. The man believed in Jesus as savior and believed in the doctrine of eternal security. Then, like people in the book of Judges, he decided to live like an unbeliever. After all, he reasoned, because of the doctrine of eternal security, he was going to heaven when he died. He married an unbeliever. After a while he died, likely the sin unto death. That is when a believer refuses to return to walking by faith in spite of repeated warnings (spankings) from God. His wife, the unbeliever, had truly been in love with the man and sought to find out how to attain salvation. She got the gospel and believed. It is sad in that the man will be in heaven. But, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, he will be ashamed because he refused to claim rewards prepared for him. All he had to do was walk by faith. God does the doing in the spiritual realm. In other words, the man got stuck at the porch and never really lived the rest of the good news. But God used that situation, in spite of the man's behavior, to bring his unbelieving wife into salvation by faith.

The book of Romans is about the gospel which includes the Christian life. The front porch is emphasized because that is the entrance into the Christian life and all the blessings and rewards that are potential for any Christian.

So, the question for you, the application is, will you, as a Christian, live the good news life by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit? Christianity is a relationship with God the Father. As Herman taught, faith dependence causes the Holy Spirit to take us to Jesus Christ who takes us to God the Father.

The following is just “extra” credit. I came across this information which is interesting but not immediately, directly related to Paul's mission. It is pertinent to our study since it indicates how Paul became a believer and an apostle.

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9 <https://www.gotquestions.org/apostle-to-the-Gentiles.html>