

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 1:1

Student Notes:

v. 1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God...

- **The Gospel of God**

The theme of this opening passage: “the gospel of God.” It’s one of the continuing themes throughout Romans. This epistle begins and ends with the phrase “the good news of God.”

Variations of the phrase: “The blessed good news”; “The good news of salvation”; “The good news of Jesus Christ”; “The good news of His Son” and “The good news of the grace of God.”

Evangelion:

The source of the phrase "gospel of God" or "good news of God"; the Greek word “evangelion”. Used sixty times in Romans.

Evangelion was used extensively in the emperor cult worship. Monumental announcements from the emperors were called, “evangelion”; good news.

When Paul wrote of the evangelion, he connected it to the gospel.

- **A Slave, Servant, Table-Waiter, Under-Galley Slave, and (a) Apostle**

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

Paul's Salutation: Letters in Paul's era generally started with a very simple salutary prologue. Paul's letter to the Romans begins with what we might call a greatly expanded salutation.

Three things he reveals about himself in the beginning of this salutation.

1. **Doulos:** a slave/bondslave

The Jewish background: Hebrew slaves could only be kept for six years, after that they were to be released. Sometimes, the slave was happy with his situation and he would offer to remain indefinitely.

And if the eved shall plainly say, I love adoni, my isha, and my banim; I will not go out (to the freedom); 6 Then his adon shall bring him unto HaElohim; he shall also bring him to the door ... and his adon shall pierce through his ear with a piercing-tool; then he shall serve him l'olam. -- Exodus 21:5-6, Orthodox Jewish Bible

John MacArthur: "In these cases, the "doulos" was declaring, "I don't serve because I have to, I don't serve because I'm forced to, I don't serve because I'm paid to, I don't serve because I'm afraid not to, I serve because I love my master, therefore I'll never go free."

Paul's image: a "bond slave" of Christ. In a world full of Roman slaves, Paul's audience would grasp the idea.

2. **Diakonos and Huperetes:**

I Corinthians 3:5: "Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos? But diakonos." ("deacon")

Early Church: "deacons" were actually table waiters. Paul: "Apollos and I are nothing; we are only but table waiters."

1 Corinthians 4:1: "We are (huperetes) servants of Christ". "Huper":

something or someone who is “under”. “Estes”: the root word that means to “row” (as in rowing a boat).

The illustration: Ancient ships often had multiple decks, manned by galley slaves. Paul: “We are third level galley slaves (huperetes).”

3. **Apostle:**

Apostolos: Someone who has been called by God – not someone who has decided on their own.

First use of “apostle”: Luke 6:13 -- “When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles...”

Paul’s status as a “called apostle”: Acts 9; Acts 22

Etymology of the word “apostle”: Greek: “apostolos”. Means “one who is sent, commissioned, or dispatched.” Examples: messengers, ambassadors, or envoys. (Term appears 78x’s in the New Testament)

Broad sense: Every Christian being sent into the world to share Christ’s message. (apostle with a small “a”.)

Specific Sense: Apostles with a capital “A” -- including the original 12. Significant requirements: 1. Directly called by Jesus. 2. Eye-witnesses of Christ and His resurrection. See Acts 1:21-22

How does Saul, turned into “Paul”, meet these requirements?

1. He had been directly called by Jesus on the road to Damascus. 2. He was a post-resurrection eyewitness of Jesus and his resurrection via a supernatural vision.

As far as Jesus is concerned, Paul met the two requirements. And who is going to argue with Him about it?