

## Romans: Verse-by-Verse

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Romans 1:2-4

### Student Notes

#### ▪ **The Gospel of God:**

The phrase, “The gospel of God” carries the weight of the balance of this crucial letter to the Romans. “God” is the most important word in Paul’s letter to the Romans.

“Romans is a book about God. No topic is treated with anything like the frequency of God. Everything Paul touches in this letter he relates to God ... There is nothing like it elsewhere.” -- Dr. Leon Morris

Just as the four Gospels are about Christ, and the Book of Acts is about the Holy Spirit’s work in the Early Church – Romans is entirely dedicated to God’s relationship to humanity.

- Verse 2 “The gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”

Most of the authorities of Jesus’ day missed this vital promise – but it was still there. It was hidden in plain sight.

Paul often describes the Gospel as a “mystery”; something hidden to some but revealed to others. Note: Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 1:26-27; Colossians 2:2; Colossians 4:3. Cf. (cross-reference) Luke 10:21.

A clear line between the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament realization found in Jesus: “The man of Daniel 7”; “The suffering servant of Isaiah 53”. See Luke 24:23-25.

All of the apostles drew that same portrait: Peter; Acts 2:24-25. Paul: Acts 17:1-3; I Corinthians 15:3-5

If the Pharisees and Sadducees missed it; if the Scribes and Doctors of the Law failed to realize it; the Gospel of God was there all along. It was hidden from their eyes in plain sight – in page after page of Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and other Old Testament books.

It was the Gospel of God promised beforehand by the prophets.

## **Two Natures; Two Experiences:**

Verses 3 & 4:

“Regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”

### **(1.) Two Natures:**

#### A. Human Nature:

“... Regarding his Son, who as to his **human nature** was a descendant of David...”

Two “sons” are immediately contrasted; God the Father’s Son and the Son of King David. (Both have dramatic importance to the narrative of the Gospel of God.)

Jesus’ human nature: “a descendant of David”. Revised Version: “The gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ...”

Jesus’ descent from King David’s lineage was a strong element in earliest Christian preaching and confession. While Jesus did not tout

this relationship, he didn't refuse to be called the "Son of David" by those who asked for his help. See: In Matthew 9:27; Matthew 15:22; Matthew 21:15;

Supportive and hostile historical references to Jesus from ancient sources:

- **Cornelius Tacitus:** "Christus, [Christ] from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus..."
- **Mara Bar-Serapion:** "What benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death? ...Or the Jews by murdering their wise king? [Christ]."
- **Phlegon:** "... And with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified, and the great earthquakes which then took place ... Jesus, while alive, was of no assistance to himself, but that he arose after death, and exhibited the marks of his punishment, and showed how his hands had been pierced by nails."
- **Pliny the Younger:** "They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god..."
- **Suetonius:** "Because the Jews at Rome caused constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ), he (Claudius) expelled them from the city (Rome)." (Life of Claudius, 25:4)

#### B. Divine Nature:

"Who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Greek word “horizo”, translated as “declared”, has a much fuller force than our English word suggests. In the Greek it has the force of the word “appointed”. See: Acts 10:42; 17:31

Paul uses the word “horizo” to act as a demarcation between two things: 1. Jesus’ human and God nature. 2. Jesus’ status before and after His Resurrection. (Peter’s use of “horizo”: Acts 2:36. Also see Mark 9:1)

The Resurrection marks the dividing line between his human role as the Son of Man and his divine role as the Son of God with power.

Verse 4: **“According to the spirit of holiness.”**

The “Spirit of Holiness” is the regular Hebrew way of saying “the Holy Spirit”. Paul reproduces the Hebrew phrase in the Greek. He’s contrasting two phrases.

The King James Version: “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David **according to the flesh;** And declared to be the Son of God with power, **according to the spirit of holiness...**”

Paul is not so much emphasizing the two natures of Christ as much as he is pointing to Jesus’ humiliation and exaltation: As the “Son of David” he lived out his humiliation; as the post-resurrection Son of God, his exaltation has introduced a new age.

Lastly: Paul gives us the fullest title for Jesus: “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

1. Both natures are brought together in this title. 2. Both of His states are brought together in this description.

And making it all the more powerful, Paul calls Him “Our Lord”. By the Virgin birth he is Jesus. By the resurrection by the Spirit of Holiness he is Christ. But for us, He is both; He is “Our Lord”.