

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

We come, once again, to the preaching of the Word of God. If you will take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter one this is part two of a series I have entitled “The Exalted Gospel: the Gospel of God.”

Indeed, the Creator of all things is the creator of the good news, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that there can be forgiveness through faith in Christ alone by his grace alone. It was not God or it was not man, it was God who conceived the gospel. It was God, not man who revealed it. It was God, not man who made it possible. It is God, not man who empowers a blind sinner to see the truth of the gospel. And it is God, not man who calls us, transforms us, who justifies us, sanctifies us, secures us and ultimately glorifies us. So he gets all of the glory, right? He gets all of the glory. Salvation is all of grace. Therefore, it is, indeed, the exalted gospel.

Because of this Paul was absolutely ecstatic. He was overjoyed. I don't know what that would have looked like for him. Those of you that know me, I get real excited about things, but you probably won't see it.

I see some of these talk show game things and these people win things and they are all over the place. I tend not to react that way, but believe me. In my heart when I think of the gospel there is nothing in life that is more glorious, that is better news than this.

And for this reason the apostle Paul sees himself as a bond servant of Christ, even the lowest galley slave of Roman ship as we studied the last time when we were together. Paul literally existed to serve the one who had purchased his redemption, who freed him from the bondage of sin.

Let me ask you before we look at the text this morning. Is this your attitude towards the gospel? When you think of the gospel of Christ is this the greatest, the best news you have ever heard? In your life when you hear good news what do you tend to do? Keep it to yourself? No. You shout it to everybody you know. Your whole life begins to orbit around that good news. Is that the testimony of your life? If not, maybe this news isn't that good for you.

May I begin this morning, before I even read the text, by saying that if you do not share the apostle Paul's exhilaration about the good news, there is probably one or maybe all of three things going on for you. One is because you have a superficial understanding of your sin. You think that you are a far better person than you really are, that in God's eyes, you are really not all that bad.

You know, a man who is convinced that he can swim around the world in the ocean is really not too thrilled about the offer of rescuing. But the man who knows he would perish in a matter of minutes would rejoice in such an opportunity.

Recently a friend of mine was talking about sharing her faith with another person and she asked this man. I am curious. Are you a Christian? And his response was so typical. He said, “Oh, I... hey, I don't get hung up on religion and all of those titles. I am just a good

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

person and I am going to live a good life.” And the way he put it, “I just believe that we have to let the chips fall where they may.”

My friend, those are the words of a fool. Hell will be filled with people who in their eyes are very good, but not in God’s eyes. You see, it is God’s standard, not our standard that determines these things. And might I say that as we study Romans we are going to see Paul arguing that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, everyone.

You see, God’s holiness is infinitely beyond our ability to grasp, making our sin infinitely beyond our ability to fathom. Sin is the failure to glorify God. None of us do that to the degree he would have us.

So, my friend, apart from the righteousness of Christ imputed to your account, on your very best day you are an abomination to a holy God. You have fallen short of the glory of God and unless you believe in the gospel you will perish in your sin.

Well, it is not very good news for another type of person and that is the type of person that does not fully understand the penalty of sin. Many people have distorted God and created a new god, which is nothing more than idolatry. All they see is a god of love. They don’t see God that is holy, that is just, that must punish sin. So many people cannot conceive of eternal punishment. They cannot conceive of a loving God who would in any way send someone to hell.

And many people also just redefine hell.

“Oh, it is not a literal place. That is just a figurative expression. And unbelievers, they just simply die and cease to exist and they don’t benefit from the blessings of heaven.”

Others created a doctrine where unbelievers are only punished temporarily and then they would argue that God mercifully just annihilates them.

Well, certainly for that person the gospel isn’t really all that good news. I mean, it is good news. But, you know, if you don’t believe in it, it is really not that big of a deal because the consequences of sin is not that severe.

There is another type of person who might not be too excited about the good news and that is the person who has a superficial grasp of their salvation and all that means in our life and the glory that awaits the redeemed.

Many people just rejoice because they are forgiven and they relish the joys of Christian fellowship. They like the culture of the church. They are happy about all of those things, but they have really no understanding of the magnificent benefits of our salvation, things like the indwelling work of the Spirit of God, the power of the Word of God in our life, the power of prayer, the power of the Spirit of God working through our gifts in the body of Christ, the joy of serving Christ, not to mention the glories of heaven.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

Frankly, many Christians see heaven kind of like a trip to Disneyland. It is going to be a really fun thing to do, but, you know, they don't see it as something so exceedingly beyond that that it causes them to rejoice with tears because, my friends, when we enter into the presence of God it is going to be an experience that certainly right now we cannot fathom. It will be exhilarating. It will be ineffable. Right now it is incomprehensible.

When you grasp these things and begin to see what wonderful news the gospel truly is, because, believe me. According to the Word of God sin must and will be punished eternally. Hell is real. Heaven is glorious beyond words. For these reasons, the gospel is the greatest news in all of the world.

You will recall in Luke chapter two when the Savior was born the good news of the gospel exploded on the hill side of Bethlehem and all of this glorious light and an angel announced the birth of Jesus and he said and the Lord suddenly stood before them and the glory of the Lord shown around them and they were terribly frightened. And an angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. Behold, I bring you..." What? Good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

And then later on, as if that wasn't enough, the text says:

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."¹

Well, dear friends, this same glory appeared to the apostle Paul who wrote this letter. He encountered the living Christ on the road to Damascus. He was confronted with that ineffable brilliant light of the presence of God, his shekinah and the exalted gospel of Christ transformed his life and it became the greatest and most exhilarating, the most life dominating news that he could possibly imagine.

So later on he would say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."²

He would even say, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."³

And here before us is this great epistle to the Romans that describes in detail this exhilarating good news.

Now, this morning we come back to the text. Let me reads the first seven verses to you. We continue to make our way through it verse by verse very carefully. I don't want to miss anything that I believe the Spirit of God would have us to grasp.

¹ Luke 2:13-14.

² Philippians 1:21.

³ Romans 8:18.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

And so in this brief introduction he summarizes the gospel that he is going to explain later on in the body of the epistle.

He says:

Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴

The first time we were together we talked about the introduction of this epistle and then we looked at part one which was the preacher of the gospel in verse one. Again, he sees himself as a bondservant. He is called as an apostle and he is set apart for the gospel of God.

Now today in part two we are going to look at the promise of the gospel and in a little bit the person of the gospel.

Again, notice the text.

“Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”⁵

Now notice verse two.

“...which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.”⁶

For the second time now in as many verses the apostle speaks of the sovereignty of God pertaining to the gospel, a gospel that he planned and he purposed and set into motion in eternity past. Remember, in verse one Paul said that he was set apart for the gospel of God. In Galatians 1:15 we learn that he was set apart by the Lord Jesus Christ and there the text says, “...even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace.”⁷

⁴ Romans 1:1-7.

⁵ Romans 1:1.

⁶ Romans 1:2.

⁷ Galatians 1:15.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

And now we come to verse two and we learn that this gospel was promised beforehand. This means that all that is required for the gospel to become reality was decreed by God in eternity past.

You will recall what Paul said in Ephesians one, for example, and verse three. He said:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁸

So now Paul is again announcing the good news of the gospel, one that had already taken place historically. But, mind you, it was one that was also promised, as the text says, before the foundation of the world. In other words, before creation. Obviously this was a decree of God that was wholly uninfluenced by anything else because nothing else existed. Very important theological point for you to keep in mind.

Now this is an extremely important revelation to the people receiving this letter, especially to the Jews, because, you see, they were accusing Paul of concocting some novel plan of salvation that contradicted the teaching of Moses. They thought that this gospel was utterly foreign to Judaism, not only foreign but hostile to it. And, of course, the type of Judaism they were living, indeed it was.

You will recall, for example, in Acts 21 verses 20 through 21 we have the story there of the elders of Jerusalem. They are rejoicing over Paul, are with Paul over the many Jews that were believing in Christ. But they were concerned about the unsaved Jews that were there in Jerusalem because of their view of Paul. And there we read, “They have been told about you,”⁹ referring to Paul, “that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”¹⁰ And so forth.

So that was the mindset of the Jews of that day. So here in verse two of Romans as well as in many other places, Paul is making it crystal clear that this gospel was promised beforehand through his prophets.

Well, Moses would have been one of those prophets, right? It was promised beforehand in the holy Scriptures.

Now, what is the holy Scriptures? Very important statement. It is easy for us to just kind of overlook this, but this is very, very important in Paul’s reasoning. You see, this is a

⁸ Ephesians 1:3-6.

⁹ Acts 21:21.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

reference to the inspired writings of the Old Testament which were sadly really not considered as all that important to the Jews or that day. The Old Testament writings were kind of like sacred relics especially by the first century here. They did not really see them so much as the inspired Word of God.

You see, the holy Scriptures were not studied nor were they valued to the same degree as the rabbinical writings. That is what was important to them. And, of course, in the rabbinical writings it really said nothing about the gospel of God, all of these things that Paul was teaching that Jesus had taught and so forth.

And, remember. It was the scribes. It was the Pharisees, those who were most excited about the writings of the rabbis, the traditions of men. These were the ones that were the most violent haters of the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this is a very important historical truth that you must understand. In fact, this explains why so often you would hear Jesus say, “You have heard that it was said...” Or he would say something like, “You have heard it said by the ancients,” or “you have heard that the ancients were told,” and so forth. “But I say unto you...”

Matthew five is a great example of that. And frequently you read about Jesus being frustrated with his disciples for not grasping the truth of the Old Testament Scripture concerning who he was. They were much more knowledgeable of many of the traditions, the rabbinical teachings than they were the Old Testament, the holy Scriptures.

You will recall Jesus’ comments to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. You remember the Lord has risen from the grave and there is a couple of guys walking along not too far from Jerusalem. They are shaking their heads and they are trying to figure out what has happened here. The text says that they thought that Jesus was going to redeem Israel, but instead now he had been crucified and now there is this empty tomb. And some are even saying that he is alive.

And Jesus comes along to them and they don’t know he is at first. Obviously these men were steeped in the rabbinical teachings. They didn’t understand the Old Testament and Jesus said to them in Luke 24:25, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!”¹¹

And then in verse 27 we read, “And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He,”¹² referring to Jesus, “explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”¹³ In other words, the Old Testament.

Luke then records their testimony. You may remember the story. It is such a beautiful story. The Lord finally reveals really who he is and they recognize him as the resurrected Christ. And in verse 31 it says:

¹¹ Luke 24:25.

¹² Luke 24:27.

¹³ Ibid.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining [what?] the Scriptures to us?"¹⁴

Oh.

You see, this was always Jesus' method of teaching the Jews, the apostles' method. They taught from the Old Testament Scriptures which never contradicted Moses. Jesus was the very Lamb of God pictured in the Jewish sacrifice.

You will recall in Matthew five verse 17 he said:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.¹⁵

So what an amazing revelation this particular verse here in verse two must have been to the first century Jews, to finally realize that they had been carrying around this great treasure of the gospel of God all along, that those dusty old scrolls that they really considered more or less a sacred relic really not only contained the law that condemned, but the grace that forgives.

And now they are learning that God had not only revealed himself to them through these holy Scriptures, but also through his incarnate Son.

You will recall the writers of Hebrews in chapter one verse one, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son."¹⁶

I love what Peter had to say in this light, 1 Peter one verse 10. He said:

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.¹⁷

¹⁴ Luke 24:31-32.

¹⁵ Matthew 5:17-18.

¹⁶ Hebrews 1:1-2.

¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:10-12.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

As we consider this passage do you think about your Bible? You know that book that collects dust typically during the week until you pull it out to bring it to church on Sunday. You know that book where in the Old Testament there are still pages stuck together where you don't even really know what is in those minor prophets. Consider that. And consider now that this is the gospel of God which had been promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. Not only they Old Testament, but we have the New Testament. We have the New Testament cannon.

Dear friends, this is the most precious, the most powerful, the most promising treasure in all of the world. This is the Word of God. Is it any wonder why it is under such attack constantly, relentlessly?

My friends, don't view your Bible as some old relic and prefer the foolishness of men of the wisdom of God. But see it for what it is. This is the Word of God and in it we have the greatest news in all of the world, the gospel of God that he decreed in eternity past.

Now, where can we see this gospel of God that he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures in the Old Testament? Well, as I told you, when Jesus was with the two walking to Emmaus, where did he begin? Well, it says that he began with Moses and all the prophets. So that might be a good place for us to start. Let's look at a few of the places where we see the gospel of God in the Old Testament.

I am just going to give you some samples and we will begin with Moses. We will go to the Pentateuch which means the five scrolls. The first five books of your Bible were written by Moses. In fact, sometimes they are called the books of Moses. Let's begin there.

For example, we could study Moses' inspired statement in Genesis three and verse 15. There, you will recall, that God had cursed the serpent and then he said this.

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed.”¹⁸

In other words, between Satan and unbelievers who Jesus called the children of the devil, John 8:44, I am going to put enmity between you the woman and between your seed, in other words, Satan's seed, and her seed which would be Christ, a descendant of Eve and all who were in him.

And then it says, “He shall bruise you on the head.”¹⁹

In other words, Christ shall bruise you, Satan, on the head. Christ would deliver a fatal blow. And we know that, for example, in Romans 16 and verse 20 the apostle Paul talks about how that, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”²⁰

¹⁸ Genesis 3:15.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

And so this is all being prophesied here in the book of Moses.

And then it says. “ And you [Satan] shall bruise him on the heel.”²¹

In other words, Satan would only cause Christ to suffer. Many of the old theologians call this the protoevangelium. It means the first gospel. You see the gospel right here. I would imagine that on the road to Emmaus this is probably where Jesus began. It is the first announcement of the Messiah Redeemer.

The promised gospel can be seen in so many places. I will give you some more while we are thinking of the books of Moses. God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12, Genesis 17, that through this seed the whole world would be blessed, that there would be an everlasting covenant that God made through or to him and that Jesus the Messiah would ultimately, the Redeemer would ultimately come through him.

We could go to Genesis 49:10 where God repeated his promise that the scepter which was a symbol of royalty.

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”²²

Well Shiloh means shalom. It means peace and this is really a cryptogram or what we might call a secret symbol in the Scripture for the Messiah. You will recall even in Revelation chapter five and verse five Jesus said, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals,”²³ and so forth.

So there is prophecies all the way back there in Genesis 49, the gospel that the prophets spoke about.

He could have gone to Balaam’s prophecy in Numbers 24 verse 17.

“A star shall come forth from Jacob, And a scepter shall rise from Israel.”²⁴

A star, *khokh* (ko-kawb’), a blazing forth of light. And, indeed, was not that Jesus the light of the world who even peeled back his flesh on the Mount of Transfiguration to allow the effulgence of his glory to be manifested? What a picture of the gospel of Christ.

Well, we could move from Moses to another prophet. We could go to the prophet Isaiah. And, again, I am just giving you samples here. There are 31 prophecies of Christ that

²⁰ Romans 16:20.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Genesis 49:10.

²³ Revelation 5:5.

²⁴ Numbers 24:17.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

were fulfilled at his first advent that are mentioned in Isaiah. I will give you a few. In Isaiah 7:14 there is the prophecy of Christ's virgin birth. In chapter nine there is the prophecy of the birth of Emmanuel, God with us. In chapters 29, 35 we see prophesied Jesus' healing of the physical deaf and the blind. Chapter 42 we read about his baptism and transfiguration and even his overall demeanor at his first advent. In chapter 50 we read about Jesus who would be beaten and spat upon. In Isaiah 53 that we read earlier we read about Israel would fail to recognize her Messiah, Jesus that would remain silent in all phases of his trial, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, how he would be completely innocent of all of the charges levied against him that he saw the need to be crucified between two criminals and that Christ's resurrection was a prerequisite to his some day occupying David's throne. The prophet Isaiah.

This would help them understand Samuel's prophecy in 2 Samuel. Remember God's covenant to David regarding the Messiah that would be his offspring, that would ultimately establish his kingdom forever.

The gospel is depicted in Daniel nine. Remember the prophecy of the 70 weeks of years that pinpointed the exact day of the Messiah's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent death.

Do you realize there are 20 messianic prophecies in the Psalms? We read about God's announcement of Christ to be his Son in Psalm two. And Psalm 16 how Christ will be resurrected from the grave. And in Psalm 22 that God would forsake Christ in his moment of agony, that he would be scorned and ridiculed, that his hands and feet would be pierced and that others would gamble for his clothes and so forth.

You could go to Zechariah, the prophet Zechariah chapter nine verse nine.

“Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”²⁵

Later on in chapter 12 verse 10 we read how that he would be pierced.

The gospel of God can be seen in how Jesus was the fulfillment of all of the indirect prophecies that we see in the Scripture, the types and the symbols and the shadows, how the paschal Lamb ultimately prefigured the Lamb of God that would come and take away the sin of the world. It is all there, how the burnt offerings and the sacrifices and even the furnishings of the tabernacle and the temple all pointed to him. The gospel can be seen in the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, how God promised to put his Spirit within the hearts of those who would believe in him.

In fact, it is estimated that in the Old Testament there are 332 prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ most of which were fulfilled literally at this first coming. These were stunning truths of the gospel of God. And this is what Paul was speaking about here in his introduction. They were promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.

²⁵ Zechariah 9:9.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

And, again, this is always how Jesus and the apostles would present the gospels. They would go to the Old Testament.

Read the account, for example, in Acts 13 when Paul was preaching to the Jews. You see a great example of that.

Now, you might ask, “You know, if all of this is there in verse two, if that is what he is referring to, I wonder why he didn’t elaborate on this a bit more, why he didn’t give some examples.”

And, by the way, he is going to in the body of the letter later on. But you must understand. This is just a quick introduction. This is just a summary. And the whole epistle, frankly, is merely an outline of concentrated truth. It is really a synopsis of the unfathomable doctrines of salvation and many other doctrines that is woven throughout the tapestry of Scripture.

In fact, you might think of every epistle as basically a sermon outline, not necessarily the full text that he would preach.

For example, in Acts 17 we learn that when Paul first preached to the people at Thessalonica he goes into the synagogue and he says this in verse two.

“And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths...”²⁶

You think my sermons are long. For three sabbaths he reasoned from the Scriptures, yeah, the Old Testament.

“...explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’”²⁷

You go to Acts 20. You remember the Lord or how Paul served the Lord there in humility and tears and he is dodging all these plots from the Jews to try to kill him and he is testifying solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God and how he did not shrink from declaring to them the whole purpose of God. And he taught both publicly and from house to house for how long? For three years. Three years he gave himself to these people.

So when Paul says in Romans 1:2 that the gospel of God was promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, please understand, dear friends, that that statement alone is merely a key to a vast underground treasure house of divine truth.

And how sad for us as believers to somehow rush by such a profound text without taking up the key and unlocking the door of the vault. And I have just barely done it here. We have just kind of peeked inside. What a tragedy that we don’t enter into the storehouse of

²⁶ Acts 17:2.

²⁷ Acts 17:3.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

divine truth that we find in these little openings so that we can relish all that is ours in our inheritance with Christ Jesus. Staggering truths, all through the Old Testament and all through the New Testament.

This is “The gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.”²⁸

And then notice verse three.

“...concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.”²⁹

In verse one we read of the preacher of the gospel. Verse two Paul speaks of the promise of the gospel. And here the person of the gospel. It is concerning his Son who is born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.

My, what an inscrutable mystery this is that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. The Son of God and the Son of David.

Well, this is very important and I want you to grasp it so listen very carefully.

You will recall when the angel appeared to Joseph explaining what was about to happen with the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:23 it is interesting how we have a quote from Isaiah 7:14.

“BEHOLD,” the angel said, “‘THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,’ which translated means [what?] ‘GOD WITH US.’”³⁰

And then the angel reveals more about her son when he appeared to Mary in Luke 1:32, says that, “He... will be called the Son of the Most High.”³¹

Now it is an important note here for you to keep in mind. Jesus Christ, the Messiah King, fully God, fully man, born of a virgin. Yes. But I want you to know that biblically he as the eternal Son of God before he was even conceived and born and was born.

He did not become the Son of God at his incarnation as some teach. Scriptures teach that there was a Father Son relationship that always existed in eternity past. In fact, in Galatians four verse four we read, “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.”³²

And, again, that is what Paul is speaking about there in Romans 1:3.

²⁸ Romans 1:1-2.

²⁹ Romans 1:3.

³⁰ Matthew 1:23.

³¹ Luke 1:32.

³² Galatians 4:4.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

So the title “Son of God” really speaks of the deity of Jesus and his equality with God.

But what an unfathomable concept here. Think about it. In his incarnation he remained the eternal Son of God. He remained fully divine and he became what he previously had not been, namely, fully human. That is what Paul was saying here.

The gospel here is “...concerning His Son.”³³

And then he says, “...who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.”³⁴

My this is a curious statement. You know, I am sure if Paul had been in person he would say, “Let me take a couple of hours and explain this to you. Let me flesh this out a bit for you.”

And I am going to try to do it in just a few minutes, ok? But he probably would have gone to Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 11 verse one where we read:

“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.”³⁵

No doubt he would have explained this to them and even elaborated on the text that Jesus later on wrote even though it hadn’t been written as yet. You recall Jesus had communicated these truths to him in the wilderness. And you remember in Revelation 22 Jesus calls the thirsty to come to him and in verse 16 he says, “I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”³⁶

This is amazing.

“I am the root and the offspring of David.”³⁷

And this helps us understand what Paul is saying here in verse three that he is the Son, but also born of a descendant of David according to the flesh. If you think with me for a second back in Revelation 22 verse 16.

“I am the root and the offspring of David.”³⁸

What is a root? Well, a root is that which gives and sustains life. Life cannot exist apart from a root. So the idea here is that Jesus is the root of David making Jesus an ancestor of David. Ok? Are you with me? Jesus is an ancestor of David. But then he is not only

³³ Romans 1:3.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Isaiah 11:1.

³⁶ Revelation 22:16.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

the root. He says, “I am the offspring of David.” So he is also a descendant of David. He is of the race of David.

All right. Now how can you be both the root and the offspring? How can you be an ancestor as well as a descendant? The only way is you have to be both God and man.

You see, Jesus’ answer was just staggering here. He is describing both his deity as well as his humanity. Jesus is saying—and this is certainly the meaning here of the text that we have in Romans 1:3. Jesus is saying, “As God, I created David. I am the divine root that has brought him forth. I am his ancestor. I am the original source of that family line. But I am also his descendant because in my incarnation I am the Son of David. I was born of the Davidic line in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in 11:1.”

“Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.”³⁹

You will remember that Jesse was David’s father through whose line the Messiah was born.

You know, how else could you make sense of Isaiah 9:7 where the prophet speaks of the coming Savior saying that he would sit upon the throne of David and rule over his kingdom?

You see, only a descendant of David that was both eternal God as well as man could fulfill such a promise.

So then, Jesus later on is revealing in Romans or Revelation 22 that he is the root and the offspring of David and, again, here in Romans 1:3 Paul speaks of the person of the gospel who is the Son of God, the one who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.

Now, why is this so important in presenting the gospel, the gospel of God? Why would Paul say this?

Because, dear friends, the work of God, the work of Redemption demanded a theanthropon. It demanded a God man, one who could supernaturally fuse the human nature with the divine and form an indissoluble bond. A man had to bear the punishment for all and yet only God could endure the full force of divine wrath. A perfect man had to die. But only God is perfect. Human flesh had to go to the grave and yet only God could overcome the grave and grant us his righteousness through that great doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

The babe in the manger had to have been born of a virgin in order for him to be both the Son of man and the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us.

³⁹ Isaiah 11:1.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

Now, can you imagine the conversations that even this verse must have sparked? As we come to a conclusion this morning just think for a minute. Paul writes the letter. He gives it to Phoebe, the deaconess. She takes it to Rome. They are reading this and I would imagine by the time they got to verse three people are saying, “Whoa. Stop. Did you just say again that he is God’s Son who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh? You know, we believe that, but could you please explain that? And hopefully somebody was there that began to explain this, to flesh it out a bit.”

Can’t you just hear the discussion? Because, dear friends, here is the truth of it all. Even as a fetus growing within Mary’s womb he was upholding all things by the word of his power, Hebrews 1:3.

Think about it. He required milk from his mother’s breast and yet in him all things hold together, Colossians 1:17.

Isn’t it amazing?

In his humanness he would grow hungry and thirsty and he would grow weak and tired. Yet in his divinity he could multiply bread and fish and turn water into wine. While on the boat with his disciples he sleeps in exhaustion, physical exhaustion. And yet at the same time he is the omnipotent Lord of the universe who could arise from his slumber and calm the sea and the storm with a word.

His human nature has now ascended into heaven and yet because of his divine nature he continues to be omnipresent. Therefore this same Jesus can say to us, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Oh, child of God, what astounding truths are set forth even here in this third verse. Dear friend, I pray that you have embraced the exalted gospel of God, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you haven’t, I pray that you would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you can be saved.

Dear Christian, may I challenge you? Never again skip over some passage in Scripture, but take what might appear to be some little key that is somewhat insignificant and won’t you take the time to use it to unlock the vast treasure house, the secret chamber of gospel truth and then go in and just sit down and rejoice in it. Just, shall we say, as we do here in Tennessee, waller in it.

May the glory of every jewel of the gospel encourage your heart even today and cause you to rejoice in the undeserved grace that we have in Christ.

Let us pray.

Father, thank you for these amazing truths. Oh, God, thank you for your gospel. Thank you that you are a sovereign God that has ordained the end from the beginning.

The Exalted Gospel – Part 2

Romans 1:1-7

Therefore we can count on every word you have promised. Cause us to rejoice in these truths that bear much fruit for your glory I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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