



Paul's Letter to The Romans

A New Apostle with the Same Old Gospel Romans 1:1-7: Part Two

Last week as we began our expedition up the steep, majestic incline of Paul's letter to the Romans, I made the point that here in the first seven verses Paul was really just introducing himself to the Roman church. There is something about that that is almost incomprehensible to us today. It's hard for us to imagine a church not knowing the Apostle Paul or his ministry. Of course, there were a few in Rome that did know him. In fact, a few knew him quite well. I am thinking particularly of Aquila and Priscilla.¹

Still, on the whole, Paul was either not known or not very well known in Rome. To remedy that Paul used this preamble of his letter to identify both himself and his message. In fact, I argued last week that the whole of Paul's letter was written to do just that. **I argued that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans to prepare a church he did not know for an intended visit. He did that by explaining the gospel he preached and he did that in order that they might...**

**...be edified,
...be at peace with one another
...help him on his way to Spain**

Now last time, we spent most of our time looking into how Paul identified himself. We noticed, first, that he used his Gentile rather than his Jewish name.

We also noticed that he summed up all of his personal information in that one word, Paul. From there, we examined the three extraordinary words he used to describe his calling. You will remember that Paul described himself as a **“slave of Jesus Christ”**, a **“called apostle”** and one **“set-apart for the gospel”**.

Now, this morning we are going to spend our time looking at Paul’s description of the gospel he proclaimed, so to help us on our way let’s refresh ourselves by reading again the first seven verses of Romans.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:1**...Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ ¶ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, unless you should get the idea that I have somehow along the way managed an original thought, let say that I have taken my list of observations on Paul’s description of the gospel from John Stott’s commentary. Let me also say that I have altered his phrasing slightly by translating it from British to Texican.²

Having said that, our first observation is this...

The Gospel comes from God...

First, Paul notes that the origin of the **“gospel”** is God. You can see that, I think, in the phrase **“gospel of God”**.³ That tells us the gospel is Trinitarian. The gospel

is not the exclusive plan of the Father, or the Son or the Spirit but is rather the divine plan and purpose of the whole godhead for saving sinful man. That tells us that the gospel was conceived and purposed in the eternal plan of God. Now I know “**conceived**” is hardly the proper word. I know that God does not actually come up with any new ideas but has always planned and purposed to do whatever He does, from all eternity. Still I don’t mind using that language because I am focusing on the point that the gospel was *always* His plan and was not merely something He came up with to get man out of the mess he had gotten into.⁴ Listen to Piper:

*The gospel is from God and through God and to God. God chose Paul, the author of Romans before he was born. God purchased his freedom by the death of his Son. God called him to be an apostle. And then God gave him a gospel - the Gospel of God himself. So God is at the bottom and God is at the top and God is in the middle.*⁵

I can’t tell you important I think that point is. You see Paul is making the point that the gospel is about what God has done. Somehow, somewhere along the way we have managed to change that emphasis to where we think the gospel is about what we do or what we believe. Paul is keeping the focus where it belongs — godward. He is focusing on the gospel as the objective work of God and not on man’s subjective response. He is keeping the focus on what God has done and not what man must do or even ought to do. Listen to how J. Gresham Machen summed up the importance of the objective reality of God’s work.

“What good does it do to me to tell me that the type of religion presented in the Bible is a very fine type of religion and that the thing for me to do is just to start practicing that type of religion now...I will tell you, my friend. It *doesn’t do me the tiniest bit of good*...What I need first of all is not *an* exhortation, but a gospel, not directions for saving myself but knowledge of how God has saved me. Have you any good news? That is the question that I ask of you. I know your exhortations

will not help me. But if anything has been done to save me, *won't you just tell me the facts?*"

Oh, how I wish I had said that! Don't you? You see Machen like Paul knew that God actually had some good news. He knew that the only **"good news"** there is comes from God. And God's good news is good because it is about what God has done. It is about His marvelous wisdom and grace in redeeming us from our sin.

Our second observation then is this...

The Old Testament is a Witness to the Gospel

Now the **"good news"** wasn't anything new and it certainly wasn't anything Paul created but rather was something previously witnessed and promised in the Old Testament. You can see that I think especially in verse two where Paul says that the gospel was...

^{ESV} **Romans 1:2**...which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,

It seems to me that it is Paul's contention that the Old Testament prophets actually understood the gospel and purposely spoke of it in what they wrote.⁶ Sometimes, their words were seemingly shrouded in mystery but many times their words were as plain and clear as the noonday sun. Either way, Paul says the gospel is all over the Old Testament and here is an important truth. Once you actually begin to see the gospel in the Old Testament, you can see it everywhere. You can see it in the skins of the animals God provided Adam and Eve to cover

over their nakedness after the fall.⁷ You can see it in the substitutionary ram God provided Abraham at just the very moment he was about to plunge a knife into the neck of his son, Isaac.⁸ You can see it in the extraordinary deliverance of the Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt. You see it in the whole idea of the Tabernacle and the endless offerings of animal sacrifice.⁹ You see it in the covenantal faithfulness of God's promise to redeem a people unto Himself just as see it in the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, the meek and lowly king of Zechariah 9, and the promised Messiah of Isaiah 9.¹⁰

You see Paul believed that the gospel was promised in the Old Testament and that is almost certainly the reason why he makes such extensive use of the Old Testament in Romans. I mentioned last week that Paul quotes directly from the Old Testament some 53 times in Romans. Beyond that he alludes to other Old Testament passages some 24 times. That means Romans contains a total of some 79 Old Testament references.¹¹ Of course, any line of argumentation that included so many references to the Old Testament would have impressed Jewish readers but Paul is not just using the Old Testament to try to sway Jewish readers. He is rather citing the revelation of the gospel in the Old Testament to demonstrate that Jesus is the point of the Bible. You can see that in verse 3.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:2**...which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son,

That leads us to a third observation...

The Gospel is about Jesus Christ.¹²

Do you get his point there? It is not just the gospel. It is the gospel regarding His Son. You see Paul is adding here another point about the gospel. He has already said that the gospel the **“gospel of God”** and that it was **“witnessed by”** and **“promised”** through the prophets in the Old Testament. Now, he is noting that the gospel is about Jesus Christ.

Now I want to spend a good deal of our time this morning right here if I could and I want to do that by setting apart for you the two principal phrases given in verses three and four.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:3**...concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Now, this is little harder to see in English than it is in Greek, especially in a translation like the NIV that is so bent on smoothing out the text, but there are two parallel clauses in these two verses. I understand the structure to look like this:

...in the sphere of the flesh, born (made) a descendant of David

...αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα,

...in the sphere of the Spirit, appointed (declared) to be the Son of God¹³

...τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν,

Now the first phrase doesn't cause much difficulty. We talked a bit last week how there are really two important implications found in the phrase. First, Jesus

became a man. He wasn't always a man but became a man. The word used here is the exact same word used in John 1.

You will remember there in John 1 that the Word *was* and even though the word already *was*, the Word *became*. You can see those two ideas in John 1:1 and John 1:14.

^{ESV} **John 1:1**...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

^{ESV} **John 1:14**...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

Now you might respond, **"Oh that happens all the time. Sometimes people are uneducated and they go to school and they become educated. They were and they become."** My response to that is, **"Yes that's true but moving from being uneducated to being educated does not involve a change of nature. They didn't start off human become educated and turn into something else, like an angel. No, their essential humanness stayed the same, even if they went to a really, really good school, like Westminster."**

But John argues that Jesus was God and became man. In theology, that act is referred to as the **"incarnation"** or the **"infleshing"** of the Son of God. And that is exactly what Paul is talking about here. And as he talks about it, he uses the exact same Greek word that John does. He says...

...according to the flesh (that is according to his human nature) he was *born or made* of the seed of David.

So Jesus became a man but he didn't just become any man. He became a man who was descendant of David. Now think about that for a minute. He created

every living thing. He made the earth and all that dwells in it and then he became a descendant of one of those He Himself created. I think that is why Jesus loved to ask the Pharisees the following question,

^{ESV} **Matthew 22:42**..."What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴ "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'? ⁴⁵ If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

"No one could say a word in reply." I love that and isn't it understandable? We know the whole story and still can't really comprehend it. Of course, Jesus did not become a descendant of David just because He liked the look of David's family. He became a descendant of David to fulfill prophecy and that is really the second implication that can be drawn from this phrase. Jesus was born of the seed of David to fulfill the various Messianic prophecies outlined in the Old Testament.¹⁴

Look for example at Isaiah 11:1...

^{ESV} **Isaiah 11:1**...There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. **(Cf. Romans 15:12)**

Look also at Jeremiah 25:5-6...

^{ESV} **Jeremiah 23:5...** "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

You see the expectation of the day was that there would be a great, national Messiah, a Messiah that would deliver the nation of Israel from its oppressors. Of course, when the scholars looked to find more about the Messiah in the Old Testament they were confronted over and over again with the identity of this mysterious son of David that would ascend his father's throne. So you can see that the reference to being a descendant of David would have evoked all kinds of mental images and preconceptions for Jewish listeners.¹⁵

Still that part of the quote is not really all that difficult to understand. It is the next part, the part that goes...**according to the Spirit of holiness, appointed (declared) to be the Son of God...**that is really a challenge. Now there are three difficulties and I want to lay them out for you this morning and try to make some sense of them all.

The first problem is trying to determine what Paul meant by "**Spirit of holiness.**"

^{ESV} **Romans 1:4...**and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Now there are two different views about what the phrase means. The first view, the correct one I think, is that the third person of the Trinity is in view, that is...the Holy Spirit. The wording of the phrase "**spirit**" first followed by the

adjective **“holiness”** would have been just how ancient writers would have described the Holy Spirit in Hebrew. The problem is that this is written in Greek and if the Holy Spirit is intended...this is a really unusual way to say it. Some scholars see another problem in that it's implied here that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from dead here and they object to that. They argue instead that the Father raised Jesus (Ephesians 1:17-20, Acts 3:15, Acts 4:10, Acts 10:40, Hebrews 13:20) or that Jesus raised Himself (John 2:19, John 10:18) and that this can't mean the Holy Spirit simply because the Holy Spirit had no part in the resurrection.¹⁶

Now I don't think that is true, especially in light of Romans 8:11.

^{ESV} **Romans 8:11**...If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Now doesn't that seem like it is talking about the Holy Spirit? Of course, it might not be but even if it is not it's difficult to eliminate the Holy Spirit from participation in the resurrection simply because our God is a Trinitarian God and as such does things in the unity of the godhead. I am thinking for instance of creation which is attributed in one-way or another to all three members of the Trinity. Still there are those that don't want to see the Holy Spirit here for just that reason.

Charles Hodge didn't see it referring to the Holy Spirit for a completely different reason. Since the first phrase **“according to the flesh”** referred to Jesus' humanity, Hodge thought the second phrase **“spirit of holiness”** had to refer to Christ's deity. In fact, he insisted that that had to be the case because of the contrast the two verses were making to each other.¹⁷

Now I am not worthy to empty Charles Hodge's chamber pot, but I am pretty sure of this one thing. His assertion maybe true but it does not have to be true. It is only important to maintain the contrast between the two if they are really in contrast to each other. Saying, "**Since one part is about His humanity, the other part has to be about His deity**" is a little like saying, "**Since one part is about a dog, the other thing has to be about a cat.**" But things can be parallel without them being antithetical. Take these two phrases...

- 1) **...now regarding the dog**
- 2) **...now regarding the dog biscuit**

You can see they are parallel and both use the word "**dog**" but they're not antithetical. In fact, they are really related to completely different realms. I think that is what is going on here. I think Paul is saying something like this:

**...as far as humanity was concerned He was made a descendant of David
...but as far as the Holy Spirit was concerned He was declared to be the Son of God with power.**

You see the ideas are grammatically parallel but not antithetical. That has led some scholars to conjecture that the two phrases might have been a part of an ancient confession of faith and that is pretty easy to imagine...¹⁸

**...as to the flesh made the Son of David
...as to the Holy Spirit, declared the Son of God.**

It even sounds more like a confession of faith if you add the phrase at the end of verse four, **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Some scholars think that Paul knew the Romans used this confession and included it in his letter to connect with the Romans even through the language of the confession is quite different than what he normally used. They see that

difference especially in the words **“Spirit of holiness”** which Paul or anyone never uses elsewhere. For that matter neither does anyone else. They also see it in the word **“declare”** (ὁρίζω) which is usually translated in other places in the New Testament as **“appointed”** or **“determined”**. In fact the word is not translated **“declared”** anywhere else in the New Testament. Normally, it is used like it is used in Luke 22:22 and in Acts 17:31.

^{ESV} **Luke 22:22**...For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"

^{ESV} **Acts 17:31**...because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

That brings us to the second problem in verse four. Some scholars think that this underlying confession may have taught **“adoptionism.”** I can assure you that it does no such thing but before I do that I probably ought to explain what I mean by **“adoptionism.”** If you will permit I would like to do that using a fairly sentimental illustration. When my wife first fell in love with me in the seventh grade, she decided to buy me a birthday card. Now it was the first card she ever gave me and I kept it till my sister, whom I will never forgive, accidentally threw it away. On the outside of the card there was a cartoon figure of a woman holding a birthday cake. She was holding it out toward the reader of the card wearing a huge smile on her face and a little cockeyed birthday hat on her head. The front caption read, **“For your birthday I decided to make you a cake.”** When you opened the card up the inside caption read, **“Poof! You’re a cake.”** In a nutshell that is **“adoptionism.”** It is a theological term that refers to Jesus being made the Son of God when he was not the Son of God before. Some scholars look at this text and see the word **“appointed”** instead of **“declared”** and think, **“Ah**

ha! See he was appointed or made the Son of God.” Look at verse 4 and you’ll see what I mean.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:4**...and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Fortunately the early church condemned the heresy of **“adoptionism”** and its rejection of Christ’s humanity. You see there were some in the early church that didn’t really believe Jesus was God from all eternity. They didn’t believe that He existed before His birth in Bethlehem and they denied His Virgin Birth. In fact, they believed that Jesus was really just a man, only a man, and that at His baptism God sent the spirit of Christ upon him making him... appointing Him...adopting Him to be His Son.¹⁹ Such people were called Ebionites.²⁰ You might remember them this way. They believed Jesus was a man and had the Christ cloak wrapped around him. Another way to remember is that they taught God more or less snatched Jesus’ body and used it until He was through with it. Obviously, they did not believe that Jesus was the eternal son. They believed He became the Son of God through this act of adoption.²¹

That is the reason so many translations, the KJV, NAS, NIV and the ESV all translate a word that is translated elsewhere as **“appointed”** as **“declared.”** The NLT goes so far as to translate it as **“shown to be”**. They all doing trying to avoid the implication that Jesus was made the Son of God. They are trying to avoid **“adoptionism.”**

But really there are two reasons why there is no adoptionism in this passage. The first is simple and is found right at the beginning of verse 3. You see Jesus is called God’s Son before Paul ever gets to this confession.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:2**...which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son,

Do you see what I mean? The gospel of God was promised beforehand in the Holy Scripture and even then it was about God's Son. Jesus did not become the Son through being adopted. Verse 3 tells us that He was already the Son, even before He became a man.

Now I said there were two reasons why there is no adoptionism here. The first reason is that Jesus is called God's Son even before He was declared in a special way to be God's Son in verse 4. But there is also a second reason and it's found in that little prepositional phrase "**in power**". You see the thing that was declared by the Holy Spirit was not that Jesus was the Son of God but rather that Jesus was now the Son of God in power.

You see the NIV has the prepositional phrase "**in power**" in the wrong place.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:4**...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.

If you take the NIV meaning, it means that the Holy Spirit powerfully declared the Sonship of Jesus by the resurrection. Now there is a sense in which that is true. But the emphasis that is intended and you can tell this by where it is located in the sentence is that "**in power**" is to go after "the Son of God" and that is just where the NAS, KJV, NKJV and ESV have it.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:4**...and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

Listen to what Martyn Lloyd Jones says:

I suggest to you that what he is saying is this: that the Lord Jesus Christ in the resurrection was declared to be the Son of God with power. He was the Son of God before. He is always Son of God. He was Son of God before the incarnation and from all eternity. He has never been anything but Son of God. He was with the Father in the beginning. There is no variation in that. Where then is the variation? Ah!...it is in the form that He assumes...when He came into this world He did not come as the Son of God with power. No! He came as a helpless babe. You see the importance of keeping this parallel in sight. Though He was still the Son of God, He was weak; He was helpless, He had to be nursed as every other child; He had to be fed and cared for...He was Son of God — yes, but not Son of God with power...But the moment you come to the resurrection, the glory comes back; the signs return— Son of God with power now. That is what the resurrection declares. What was veiled while He was here on earth, is now fully revealed.²²

Now thus far we have made three observations on the gospel. We have observed that the gospel comes from God. We have observed that the gospel was witnessed, really declared by the Old Testament and the prophets. We have observed that the gospel is about Jesus Christ. I want to make two more observations and I want to combine them together because of the time. So let me put it this way...

The goal of the Gospel is to bring all kinds of people to Faith...thereby honoring the name of Christ²³

^{ESV} **Romans 1:5**...through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ ¶ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think of Paul saying this, **“The long awaited King of the Jews, the Messiah, the King of Creation has come into the world and has graciously appointed me to**

go and herald His coming to the Gentiles and to gather in those that belong to Him and brothers and sisters that includes you in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints. And I am going to do that not to honor me, not to honor you, but to honor Him. I am going to do that for His name's sake only."

Don't you love that brothers and sisters?

You know when I was in Africa, I met a young man named Habou who had been converted out of animism; he was apart of the Hausa tribe I think. Anyway, at one of our meetings he was giving his testimony and he said in English, with tears in his eyes, "You know every time I go back to my village, my mother and father say, 'We are offering up a chicken for you hoping that our gods will cause you to give up this Jesus and come back to us' and I (He stopped for a minute and took a long breath) and I tell them...don't kill anymore chickens for me...all the offering I need was made long ago. If you want to kill your chickens, kill them and eat them but if God gives me strength I will not give Him up, instead I will try to bring honor to His name and His name alone."

That's what Paul means here. Do you see that?

Then let me stop by reminding you what we have observed together this morning here in Romans 1:1-7:

The Gospel comes from God...

The Old Testament is a Witness to the Gospel...

The Gospel is about Jesus Christ...

The goal of the Gospel is to bring all kinds of people to Faith...thereby honoring the name of Christ ...

Let's pray.

¹ C.K. Barrett, *Epistle to the Romans* from the Harper N.T. Commentary Series (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 6. See also... ^{NIV} **Acts 18:2** There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them... Finally, see...Gaius Suetonius, (trans. by Robert Graves) *Twelve Caesars* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1957) p. ?.

^{NIV} **Acts 18:2**...There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them.

^{NIV} **Acts 18:11**...So Paul stayed for a year and a half (working and perhaps living with Aquila and Priscilla), teaching them the word of God.

^{NIV} **Acts 18:19**...They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

^{NIV} **Romans 16:3**...Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus (Apparently, they had moved back to Rome at this point).

^{NIV} **2 Timothy 4:19**...Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. (By the time of Paul's imprisonment, Aquila and Priscilla had moved back to Ephesus to help Timothy.)

Aquila and Priscilla had met Paul in Corinth. There they worked with him for a year and a half mending tents and preaching the gospel. Then they followed him to Ephesus and stayed there helping Timothy and training Apollos while Paul went on. Eventually, they moved back to Rome and were there when this letter was written. Then just about the time Paul was headed to Rome in chains they left Rome and went to Ephesus to help Timothy with the church there. They knew Paul. In fact, they knew everybody. They were more or less the first century equivalent of a Harold and Dot Driver.

² John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News For the World*, (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 48-54.

³ Barrett, 18. He writes, "...it is best to take it as a genitive of the author: the Gospel is the Good News God is now setting forth. Paul's theology is theocentric in that God is the source of salvation and thus of the Gospel, and of the theology that rests upon the Gospel; christocentric in that the historical manifestation of the truth of God lies in the deeds of Jesus Christ."

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans Volume 1: Justification By Faith, Romans 1-4* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 35. He writes, "The final point about the gospel made by Paul in these two verses of Romans is the one with which Paul actually starts, namely, that it is *God's* gospel. It is something God announced and accomplished and what *he* sent his apostles to proclaim. It is something God blesses and through which *he* saves men and women. The grammatical way of stating this is that the genitive ("of God") is a subjective, rather than an objective genitive. It means that God creates and announces the gospel rather than that he is the object of its proclamation."

⁵ John Piper, "The Author of the Greatest Letter Ever Written" from his sermon series on Romans, available at desiringGOD.org. (Bethlehem Minnesota: Desiring God Ministries, April 26, 1998), 5. Cf. Martin Luther, *Luther's works, vol. 25 : Lectures on Romans* edited by J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1972; reprinted 1999). He writes: "*The Gospel* is not only what Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have written. This is clear enough from this

passage. For it states expressly that the Gospel is the Word concerning the Son of God, who became flesh, suffered, and was glorified. Therefore, no matter who writes and teaches it, whether Matthew or Thomas, and no matter in what words or tongues, it is the same Gospel of God. It does not make any difference how many books and writers teach it, because it is all the same thing that all are teaching."

⁶ NIV **Hebrews 11:24**...By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. ²⁶ **He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.**

⁷ NIV **Genesis 3:21**...The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

⁸ NIV **Genesis 22:12**..."Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." ¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

⁹ NIV **Hebrews 10:11**...Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

Cf. NIV **Hebrews 10:1**...For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated **endlessly** year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

¹⁰ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwin C. Hoskyns, from the 6th ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 28. Barth writes: "The words of the prophets, long fastened under lock and key, are now set free. Now it is possible to hear what Jeremiah and Job and the preacher Solomon had proclaimed long ago. Now we can see and understand what is written, for *now* we have an entrance into the Old Testament."

¹¹ E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1957; reprinted 1981 and 1991), 150-4.

¹² Martin Luther, *Luther's works, vol. 25 : Lectures on Romans* edited by J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1972; reprinted 1999) This is what he says in his gloss on Romans 1:3. "Here the door is thrown open wide for the understanding of Holy Scriptures, that is, that everything must be understood in relation to Christ, especially in the case of prophecy. But Scripture is completely prophetic, although not according to the superficial sense of the letter."

¹³ Barrett, 18.

¹⁴ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988; reprint, 1994), 42. He writes: "That the Messiah would be a *descendant of David* is taught in the Old Testament (Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24, etc.) and elsewhere.~ The idea is found in a number of places in the New Testament. Paul's expression here means "became of the seed of David according to the flesh", "the seed of David" being referred to on a number of occasions besides the present passage (John 7:42; 2 Tim. 2:8). Jesus is also called the "Son of David" a total of 12 times, and there are other references of a somewhat similar character. Jesus does not call himself "Son of David" and indeed on occasion seems to distance himself from the title (Mark 12:35-37).³⁸ But we should not exaggerate the significance of this, for when the title was directly applied to him he did not reject it (Mark 10:47-52). The facts seem to indicate that it was widely expected that the Messiah would be of David's line and that Jesus knew that he was of Davidic descent. But presumably because of popular messianic expectations he put no emphasis on the fact."

¹⁵ R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 100-103. France is quite thorough in tracing the various Messianic interpretations of Jesus day. He compares how the Rabbis interpreted certain passages and how Jesus those passages in making claims about himself.

C.f. Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1992) 103-135.

Also, John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 36-61.

And especially James Montgomery Boice, *God the Redeemer* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1979) 122-157.

¹⁶ Walvoord, 205-206. He writes: "Like other important acts of God foundational to the Christian faith, the resurrection of Christ is related to each Member of the divine Trinity. God the Father is said to have raised Christ from the dead in numerous passages This is implied in the Old Testament prophecy of the resurrection of Christ found in Psalm 16:10-11 where His deliverance from Sheol and corruption is attributed to God. Peter cites Psalm 16 in Acts 2 24 32 in relating the resurrection of Christ to God A similar statement is made Acts 13 30 where Paul states God raised him from the dead e resurrection of Christ is specifically related to the Father in Romans 6:4 and Ephesians 1:19-20.

Without contradicting the participation of the Father in the resurrection of Christ, the Scriptures also reveal that Christ raised himself from the dead. In John 2:19 Christ declared, Destroy temple, and in three days I will raise it up A similar statement is made in John 10:17 18 where Christ claimed not only have power to lay down His life but to take it up again The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the resurrection of Christ is less clear The only reference to it in Romans 8:11 draws a parallel between the resurrection of Christ and the giving of life to the believers which in both cases, is accomplished through the Spirit that dwelleth in you However some have interpreted this passage to refer to the resurrection on the part of the Father in which the Holy Spirit somehow participated.

The relation of the resurrection of Christ to the three Persons of the Trinity is not, however, a contradiction. In other important works of God, such as the creation of the world and the incarnation of Christ, a similar participation of each Member of the Trinity can be observed. In revelation, however, the unity of the Trinity as well as Their distinction in persons is carefully

supported and no contradiction remains for one who accepts the doctrine of the Trinity. It is indeed the work of the triune God.”

Also see William S. Plumer, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1991; reprinted from the 1870 edition), 35.

¹⁷ Charles Hodge, *Romans* from the Crossway Classic Series edited by Alister McGrath and J.I. Packer, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossways Books, 1993), 18. He writes: “...these words, *the Spirit of holiness*, are in antithesis with *according to the flesh*; as to the flesh he was the Son of David, as to the Spirit the Son of God. As *flesh* means his human nature, *spirit* can hardly mean anything else than the higher or divine nature of Christ...Those who understand the phrase Spirit of holiness to refer to the Holy Spirit either suppose that the apostle refers to the evidence given by the Spirit to the Sonship of Christ (Calvin’s view), or think he is appealing to the testimony of the Spirit as given in the Scriptures: “Christ was declared to be the Son of God according to the Spirit.” To both these views, however, the same objection remains, that the antithesis is destroyed.”

¹⁸ C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans: Volume 1, Introduction and Commentary on Romans 1-8* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975; reprint, 1992), 57. “That in these two verses Paul is making use of the language of an already existing confessional formula, though it is hardly as certain as it is sometimes assumed to be, seems highly probable. For him at this particular point, when he is introducing himself to the Roman church, to underline his fundamental agreement with his fellow Christians in this way would make good sense-”

¹⁹ Bengt Hagglund, *History of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968; reprinted from the 1966 edition), 32.

²⁰ D. Jeffrey Bingham, *Pocket History of the Church* (Downer’s Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 40.

²¹ H.F. Vos, “Adoptionism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1984), 13-14.

²² D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 1, The Gospel of God* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), 115, 117.

²³ Now this phrase “**obedience of faith**” is problematic but let me just briefly say that most commentators understand “**obedience**” here to equal “**faith**” and I think that is right. I’ll talk more about that later but you can see how the two are equated in one particular verse.

^{NIV} **Romans 10:16** But not all the Israelites accepted the good news (obeyed the good news). For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?”

Cf. D.B. Garlington, “The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans, Part 1: The Meaning of ὑπακοή πίστεως in Roman 1:5; 16:26” in the *Westminster Theological Journal* (Fall 1990), 201-224.