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1:4-17

1:4-7) *"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, 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, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 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."*

Was declared - (horizō) from which we get the English word “horizon” means “to distinguish”. As we looked at in the previous verses, Paul is making clear what the “good news of God” is. It was something clearly promised by God through His prophets in Scripture and in particular concerning His Son. Paul pointed out that Jesus is a blood descendant of David which is in fulfillment of the unconditional covenants; particularly the Davidic Covenant (2Sam 7). Paul says that this link to David is “according to the flesh” and this is important to understand that the Son of God is fully man; a detail that becomes particularly important in chapter 5:12-21.

It was not Jesus’ claim to be descended from David that caused the Sanhedrin to want to kill Him for “blasphemy”, it was the fact that He claimed to be the **Son of God**; one with the Father:

"I and the Father are one." The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God." " [Jhn 10:30-33 ESV]

In saying that He was one with the Father, the Jews understood that He was claiming to be God, but this would be absurd to their minds as they held to the “shema” (Hebrew for “hear”) from Deuteronomy 6:4 “the Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” While they would equate Jesus’ claims to stating that there is more than one God, Jesus was revealing what scripture already had alluded to which is that the one God exists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Genesis account of the creation of man (Gen 1:26), God records “let us make man in our image” and the very name of God in the Hebrew “Elohim” is the plural of El, which means that God refers to Himself in the plural.

In power according to the Spirit of holiness - It was not mere verbal proclamations that render Jesus to be the very Son of God, rather it was with the miracles, teaching and total guidance by and power of the Holy Spirit that accompanied His ministry (Heb 2:4). Jesus was not just any other man, He was absolutely holy; perfectly aligned with every command and purity of the Father establishing in His flesh the second Adam; the righteousness of God revealed in flesh:

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." [Heb 4:15 ESV]

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." [2Co 5:21 ESV]

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"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." [Phl 2:8 ESV]

By His resurrection from the dead - Jesus had already demonstrated His power of resurrection through various resurrections He commanded during His ministry, but they would eventually go on to die a natural death. The resurrection of Himself that Jesus predicted was more than that. Jesus proclaimed that He would raise Himself up after three days:

"So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken." [Jhn 2:18-22 ESV]

While the resurrections that Jesus performed were carried out at the audible command from Himself, His resurrection would be commanded not through an audible voice, but by His own power. Scripture attributes His resurrection to the power of the Father (Acts 5:30; 1Thes 1:10; Gal 1:1), the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:4; 8:11) and to the Son Himself:

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." [Jhn 10:17-18 ESV]

But Jesus' resurrection as it is connected with the "good news from God" demonstrates more than His power to bring Himself back from death in a new body. It serves to prove that His sacrifice was sufficient to appease God's wrath against the sins of the redeemed and guarantee a resurrection to life:

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," [Heb 1:1-3 ESV]

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." [Heb 9:11-12 ESV]

"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead." [1Co 15:20-21 ESV]

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Jesus Christ our Lord - Paul identifies this unique man who is the Son of God by name. Jesus = “Jehovah is salvation” who is the Christ = “anointed One” is our Lord not only by virtue of His status as God, but also is the worthy King who laid down His life for His people and to Him is all Lordship due. Paul points out the personal relationship we have with God through “our” Lord.

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship.... called to belong to Jesus Christ.... called to be saints - Just as Jesus called the original 12, He calls all that belong to Him through grace. As we looked at in verse 1, Paul links this calling to being “set apart”; a plan that according to scripture has its origins in eternity. Believers are the possession of God and as such we have been redeemed for the sake of glorifying Him through our works and our witness:

"waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." [Tit 2:13-14 ESV]

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." [1Pe 2:9 ESV]

The Obedience of faith - This is a paradoxical statement in that it presents the action of obedience with faith. Paul will make it clear that we have no righteousness of our own and that saving faith itself is a gift from God. So what does he mean here when he says to bring about the obedience of faith?

Jesus submitted to the Father in order to demonstrate His own righteousness and qualification for being the perfect sacrifice for sins. As God's children are given saving faith through grace, it produces a response within of the desire to submit to what is good and true as it is given to us in His Word. We trust first and foremost that what Jesus did on the cross is sufficient for us and therefore count all other human effort as loss as it counts toward salvation.

However as we have seen in previous scripture there is a clear purpose for our calling that He gives His children the power for through His Spirit and that is to bring glory to His name! And how do we do that?

Profession - we honor the Lord by proclaiming man's indictment and total guilt before a holy God confessing that in our flesh “dwells no good thing” (Rom 7:18). We then acknowledge that His Son paid the price for our sin and that his work is completely sufficient for our forgiveness and redemption before the Father.

Action - we testify and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ and His word in our lives by our words and deeds understanding that He forgives our failures when we sin. This is the outworking of the works that He has prepared beforehand for us to do (Eph 2:10) and our obedience demonstrates the reality of our salvation (Rm 16:19,26; Mt 17:13,14,22-27; Jas 2:17-20)

Through what we profess and how we act, we demonstrate the power of God's grace working in us and we have peace in our souls as we abide in the Lord.

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PAUL'S HEART TOWARD THE CHURCH AT ROME

1:8-10) *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you."*

I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you - Paul gives the Lord the credit and glory for their salvation and its testimony throughout the Roman world. It clearly displays the power and will of Jesus to do exactly what He said when he proclaimed that He will build His church. While Paul wanted them to be encouraged by the further grasp of doctrinal truths, it is clear that they understood and embraced the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I mention you always in my prayers - Despite the fact that there were no false doctrines to speak of or outright acts of sin, Paul demonstrates his heart for the body of Christ in his commitment to them in prayer.

How does his service to God through Jesus Christ differ from that of what his life as a Pharisee looked like; particularly in his attitude towards God's people? _____

Paul's desire was not simply to pray for the believers in Rome, but as he revealed it had been his desire for quite some time to come and visit them in person and he explains why...

1:11-12) *"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you-- that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine."*

Spiritual gift - the primary gift we receive from God is Jesus Himself (Jhn 4:10; Rom 5:15,16; 2 Cor 9:16). God gives the gift of His Holy Spirit (Act 2:38; 10:45; 11:17) Who is our seal of redemption (2 Cor 1:22). As Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father He is a dispenser of gifts to His body (1Cor 12:1-31) in order that the body may be encouraged by each other and grow up in unity of the faith:

"Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ," [Eph 4:8-15 ESV]

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Mutually encouraged - Paul demonstrates humility here as he expresses a desire to be encouraged by their faith as well. In humility we should recognize that we need each other as there are many members within the body of Christ. Each individual is vital and if we don't recognize our need to receive what others have to dispense in their own faith, we are limiting our own growth. Paul makes this clear in detail in his letter to the Corinthians:

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." [1Co 12:12-27 ESV]

How does God's Word in regards to the body of Christ differ in thought from what the worlds thinking would try to condition humanity to think concerning individuals? _____

1:13-15) *"I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome."*

Paul understands that the Lord has given him (and every believer) a gracious and glorious opportunity to invest in the future of God's harvest of souls. "Harvest" (karpos) or fruit is realized in several different ways. In Galatians Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit as **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;"** [Gal 5:22-23 ESV]. There is also the fruit of new converts and Paul certainly would have been seeking that as he considered each convert as a direct result of his ministry to be his joy and crown (Php 4:1). As Paul had been charged with bringing the gospel to the Gentiles, he reflects on the fact that God is no respecter of persons. Sin and each persons need for salvation is the great equalizer of humanity!

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THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

1:16-17) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith. " "

In these two verses Paul states the main theme of this entire letter. He began in his introduction with the fact that he had been “called” and “set apart” for the gospel or “good news” of God. Paul will now transition to explaining the fact that it is the only good news for mankind and that its truths are completely offensive to the minds of natural man. It exposes the truth of mans condition as a result of Adams sin and the fact that only God is intrinsically righteous. If man is to be counted as righteous, it will only be through faith.

I am not ashamed of the gospel - Jesus told His followers to expect that the world would hate them because they hated Him first (Jhn 15:18,19; aslo 1Jhn 3:13). But why would good news bring shame? Because it is diametrically opposed to the mind of the natural man:

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."
[1Co 2:12-14 ESV]

In fact as early as in Genesis we see Cain wanting to kill Able because God was pleased with what Able had offered as a sacrifice. Was God pleased with Able because he was better than Cain? No rather the difference in their offerings is that Able’s was a reflection of God’s provision for the sacrifice as opposed to Cain’s which was a reflection on man’s efforts to please God his own way.

To the religious mind, their own piety and “work” cannot be rendered as useless in the sight of God and to the non-religious; well, “who cares”; right? Either way no one thinks they deserve hell, nor could something so monumental be obtained as a gift. Jesus who is the cornerstone became a stumbling block to the unbelieving Jews (Isa 8:14; Rom 9:33; 1Pe 2:8), and God is an offense to the darkened hearts of natural humanity. The gospel defies all natural thought processes and in some form or another brings those who know it and cling to it to the point of being offensive to the world.

Paul suffered in many ways as a result of his ministry and so have a multitude of believers. Paul tells Timothy that ***“all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”*** (2Tim 3:12) While not all believers will face the same amount or type of persecution, we are taught to expect it and be prepared for it. Rather than be ashamed, persecution serves to strengthen each believer when looked at through the lens of scripture. There is power revealed in it! If the gospel of Christ is not true, how could it invoke so much hostility?

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As Paul will explain in this letter, the gospel was always intended by God to go forth to Jews and Gentiles. God's "dynamite" or **power** is an expression of His omnipotence (Ex 15:6; Dt 32:39; Job 9:4; Pss 33:8,9; 89:13; 106:8,9; Is 26:4; 43:13; Jer 10:12; 27:5; Mt 28:18; Rom 9:21). Only the "dynamite" of God's sovereign grace can bring life to spiritually dead humanity (Rom 5:6; 8:3; Jhn 1:12; 1Cor 1:18,23-25; 2:1-4; 4:20; 1Pet 1:23).

Salvation - (sōtēria) meaning "deliverance" is used by Paul for the first time here in this letter. God's gospel has the power to deliver; from what? The next section of this chapter through 3:20 reveal that it is ultimately God's wrath that all humanity needs to be delivered from. His wrath will be experienced for all eternity for unbelieving humanity (Isa 66:24; Mt 25:41; Mk 9:48; Lk 3:17; 2Th 1:9; Rev 14:11; 20:11-15).

Beyond escaping His wrath, God delivers us from ourselves as we are called to become Christ - like looking forward to the outcome of our faith, the resurrection of our bodies. In this we are delivered from spiritual darkness and brought into His marvelous light (Rom 8:29;12:2; Col 1:9-14; 3:1-17; 1Thes 5:5-8; 1Pet 1:14; 2:9-12; etc.).

Believes - (pisteuō) meaning "to be persuaded of" and "trust in" - not simply a matter of knowledge as James wrote that even the demons believe that God is one and shudder (Jam 2:19). True saving faith is a work and gift of God (Eph 2:8) and begins with profession (Rom 10:10; 1Jhn 2:23; 4:2, 15) and results in following the Lord in obedience (Rom4:3; Jhn 8:31; 14:21-24).

Righteousness of God is revealed - Paul will demonstrate in this letter that only God possesses righteousness and that man is fallen with no righteousness of his own. When man is held to the light of the holiness of God this reality is inescapable. God's righteousness is fully expressed in His Son who gave His life as an atonement for our sin.

From faith for faith - The only imputation of God's righteousness to man is through faith. Paul here is expressing the fact that this saving faith is the same powerful gift from God handed down through history to individuals that He has given it to. From the faith of Abraham who believed God and was counted as righteous to the faith of believers in the revealed Son of God; it was never of works of man, but always of trust in the perfection of God.

Another possible explanation of this phrase may be Paul's way of describing how the faith that comes from God as a supernatural gift produces the visible faith acted upon in the life of true believers.

"But the righteous man shall live by faith" - From Hab 2:4 demonstrates that God only counts faith, not works, as righteousness. For those who are alive to God by His Spirit, the sum total of their lives is that they lived according to belief in God's Word and His salvation. True faith produces sanctification even though the process can seem slow at times.