

WONDERFUL, *EXTRA GOOD NEWS!* Romans 1:1-7

Int: A while back in history some really good news broke out among a lot of scared, beaten-down people. It was that “good news” (the literal meaning of the word “gospel”) that Paul addressed in the text. Christians in Rome did not know him. He wanted their support for his mission to Spain (Rom 15:24, 28). So they needed to know the gospel he preached. At the head of this letter, therefore, the apostle set out a trio of important facts about this wonderful, extra good news!

PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL 1:2

The gospel was no novelty. God promised it “beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures.” Dozens of ancient prophecies stretching back almost to the dawn of human history anticipated the gospel.

Enemies of the Christian gospel still sneer at its relative youth. These critics are all wrong! There is nothing new about it. Gospel roots anchor firmly in holy history going all the way back to the era of Adam (Gen 3:15).

PERSON OF THE GOSPEL 1:3-4

The gospel concerns a person, the Lord Jesus Christ! Paul added two phrases which set forth two stages in the career of Jesus, i.e. his birth and his resurrection. “Descended from David according to the flesh” identified him as the legitimate King of the Jews, the messiah of Israel. Never for a moment had he ever ceased to be the Son of God but his resurrection from the dead openly and powerfully “declared” what he always had truly been!

Bottom line. Christianity is Christ! It is not first and foremost a philosophy to adopt, a code of ethics to follow, or a body of doctrines to believe. Take Muhammad from Islam, Buddha from Buddhism, Confucius from Confucianism, Lao-tze from Taoism, and nothing is lost. But take the Lord Jesus from the gospel and nothing is left! The gospel is about a person, Jesus the Son of God!

God has a plan of salvation but only to lead to Jesus, the person of salvation!

PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL 1:5-7

It is not clear whether “grace and apostleship” are two different things or if Paul meant “the grace gift which is apostleship. Clearly, however, God gave Paul the mission of so preaching the gospel as to bring about “the obedience of faith,” or better, “the obedience *which is* faith”! That is the *intention* of the mission.

The preaching of the gospel is meant for “*all* the nations,” not just Israel. This is the *inclusiveness* of the mission. These words now pass perhaps half-noticed if at all. But they surely did not come easily to an ex-Pharisee like Paul who spent his early years believing God loved only Jews and created the nations, i.e. the Gentiles, as fuel for the fires of hell!

The nations benefit from the gospel but that is not the ultimate aim of preaching it. The final outcome is the honor and glory of Christ Jesus! That is the mission’s *inspiration*. God’s heart, God’s desire is to see the nations worship him!

Con: The gospel is *old* news and *new* news but above all it is *good* news! Have you heard it? Have you believed it? Are you telling it? If not, why not?