ROMANS 1

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

The Gospel of God, the Righteousness Revealed, and a World That Would Not Give Thanks

> *"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."*
> ROMANS 1:16

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Paul has brought us

1. Paul wrote Romans from Corinth, probably in the winter of AD 56–57, to a church he had not planted and had never visited.

2. Chapter 1 is the doorway to the whole argument.

3. Few chapters have changed more lives.



"obedience of faith" opens the letter (1:5) and closes it (16:26)

The Gospel of God Concerning His Son

A slave, a summons, a promise kept — the whole gospel folded into one long greeting

ROMANS 1:1

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

DAVID GUZIK

Doulos as utter devotion; “declared” = put beyond doubt; grace given for obedience of faith.

R.C. SPROUL

Slave, not servant; no Savior-without-Lord; the gospel God owns; the resurrection leaves no excuse.

C.H. SPURGEON

Set apart from politics to the gospel; all the gospel in the Old Testament; more than man.

MATTHEW HENRY

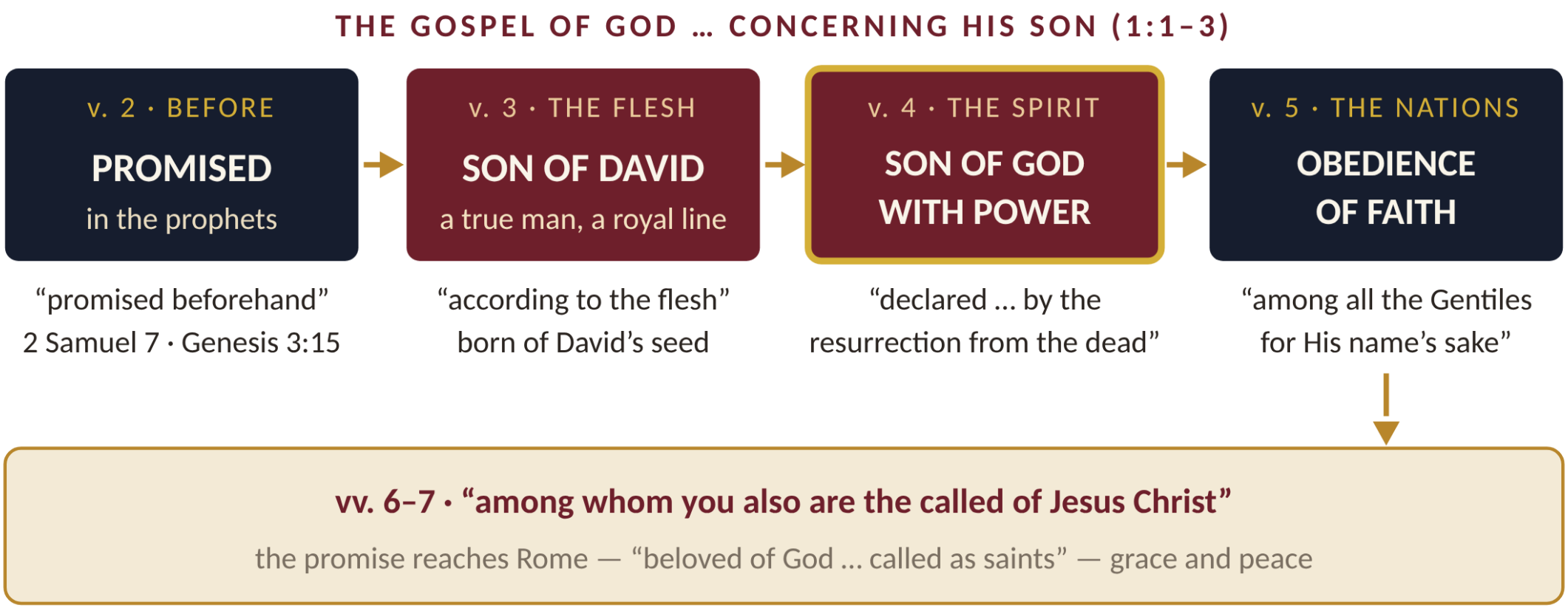
Servant and steward; a gospel Pharisee; morning-beams of the Sun; faith as obedience.

δοῦλος

DOULOS · “SLAVE, BOND-SERVANT”

Paul’s first word about himself.

The shape of the gospel · 1:1–7



Read the greeting left to right: promised in the prophets, born David's son, declared God's Son with power by the resurrection, and sent to the nations for the obedience of faith — which is how the gospel reached Rome, and us.

Debtor to Greeks and Barbarians

Thanks, unceasing prayer, a hindered journey, and a debt only the gospel can pay

ROMANS 1:14

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

DAVID GUZIK

Church not founded by Paul; Rome's roads and peace repaid with the gospel.

R.C. SPROUL

A lawful oath; pastors need encouragement too; the debt reaches everyone we meet.

C.H. SPURGEON

Paul the Ready — ready to preach, suffer, discipline and die, never to preach another gospel.

MATTHEW HENRY

Famous for faith; his receivings made him a debtor; more grace, more owed.

ὀφειλέτης εἰμί

OPHEILETĒS · "DEBTOR, ONE UNDER OBLIGATION"

NASB "I am under obligation" renders a noun: "I am a debtor" (so KJV).

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

The thesis of Romans — power for salvation, righteousness revealed, life by faith

ROMANS 1:16

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.

DAVID GUZIK

The gospel is power; the God-kind of righteousness given; by faith from beginning to end.

R.C. SPROUL

God's power in the preached Word; alien righteousness; trust what God has said.

C.H. SPURGEON

Many were ashamed of its plainness; the sweet story of the cross; law versus faith.

MATTHEW HENRY

Medicine must be taken; Jew first, then Gentile; all along from faith to faith.

οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι
EPAISCHYNOMAI · "TO BE ASHAMED OF"

A strengthened form of aischynomai — to be ashamed of something, to disown it.

Truth Suppressed, Glory Exchanged

Wrath revealed from heaven against a world that knew God and would not honor Him

ROMANS 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

DAVID GUZIK

Wrath as holy revulsion; suppression; rejecting God makes no one smarter; gods in our image.

R.C. SPROUL

Not merely irritated; truth held down like a spring; a moral, not intellectual, problem.

C.H. SPURGEON

They knew God but gave no reverence or thanks; a gospel of the stars; fools pretend to be wise.

MATTHEW HENRY

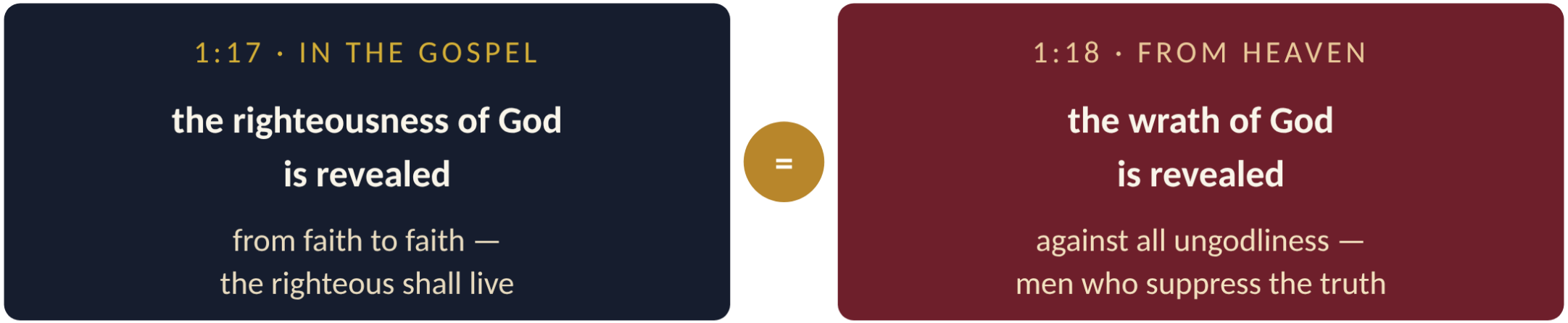
The heart a dungeon for truth; the workman known by his work; pride, not want of light.

ὀργὴ θεοῦ · κατεχόντων

ORGĒ · "WRATH"

Orgē is God's settled, holy opposition to evil — not a fit of temper.

Two revelations, one verb · 1:17–18



ἀποκαλύπτεται · apokalyptetai (G601) — "is being revealed," present tense, in both verses

the "For" at the start of v. 18 ties them: the wrath is the reason the righteousness is needed

The same present-tense verb sits in both verses: God's righteousness is being revealed in the gospel, and His wrath is being revealed from heaven — the second is why the first is good news.

God Gave Them Over

Three exchanges, three handings-over, and a harvest of sin applauded

ROMANS 1:24

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

DAVID GUZIK

Wrath, not kindness, lets sin run; respectable sins beside murder; an unapproved mind.

R.C. SPROUL

Judicial abandonment; sin as punishment for sin; approval seeks allies against guilt.

C.H. SPURGEON

A beast of yourself; London as guilty as Rome; look to Jesus and live.

MATTHEW HENRY

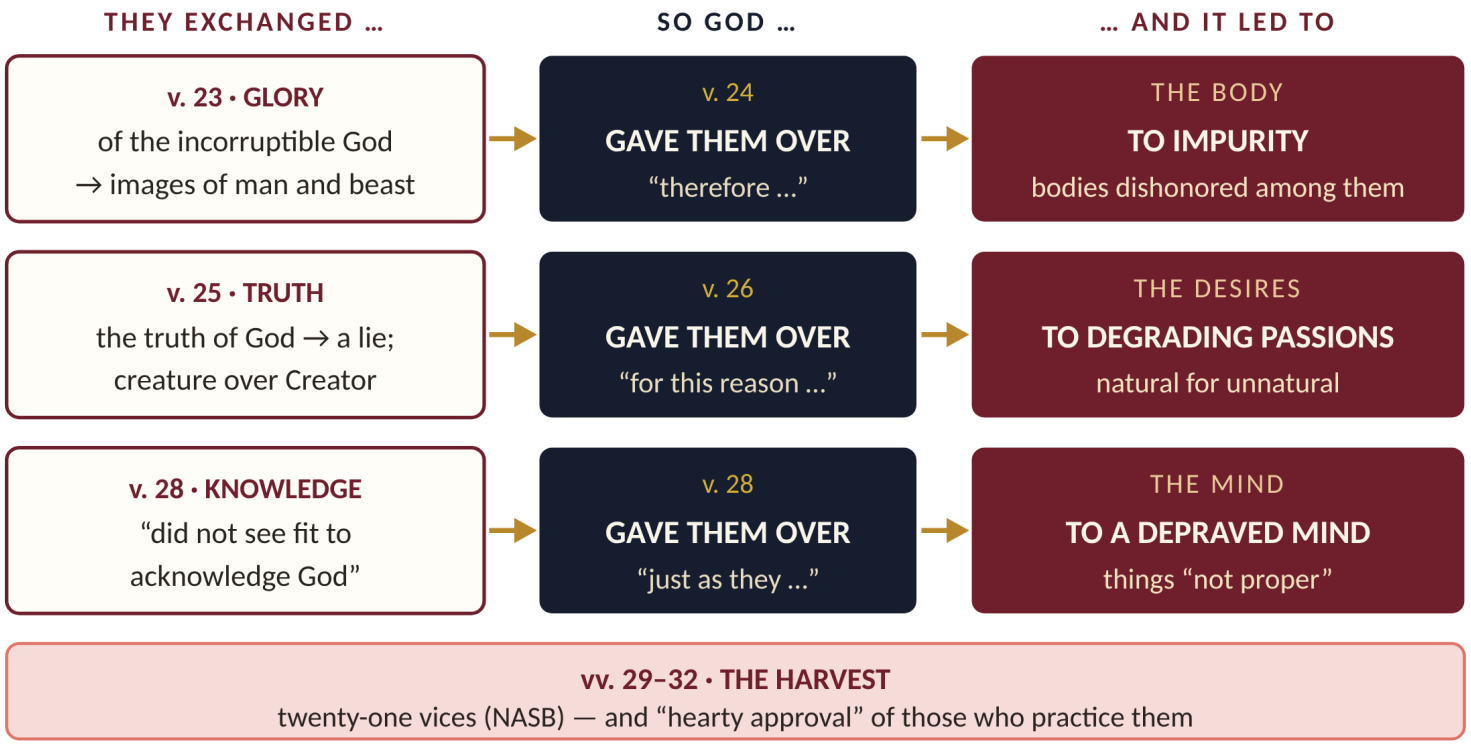
Dishonoring God, dishonored themselves; restraint withdrawn; approval a deeper sin.

παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς

PAREDŌKEN · "GAVE OVER, HANDED OVER"

Paradidōmi is to hand over into another's custody — the word for handing a prisoner to the jailer (Matthew 5:25) or Jesus to Pilate (Mark 15:1).

Exchanged, so given over · 1:23–32



Same verb, παραδίδωμι: the Father "delivered Him over for us all" (8:32) — the Son given over for the given-over.

Each row reads left to right: what people exchanged, God's answer ("gave them over"), and where it led — the body, the desires, the mind — until the harvest of verses 29–32. The same verb is used of the Father giving up His Son.

What to carry from this chapter

1

The first word is “slave.”

Before “apostle,” Paul calls himself a doulos of Christ Jesus — and the greeting closes on “Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2

The resurrection marked Him out; it did not make Him Son.

Horizō means to mark a boundary.

3

“Obedience of faith” is the frame of the letter.

It stands at 1:5 and again at 16:26, with the prophets, the gospel and the nations in both places.

4

Paul the Ready.

Ready to preach at Rome, to suffer at Jerusalem, to die — but “not ready to preach another gospel.”

More to carry

5

The gospel is power, not advice.

“It is power. It lifts them up” (Morris, in Guzik).

6

A given righteousness.

Luther hated “the righteousness of God” until he saw it was a gift; Sproul calls it “alien righteousness” — not ours, credited to us, received by faith from beginning to…

7

Two revelations, one verb.

Righteousness “is revealed” in the gospel (v. 17); wrath “is revealed” from heaven (v. 18).

8

Truth is not missing; it is held down.

Katechō: the world’s problem is suppression, not ignorance.

Talk it through

1. Paul's first word about himself is "bond-servant." If someone described you by what owns you, what would they say — and what would Paul want them to say?

2. Paul said, "I am under obligation" to people he had never met. Who are your Greeks and barbarians — the people God has put you in debt to with the gospel?

3. Where are you most tempted to be ashamed of the gospel — at work, with family, inside, online? What would "not ashamed" look like there this week?

4. Paul says the deepest sin is suppressing truth we already know. What truth about God or yourself have you been holding down?

5. Verse 21 makes ingratitude the first step down. What happens in your heart when you stop thanking God?

CLOSING

Romans opens with a slave announcing a King and ends its first chapter with a world handed over to what it chose. Between them stands one sentence: the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Paul was not ashamed of it, and the righteous still live by it.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study, reflection journal and film: see the Romans study page.