SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 1

Not Ashamed of the Gospel — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God has a gospel, and it is about His Son — promised, born, raised, and preached to every nation as the power to save everyone who believes. That good news is needed because the whole world knew God and pushed Him away, and God has given it over to what it chose.

00 The Text

ROMANS 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as 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 born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,

4 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,

5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about ▤ the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,

6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

7 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.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your ⟲ faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the ⟲ gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's ⟲ faith, both yours and mine.

13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

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

15 So, for my part, ▤ I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

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.

17 For in it △ the righteousness of God is revealed from ⟳ faith to ⟳ faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man ☆ SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

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

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, △ His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are ⚠ without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, ⚠ they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 ⚠ Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and ⟳ exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

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

25 For they ⟳ exchanged ⚠ the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than △ the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God ⟳ gave them over to ⚠ degrading passions; for their women ⟳ exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God ⟳ gave them over to ⚠ a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also ⚠ give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "set apart for the gospel of God" — God — His character & actions
- **v2** "promised beforehand through His prophets" — Promise / blessing
- **v4** "declared the Son of God with power" — God — His character & actions
- **v4** "by the resurrection from the dead" — God — His character & actions
- **v5** "the obedience of faith" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "called as saints" — Promise / blessing
- **v14** "I am under obligation" — Command / instruction
- **v15** "I am eager to preach the gospel" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "I am not ashamed of the gospel" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "the power of God for salvation" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "to everyone who believes" — Promise / blessing
- **v16** "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "the righteousness of God is revealed" — God — His character & actions
- **v17** "SHALL LIVE BY FAITH" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" — Sin / warning
- **v18** "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "His eternal power and divine nature" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "without excuse" — Sin / warning
- **v21** "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" — Sin / warning
- **v22** "Professing to be wise, they became fools" — Sin / warning
- **v24** "in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "the truth of God for a lie" — Sin / warning
- **v25** "the Creator, who is blessed forever" — God — His character & actions
- **v26** "degrading passions" — Sin / warning
- **v28** "a depraved mind" — Sin / warning

- **v32** “give hearty approval to those who practice them” — Sin / warning
- **v1** “gospel” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v5** “faith” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v23** “exchanged” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v24** “gave them over” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

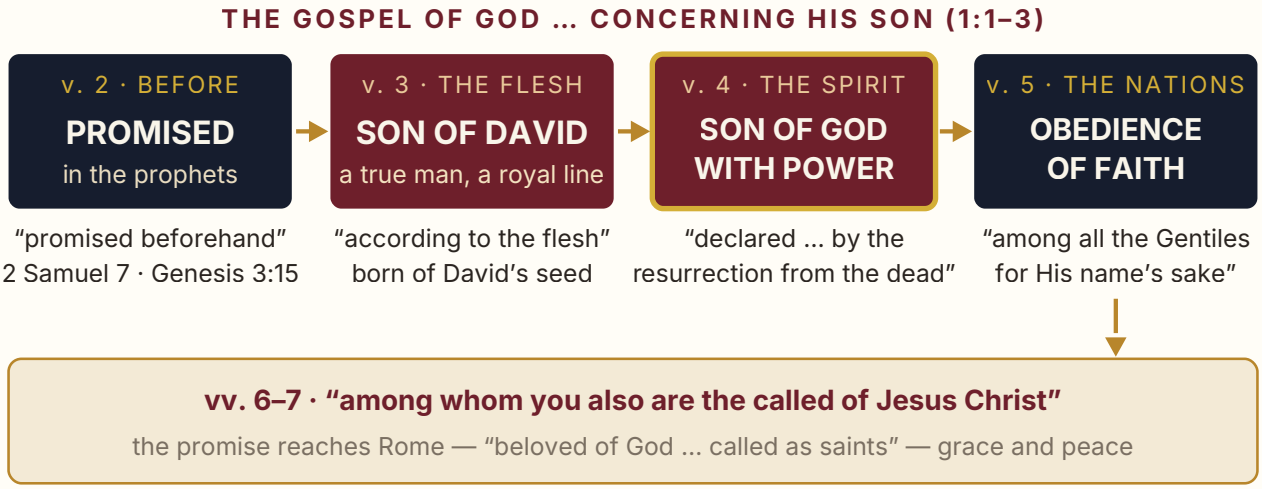
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 1:1

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

FIGURE · 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.

Setting. Paul writes from Corinth (about AD 57) to believers in Rome he has never met. He has longed for years to come (v13) and plans to pass through on his way to Spain (15:24). Chapter 1 is his self-introduction, his gospel in summary, his reason for writing, and the opening of his case that the whole world needs that gospel.

Structure:

- vv1–7 — **the greeting:** Paul, a bond-servant, called, set apart for the gospel of God (v1) — promised in the prophets (v2), concerning God's Son: descendant of David according to the flesh (v3), declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection (v4) — through whom grace and apostleship came, for the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (v5). The Romans are "the called," "beloved of God," "called as saints" (vv6–7). Grace and peace.
- vv8–15 — **Paul and Rome:** thanks for their famous faith (v8); unceasing prayer to come (vv9–10); to impart a gift and be mutually encouraged (vv11–12); often planned, prevented so far (v13); under obligation to Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish (v14); eager to preach in Rome (v15).
- vv16–17 — **the thesis:** not ashamed — the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, Jew first and also Greek (v16); in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith — Habakkuk 2:4 (v17).

- vv18–23 — **the indictment opens:** the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against men who suppress the truth (v18); what can be known of God is evident — His eternal power and divine nature clearly seen in creation — so they are without excuse (vv19–20); they knew God but did not honor Him or give thanks; futile, darkened, fools (vv21–22); they exchanged His glory for images of man and beast (v23).
- vv24–32 — **God gave them over:** to impurity (vv24–25), to degrading passions (vv26–27), to a depraved mind (v28); the harvest — a list of twenty-one sins (vv29–31); knowing they deserve death, they do them and approve of those who do (v32).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "God" ×22 — vv1, 4, 7 (×2), 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19 (×2), 21 (×2), 23, 24, 25, 26, 28 (×2), 30, 32. God is the subject of the chapter in both halves — His gospel, His power, His righteousness, His wrath, His handing over.
- "faith" ×6 — vv5, 8, 12, 17 (×3, counting the Habakkuk quotation).
- "gospel" ×4 — vv1, 9, 15, 16.
- "power" ×3 — v4 (the Son declared with power), v16 (the gospel is God's power), v20 (His eternal power seen in creation).
- "called" ×3 — vv1, 6, 7.
- "Son" ×3 — vv3, 4, 9.
- "revealed" ×2 — v17 (righteousness), v18 (wrath).
- "unrighteousness" ×3 — v18 (×2), v29; "righteousness / righteous" ×2 — v17.
- "exchanged" ×3 — vv23, 25, 26.
- "gave them over" ×3 — vv24, 26, 28.
- "truth" ×2 — vv18, 25.
- "wise" ×2 (vv14, 22) and "foolish / fools" ×3 (vv14, 21, 22).
- knowing words — "known" (v19), "knew" (v21), "acknowledge" (v28), "know" (v32): they always knew.

Contrasts: according to the flesh ⟷ according to the Spirit of holiness (vv3–4). Righteousness revealed in the gospel ⟷ wrath revealed from heaven (vv17–18). Paul gives thanks for them (v8) ⟷ the world would not give thanks (v21). Professing to be wise ⟷ became fools (v22). The incorruptible God ⟷ corruptible man, birds, animals, crawling things (v23). The truth of God ⟷ a lie; the Creator ⟷ the creature (v25). Natural ⟷ unnatural (v26). Paul "eager" to give (vv11, 15) ⟷ people eager to approve sin (v32). The "obedience of faith" (v5) ⟷ "disobedient to parents" (v30).

Text notes. KJV "Jesus Christ" (v1) and "the gospel of Christ" (v16) follow the later manuscripts; NASB95 reads "Christ Jesus" and "the gospel." KJV's vice list has twenty-three items (adding "fornication" in v29 and "implacable" in v31); NASB95 has twenty-one.

Shape of the chapter: a door, a longing, a thesis, and a descent. The first seventeen verses rise to the gospel; verses 18–32 go down a staircase — suppress, refuse to thank, exchange, given over — three times over, each step lower.

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel of God is about His Son and is God's power to save everyone who believes; it reveals a righteousness from God received by faith. And it is needed, because the whole world knew God, refused to thank Him, traded Him for idols, and has been handed over to what it chose.

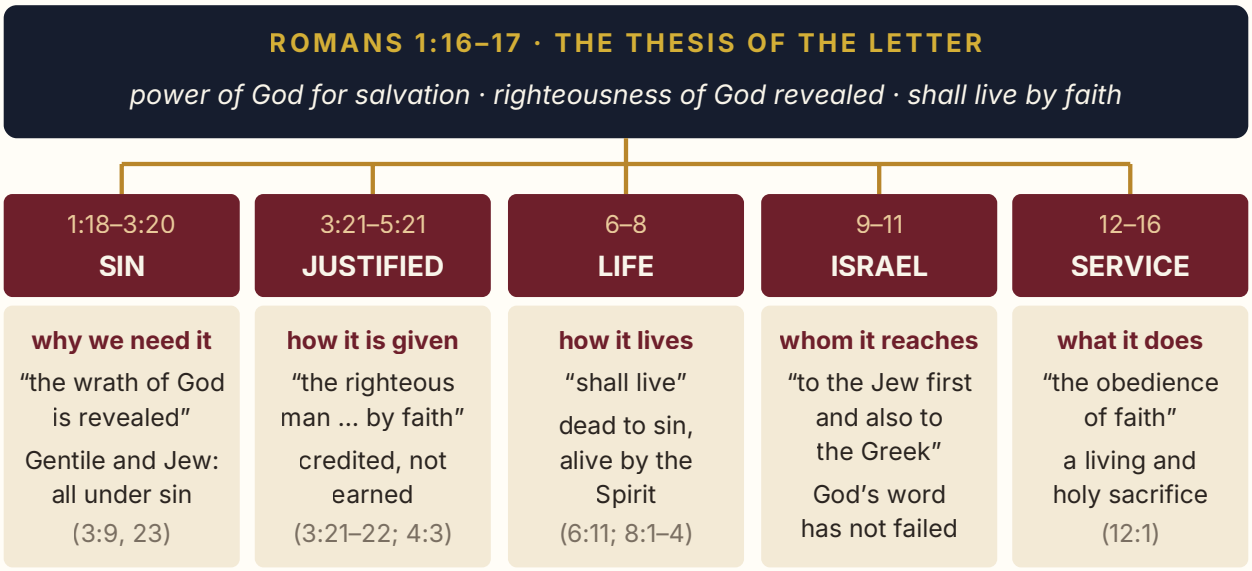
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 1:17

"For in it △the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man ☆SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

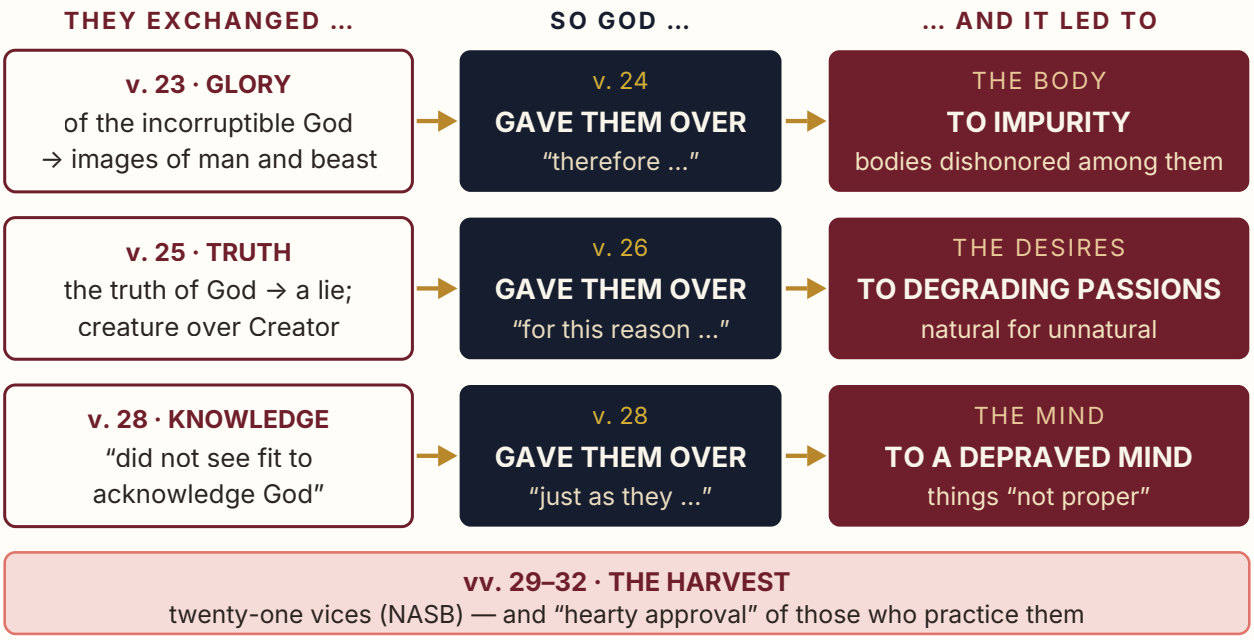
FIGURE · ROMANS 1:16–17 AS A MAP OF THE LETTER



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

The thesis unfolds into the whole letter: why everyone needs God's righteousness, how it is given by faith, how the righteous live, what it means for Israel, and what the obedience of faith looks like.

FIGURE · 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.

Who is the gospel about? (vv1–4). The gospel is "of God" — He owns it (Sproul: the genitive of possession; "The gospel does not originate with Paul; it originates with God") — and it is "concerning His Son." Two lines describe Him: according to the flesh, a true man of David's royal line (2 Sam 7:12–13); according to the Spirit of holiness, "declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection." Guzik, with Clarke: "declared" means put beyond doubt. The Greek *horizō* is to mark a boundary: the resurrection did not make Jesus God's Son, it marked Him out publicly — and Acts 17:31 uses the same verb of the Man God "has appointed." Henry and Spurgeon both read the two natures here: "He was a man, therefore he died: but he rose again, for he was more than man" (Spurgeon).

What does it mean that Paul is a "bond-servant"? Sproul insists on "slave": a *doulos* was bought and owned, and Paul knew no gap between Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord. Guzik, with Morris, softens the picture without losing it — "complete and utter devotion." Henry calls him a steward in the house. All three agree: Paul's identity begins with whose he is.

"The obedience of faith" (v5). Is faith the obedience, or does obedience come from faith? Henry holds both — the mind submitting to God's revelation, the will to His commands. Paul ends Romans with the same phrase (16:26), so the letter is bracketed by it. Faith is not a feeling about God; it is surrender to Him.

Paul's debt (vv8–15). Guzik: Paul did not found this church; it likely grew from Pentecost converts (Acts 2:10). Paul's "obligation" is not something he borrowed but something Christ laid on him (Henry: "His receivings made him a debtor"); Sproul says the same debt reaches everyone a Christian meets. Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on "I am ready" — Paul the Ready — ready to preach, suffer and die, but never to preach another gospel.

What is "the righteousness of God" (v17)? All four teachers read it as the righteousness God *gives* — Guzik: "the God-kind of righteousness that is given to the sinner who puts their trust in Jesus Christ"; Sproul: Luther's "alien righteousness," not the righteousness by which God is righteous. Luther hated the phrase while he thought it meant God's punishing justice, and the Reformation began when he saw it as a gift. (Some modern scholars stress God's own saving faithfulness here; Romans 3:26 shows both are true — God is just and the justifier.) Abraham is the pattern: "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6).

"From faith to faith." Guzik: "by faith from beginning to end." Henry: "all along from faith to faith." Habakkuk 2:4 was spoken while Babylon was coming; the righteous man would live by trusting God's word in the dark. Sproul: to live by faith is not merely to believe God exists but to trust what He says. Paul drops Habakkuk's "his" and quotes it again in Galatians 3:11.

Why does wrath come right after good news (v18)? The "For" ties them. Sproul calls 1:18–3:20 preparatory — the gospel is good news only to people who know they are guilty. Guzik with Murray: wrath is "the holy revulsion of God's being" against what contradicts His holiness; Sproul: "He is not merely irritated." Righteousness and wrath are both "revealed," present tense — both are happening now.

Can creation save anyone? (vv19–20). All four say creation is enough to condemn, not enough to save. The knowledge is real — Henry: "The workman is known by his work"; Spurgeon hears "a gospel of the sea, and of the heavens, of the stars, and of the sun" — and it leaves people "without excuse" (*anapologētos*, no defense). Sproul pushes hardest: there are no innocent people, the agnostic has no safe harbor — "Your problem is not an intellectual problem" — but he distinguishes this knowledge from the saving knowledge only the Spirit gives. The problem is not that people do not know; it is that they "suppress the truth" (*katechō*, hold it down). Henry: the heart is "the dungeon in which many a good truth is detained and buried."

The first sin is ingratitude (v21). Spurgeon's sermon on vv20–21 — *Inexcusable Irreverence and Ingratitude* — says they never denied God existed; they gave Him no reverence and no thanks. Guzik: knowledge without holy practice is useless. Then the slide: futile reasoning, a darkened heart, foolishness dressed as wisdom — "The way to be a fool is to pretend to be wise" (Spurgeon).

The exchanges (vv23, 25, 26). Glory for an image, truth for "the lie," the natural for the unnatural. Psalm 106:20 says Israel did the same at Sinai. Guzik: we keep making God in our own image, or one beneath us — and we become like what we worship. Sproul answers Freud: fallen people would never invent a *holy* God; they invent manageable ones.

What does "God gave them over" mean? (vv24, 26, 28). Sproul: judicial abandonment — God takes His restraining hand off. Henry: the withdrawing of restraining grace, so the punishment matches the sin — "Those who dishonoured God were given up to dishonour themselves." Guzik: "It is actually His wrath that allows us to go on destroying ourselves with sin." Sproul's hard line: "Most of the time, when we sin, we are working out God's punishment for our sin." Yet *paradidōmi* is also the gospel's verb — Christ "was delivered over because of our transgressions" (4:25); God "delivered Him over for us all" (8:32).

Verses 26–27. Guzik, Sproul and Henry all read "against nature" as against God's created order, not merely custom (Sproul: "against nature as God has created it"), and Sproul calls it Paul's clearest picture of a world turned upside down — while insisting that sex itself is "a beautiful thing, a divine creation." Then Paul immediately widens the list to gossip, envy, arrogance and disobedience to parents; Guzik notes the respectable sins stand beside murder. No one reads this list from above — chapter 2 turns to the reader who nods along (2:1).

Worse than doing it (v32). Henry: approving others' sin is a deeper sin, because it defends wickedness and spreads it. Sproul: we look for allies to lessen our guilt. The list ends not with the worst act but with the worst attitude — applause.

Word study (Greek):

- **bond-servant — *doulos* (G1401):** slave, one owned by a master.
- **set apart — *aphōrizō* (G873):** to mark off by a boundary; perfect participle, set apart and still so.
- **declared — *horizō* (G3724):** to mark out, define, appoint (also Acts 17:31).
- **power — *dynamis* (G1411):** ability, might — the gospel *is* God's power (v16), the Son declared *with* power (v4).
- **obedience — *hypakoē* (G5218):** obedience that begins with listening.
- **under obligation — *opheiletēs* (G3781):** debtor.
- **eager — *prothymos* (G4289):** ready, willing in spirit.
- **ashamed — *epaischynomai* (G1870):** to be ashamed of, to disown.
- **righteousness — *dikaiosynē* (G1343):** the righteousness from God received by faith.
- **revealed — *apokalyptō* (G601):** unveiled — present tense in vv17 and 18.
- **wrath — *orgē* (G3709):** God's settled, holy opposition to evil.
- **suppress — *katechō* (G2722):** to hold down, restrain.
- **without excuse — *anapologētos* (G379):** without a defense (also 2:1).
- **divine nature — *theiotēs* (G2305):** divinity, what God is (KJV "Godhead").
- **exchanged — *allassō* (G236), *metallassō* (G3337):** to trade one thing for another.
- **gave over — *paradidōmi* (G3860):** to hand over into custody; used of Christ in 4:25 and 8:32.
- **depraved — *adokimos* (G96):** failed the test, unapproved; a play on *dokimazō* (G1381), "see fit."
- **give hearty approval — *syneudokeō* (G4909):** to be pleased together with (Acts 8:1).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The first word is "slave."** No Savior who is not also Lord.
2. **The resurrection marked Him out; it did not make Him Son.** *Horizō* — the boundary line of a horizon.
3. **"Obedience of faith" frames the letter** (1:5; 16:26).
4. **Paul the Ready** — ready for anything except another gospel (Spurgeon).
5. **The gospel is power, not advice** (Morris, in Guzik).
6. **A given righteousness** — Luther's discovery, Sproul's "alien righteousness."
7. **Two revelations, one verb** — righteousness revealed (v17), wrath revealed (v18).
8. **Truth is not missing; it is held down** — Henry's "dungeon."
9. **The first sin named is ingratitude** (v21).
10. **God gives us what we insist on — and then gives His Son** (1:24; 8:32).

Cross-references: Gen 3:15; 15:6; 2 Sam 7:12–13; Ps 19:1; 81:12; 106:20; Jer 2:11; Hos 4:17; Hab 2:4; Matt 27:18; Mark 8:38; Acts 2:10; 8:1; 17:30–31; Rom 2:1; 3:21–26; 4:25; 8:32; 16:25–26; 1 Cor 1:18; Gal 3:11; Eph 4:17–19; Phil 3:9; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · 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."

Command to obey — the obedience of faith. Paul's gospel was meant to produce obedience, not just agreement (v5). Faith that never bends my will is not the faith Paul preached. Today I'll name one thing God has plainly told me to do that I have been "believing about" instead of doing — and do it.

Sin to confess — ingratitude and suppressed truth. The slide in this chapter starts with two quiet sins: not honoring God as God, and not giving thanks (v21). I know that slide. Every relapse I've watched in a man's life — and in mine — started with a heart that stopped thanking God and started holding down something it knew was true. I confess where I have pushed truth down because it was inconvenient.

Warning to heed — "God gave them over." The scariest sentence in the chapter is God letting people have what they insisted on. Addiction works exactly this way: I exchange the real thing for a counterfeit, and then the counterfeit owns me. The "freedom" to keep sinning is not mercy; it is judgment (Guzik). And verse 32 warns me about the applause — the circle of friends who cheer each other into sin. I don't want to be one of the cheerers, and I don't want the men I serve surrounded by them.

Promise to trust — power for everyone who believes. The gospel is not a self-improvement plan; it is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (v16). Everyone — the man in a cell, the man with a needle, the respectable man whose sins are on the "polite" end of the list. The righteousness I need is given, not earned, and I live by it "from faith to faith." And the verb that handed the world over is the verb that handed Christ over for me (8:32).

Example to follow — Paul the Ready. Paul prayed without ceasing for people he had never met (vv9–10), counted himself in debt to every kind of person (v14), and was eager to preach (v15). I want to be "ready" like that (Spurgeon) — ready to share the gospel with the next man I meet, not ashamed of it in the yard, at the job site, or at my own table.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul's first word about himself is "bond-servant." If someone described me by what owns me, what would they say — and what would Paul want them to say? (1:1; 6:17–18) *A slave of Christ is the only free man.*
2. Paul said, "I am under obligation" to people he had never met. Who are my Greeks and barbarians — the people God has put me in debt to with the gospel? (1:14–15; 1 Cor 9:16) *The more grace received, the more is owed.*
3. Where am I most tempted to be ashamed of the gospel — at work, with family, inside, online? What would "not ashamed" look like there this week? (1:16; 2 Tim 1:8) *The cure for shame is confidence in what the gospel is.*
4. Paul says the deepest sin is suppressing truth I already know. What truth about God or myself have I been holding down? (1:18–21; John 3:19–21) *When you and the truth quarrel, end the fight soon.*

5. Verse 21 makes ingratitude the first step down. What happens in my heart when I stop thanking God? (1:21; 1 Thess 5:18) *Thankfulness keeps God as God.*
6. “God gave them over” — He let them have what they wanted. Have I ever gotten what I insisted on and found it was a judgment? How does 8:32 change the story? (1:24–28; 4:25; 8:32) *The Son was handed over so the handed-over could come home.*

Worship. The God who could have left the whole world in its exchange instead sent a gospel about His Son — promised for centuries, born in David’s line, raised in power — and calls people like me “beloved of God” and “saints” (v7). The Creator “who is blessed forever. Amen” (v25) is blessed by me today.

Prayer. Father, thank You — I don’t want to be a man who knows You and will not thank You. Forgive me for the truth I have held down and the counterfeits I have traded You for. Don’t give me over to what I want; give me what You gave: Your Son, handed over for me. Make me a bond-servant who is not ashamed of the gospel and ready to preach it to anyone You put in front of me. Let the righteous live by faith — starting with me, today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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