

# DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME // WHAT IS YOUR MISSION?  
FEBRUARY 28, 2021

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discussion Starter:** How would you explain the Gospel to someone who has never heard it but is open to hearing it?

**Key Passage:** “Which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.” (Romans 1:2-6)

In our text, Paul explains three realities about the gospel: It isn't a new message—it was promised in the Old Testament; it centers upon Jesus Christ, and Paul's mission and identity are connected to Christ.

## 1. The Gospel was promised by God in the Old Testament.

Paul helps his readers understand that the gospel didn't simply come about after Christ's death and resurrection; rather, it was prophesied in the Old Testament: “Which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (v.2).

**Discuss:** Look up these prophecies and discuss what is being prophesied: Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Psalm 69:8; Isaiah 53:4-5; Zechariah 12:10; Job 19:25.

**Discuss:** Why is it important to know that the Gospel isn't some new idea; rather, it had been prophesied long ago in the Old Testament?

## 2. The Gospel centers on Jesus Christ.

One of the Old Testament prophecies assures that the Messiah would be one of David's descendants, and would sit on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Paul has this prophecy in mind when he writes, “concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh” (v.3).

After emphasizing Jesus' humanity, Paul then emphasizes Jesus' deity evidenced by His resurrection from the dead: “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” (v.4).

**Discuss:** How would it change the Gospel if Jesus was human but not God?

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### 3. Paul's identity and mission are connected to Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

Paul wants his Roman readers to know that his own identity is inseparably connected to Jesus Christ in three ways:

- **It is through Christ that Paul received grace.**

*"...through whom we have received grace..."* (v.5a)

Grace is God's undeserved favor extended to us sinners. Grace is when God does something for us that we could never do for ourselves.

**Discuss:** How would you explain grace to someone who has never heard of it?

- **It is through Christ that Paul received apostleship.**

*"through whom we have received...apostleship..."* (v.5b)

Christ gave Paul the authority to represent Him and to speak in His authority.

**Discuss:** How can you tell if someone is representing Christ and speaking in Christ's authority?

- **It is through Christ that Paul was sent to take the Gospel to all people—including Gentiles.**

*"...to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ."* (v.5c-6)

Belief and obedience are two sides of the same coin. Responding to the Gospel in belief is an act of obedience toward God; refusing to believe the Gospel is an act of disobedience toward God. In Acts 9:15, Jesus said about Paul: *"He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."* Notice that Paul's mission was both global: to *"all the nations"* (v.5) and local: *"including you [in Rome] who are called to belong to Jesus Christ"* (v.6).

**Discuss:** We all share Paul's calling to take the Gospel to all the nations (Matthew 28:19-20). But as a Roman citizen, Paul had a special burden in his heart to share the Gospel in Rome. Do you have a special people group or place that you feel burdened to reach with Gospel? Why them? Why there?

#### **For Further Study**

International Mission Board at [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)

"What is Christian Missions?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

*When Missions Shapes the Mission* by David Horne