

## **Romans 1:1-2**

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,*

We saw in our study last week, that Paul is not only introducing himself, but he is introducing the theme of this book and the source of his transformation - God's Gospel. As Paul mentions this message of good news, he erupts into a detailed exaltation over both what this good news really is and where this good news can be found.

## **Romans 1:1b-2**

set apart for the gospel of God, 2 **which he** promised beforehand **through his** prophets in the holy Scriptures,

Pay careful attention to the details and see into the mind of Paul to the realities that he is assuming to be true. Listen to where you can find this good news of God, and listen to who is doing the speaking.

The Gospel of God which HE [God] promised beforehand through HIS [God's] prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

Let me put these assumptions into a propositional sentence - "*God spoke through men called prophets in the Holy Scriptures*". Paul is affirming what is one of the most important doctrines in Christianity:

## **Truth #1 The Bible is God-Breathed**

It is God that does the promising in the Scriptures. It is God who does the writing of the Scriptures through his prophets Our God is not silent. God, in his infinite wisdom, has ordained that the way in which he will communicate to his people is through human language in black and white ink on a page written through human instruments by the power of the Holy Spirit.

HE speaks. He has spoken through creation, he has spoken through his mighty works, he has spoken in an audible voice and through dreams and visions, he has spoken through the incarnation of Jesus Christ the son of God. But the primary way we hear his voice with most clarity and the most certainty today is through a book he breathed.

Paul is assuming what in other parts of the Bible he declares clearly.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

Peter says something similar

**2 Peter 1:19-21 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed**, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

When we open up the Bible, we open up to God-breathed words through human authors. The incomprehensible God, has made himself comprehensible by revealing himself through the words of human authors over thousands of years, and preserving his words in a book that we might hold in our hand.

In each book of the Bible, we hear the voices of different personalities with different styles of writing such as Moses, Isaiah, John, Paul, Peter, James, and others. But it is God speaking through these personalities, voices, and styles. There is no book like the Bible. Because Paul believes the Bible is God-breathed he describes the Bible with a significant adjective in this verse.

### **Romans 1:1b-2**

set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the **holy Scriptures**,

## **Truth #2 The Bible is Holy**

In our community group Bible studies this week, we saw God manifesting himself to Moses as fire, and God warned Moses not to draw near for the very ground he was standing on was “holy ground”. We talked about Isaiah, who saw God sitting on a throne with angels circling him singing “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty” day and night without end. We see the same scene in Revelation chapter 4. Throughout the Bible, there is an emphasis on describing God as the Holy One.

This word - “Holy” - carries with it several nuances. Holy means to be without corruption. It is a state of absolute purity. It also means to be set apart, or to be totally other than something else by comparison. God is Holy because he is set apart from the rest of creation as uniquely pure, right, and true.

One Bible dictionary says this about the word Holy.

*The biblical use of the term “holy” has to do primarily with God’s separating from the world that which He chooses to devote to Himself. (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 772).*

This is why Christians, are called saints - or “holy ones” as we will see Paul describe later in verse 7. We are made positionally holy by God through the work of Jesus. He sets us apart from the rest of the world for his use. ***By describing the Bible as Holy, Paul emphasizes that the Holy God is both the source of these Scriptures, and he has set apart these Scriptures for His purposes in the world.*** These writings are no accident. They are not powerless collections of ancient texts. They are holy - set apart words - by the mouth of a Holy God who has given them to his people for the accomplishment of his sovereign purposes in his people.

King David, only had a portion of the Old Testament when he was writing the Psalms, but listen as he understands the supreme value of the written Scriptures he had.

**Psalm 19:7-11** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Do you hear what this holy set-apart word of God is doing in this passage alone? The word is reviving, making wise, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, warning you, and rewarding you. These are just some of the things that the Holy God is accomplishing through his Holy Scriptures. We can not know God, love God, or enjoy God, unless God makes himself known and it is through his Holy Scriptures he has decided to do so. He is making himself known. He is making his plan known. He is making the Gospel known. And now we come to Paul’s primary point in verse 2.

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set apart for **the gospel of God**, 2 which he **promised beforehand** through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,

## **Truth #3 The Bible Reveals the Gospel of God**

Remember last week we defined the Gospel as “God’s Good News of Salvation to the World through the death and resurrection of Jesus for all who have faith.” But Paul emphasizes here that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation of mankind is not something new. The Gospel was not God’s plan - B. This good news is and has always been God’s plan from the beginning, and God promised the good news of Jesus in the Old Testament Scriptures so that when Jesus came and when Jesus accomplished what he did, we might as Peter says, *“have the prophetic word more fully confirmed”*

***When you read the Old Testament, you see the living hope of Jesus on every page-thousands of years before Jesus was born in a manger.***

Jesus states this about himself to the religious people who were not reading the Scriptures rightly.

**John 5:39-40** *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

The Old Testament Scriptures bear witness about Jesus. If I were to lead you through every single way in which they do that, we would be here all day, but I do want you to see at least 4 ways in which the gospel message of Jesus was "promised beforehand."

Here are 4 ways the Gospel was promised beforehand with some examples for each.

### **1. We See Jesus in the Covenant Promises**

In Genesis 3:15, God promises that an offspring from Eve would one day crush the tempter and destroy the evil one. Jesus is the one who would fully and finally crush the serpent's head. In Genesis 12 and Genesis 17, God promises that through Abraham's line all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Jesus came from the line of Abraham and it is he who has blessed all the nations. In 2 Samuel 7, King David is promised an offspring from his line that would sit on an eternal throne over a kingdom that would have no end. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who came from David's line to establish an eternal kingdom in which there will be no more suffering, no more pain, and no more funerals. Paul will reference this promise in Romans 1:3 when he identifies Jesus as the one who *"was descended from David"*.

### **2. We See Jesus in God's Mighty Acts of Salvation and Provision**

In Exodus 12, God sends a death angel to bring judgment on every house in Egypt, but he makes a way for salvation. Anyone who would obediently sacrifice a spotless lamb and put its blood on their door may escape the judgment of God. The blood of that lamb was a foreshadowing to the blood of THE lamb, Jesus Christ whose blood dripped from a cross so that anyone who trusted the blood of lamb would be saved from God's judgment. Upon seeing Jesus, John the Baptist rightly exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

In Exodus 16 God provides for his people bread from heaven so that they might live. Listen to Jesus' words:

**John 6:32-34** *Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the*

*bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” 34 They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” 35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

In Leviticus 16 God orders that the Jewish nation would celebrate the day of atonement annually. On this day every year, the blood of a sacrifice would be taken into the tent of the presence of God for the forgiveness of the sins of God’s people. Thousands of years later on the Jewish day of atonement Jesus became the perfect and permanent blood sacrifice for the sin of his people for all time.

**Hebrews 9:24-26** *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

In **Numbers 21**, the people of God fall into great sin grumbling and mumbling against God in all ungratefulness and God sends poisonous serpents to bite them as judgment for their unfaithfulness. But God tells Moses to make a bronze serpent and to set it on a pole, and anyone who would look upon that bronze serpent would live. In **John 3:14** Jesus says:”14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

### **3. We See Jesus in the Old Testament Characters**

**Jesus is the true and better Adam.** Where Adam fell into temptation in the garden, Jesus prevailed over temptation in the Garden. Through Adam’s sin we received the sentence of death. Through Jesus’ righteousness we receive the eternal life.

**Romans 5:14-15** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who **was a type of the one who was to come.**15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

**Jesus is the true and better Joseph.** Joseph was betrayed and falsely accused but rose up to royalty and saved his family from famine. Jesus was betrayed and falsely accused but rose from the dead to save his people from Judgment

**Jesus is the true and better Moses** who delivers his people not from slavery to Pharaoh, but from the slavery of sin and death.

**Jesus is the true and better Joshua**, who triumphantly leads his people into the promised land of an eternal inheritance.

**Jesus is the true and better David**, who sits on an eternal throne, after defeating not Goliath, but Satan himself.

**Jesus is the true and better Jonah**, who after being three days and three nights not in the belly of a fish, but in the grave, burst forth in glorious resurrection with a message of salvation for the Gentiles.

And lastly,

#### **4. We See Jesus in Specific Prophecies of the Old Testament**

In **Deuteronomy 18:15** Moses promises a future prophet whom God's people should listen to 15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

Jesus is that prophet.

**Acts 3:22-23** 22 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.'

Jesus is the miracle baby born of a virgin from Isaiah 7:14. Jesus is the coming shepherd of God's people who was born in Bethlehem from Micah 5:2. Jesus is the Son of Man coming on the clouds from Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus is the promised savior from Isaiah 61. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus stood in the synagogue and read from the scroll of Isaiah. After reading from the scroll he sat down and declared, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Jesus is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

These are just samplings of fulfilled Scriptures. Are you starting to see the enormous amount of truth behind Paul's statement in Romans 1:2 that the Gospel of God has been promised beforehand? Jesus himself walked through the Scriptures with his disciples showing himself in all of the holy scriptures.

**Luke 24:27** *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Do you see the beauty of it all? These chapters and verses written over the course of thousands of years prior to Jesus' birth by different authors in different regions all come together to tell one story. The holy God is making a way for unholy people to be reconciled to God through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Paul is set apart for the Gospel of God, which God promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. Paul introduces his letter, and describes the Gospel in this way because he wants you to know where you can find the Gospel story over and over and over again in the Holy Scriptures. But he does not only want you to know the content of the Gospel story and where it is to be found. He wants you to believe it as trustworthy.

## **#4 The Bible Reveals the Faithfulness of God**

***Paul stresses the “promised-beforehand” because it is in the fulfillment of these promises and these prophecies that we may see more fully the Gospel as being worthy of all our trust and devotion.*** Verse 2, is not only a statement about the content of the gospel, it is also a reason for believing it.

This is significant not only for believing what Jesus did, it is significant for believing what Jesus is doing and what Jesus will do. While the Gospel and the person and work of Jesus may be the fulfillment of Old Promises, the gospel is itself full of promises to us that we must believe.

- Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus and you are promised eternal life.
- Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus and you are promised rebirth, a new you, and a spiritual resurrection.
- Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus and you are promised very presence of God's Holy Spirit for the rest of your life that will increasingly transform you into God's image.
- Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus and you are promised that your suffering now will not be worthy of comparison to the glory that will be revealed to you.
- Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus and you are promised a resurrected body in a renewed creation with no more sin to fight, no more sorrow to experience, and no more death to come.

These are promises that the Gospel offers, and IF, God promised the good news of Jesus beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, and Jesus came and did exactly what God said he would do then won't he do exactly what he says he will do for us who believe?

*“God's deity - his Godness - is shown in declaring his purpose before it happens and then seeing to it that it happens by “accomplishing all [his] purpose.... His predictions are certain, not mainly because he foresees without error, but because he executes without fail. This is no small aspect of his glory in fulfilling Scripture.”*

- John Piper

God made promises in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the New Testament. ***God made promises in the New Testament that will be fulfilled in part when we put faith in Jesus and will be fulfilled in full when we see him face to face.***

So what do we do with those truths? Here are three Takeaways:

- Repent from your sin and Believe in the Gospel
- Trust God's Promises
- Cherish Your Bible

It is only in knowing the Gospel in the scriptures that you will be able to believe it, and it is only in knowing the promises, that you will be able to trust them.

*Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.*

*"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—  
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!*

*Amen.*