



ROMANS 1 WITHOUT EXCUSE

In this opening chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, he states that we are "without excuse" for rejecting God, because His "invisible attributes" are seen in all creation. A sober look at the majesty of the universe is sufficient for all men to believe in and glorify God. -JT

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— **2** the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures **3** regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, **4** and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. **5** Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. **6** And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ

reported all over the world. **9** God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you **10** in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— **12** that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.

15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being

understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. **25** They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. **27** In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. **29** They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; **31** they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. **32** Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

When Paul wrote the Book of Romans, he had been a Christian preacher for some 20 years. On his way to Jerusalem, he had three months in Corinth without any pressing duties. He perhaps thought this was a good time to write ahead to the Christians in Rome, a church he planned to visit after the trip to Jerusalem.

As Paul endeavored to go to Rome, the Holy Spirit warned him about the peril awaiting him in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). What if he were unable to make it to Rome? Then he must write them a letter so comprehensive that the Christians in Rome had the gospel Paul preached, even if Paul himself were not able to visit them.

Because of all this, Romans is different than many of the other letters Paul wrote churches. Other New Testament letters focus more on the church and its challenges and problems. The Letter to the Romans focuses more on God and His great plan of redemption.

To all who are in Rome: Paul had never been to Rome, and he did not found the Roman church. This makes the Book of Romans different because most of Paul's letters were to churches he founded. It seems the church in Rome began somewhat spontaneously as Christians came to the great city of the Empire and settled there. There is also no Biblical or historical evidence that the Apostle Peter founded the church in Rome. Acts 2:10 describes how there were people from Rome among the Jews present at the Day of Pentecost; so when they returned home, there was a Christian community in Rome. Beyond that, the origins of the church in Rome are somewhat obscure, but Christians continually migrated to Rome from all parts of the Empire. It shouldn't surprise us that a church started there spontaneously, without being directly planted by an apostle.

"Men cannot charge God with hiding himself from them and thus excuse their irreligion and their immorality."
- Lenski

I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also: Ironically — in the mystery of God's irony — when Paul did eventually get to Rome, he came as a shipwrecked prisoner. "I do not suppose that Paul guessed that he would be sent there at the government's expense, but he was. The Roman Empire had to find a ship for him, and a fit escort for him, too; and he entered the city as an ambassador in bonds. When our hearts are set on a thing, and we pray for it, God may grant us the blessing; but, it may be, in a way that we never looked for. You shall go to Rome, Paul; but you shall go in chains." (Spurgeon)

For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes: This is why Paul is not ashamed of a gospel centered on a crucified Savior. He knows that the gospel — the good news of Jesus Christ — has inherent power. We do not give it power, we only stop hindering the power of the gospel when we present it effectively.

His invisible attributes are clearly seen: God shows us something of His eternal power and divine nature through creation, by the things that are made. He has given a general revelation that is obvious both in creation and within the mind and heart of man. The universal character of this revelation and the clarity of it leave man **without excuse** for rejecting it. "Men cannot charge God with hiding himself from them and thus excuse their irreligion and their immorality." (Lenski)

Professing to be wise, they became fools: Our rejection of God's general revelation does not make us smarter or better. Instead, it makes mankind futile in their thoughts, and makes our foolish hearts darkened — and we become fools. The fact is once a man rejects the truth of God in Jesus, he will fall for anything foolish, and trust far more feeble and fanciful systems than what he rejects from God.

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ROMANS 1

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**THE HEAVENS DECLARE
THE GLORY OF GOD**

**THE SKIES PROCLAIM
THE WORK OF HIS HANDS**

PSALM 19:1

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