

Week 1

Interpretation Exercise

Interpret the following scripture using all of tools listed here that you have available. Analyse and apply the scripture in a structured way: (1) what did this scripture mean to Paul and his readers, and (2) what does this scripture mean to us?

Romans 1

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

**7To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.**

[1] Or who as to his spirit

[2] Or was appointed to be the Son of God with power

NASB: 1Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, [1] <*1> called as an apostle, <*2> set apart for <*3> the gospel of God, 2which He <*4> promised beforehand through His <*5> prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3concerning His Son, who was born <*6> of a [2] descendant of David <*7> according to the flesh, 4who was declared <*8> the Son of God with power [3] by the resurrection from the dead, according to the [4] Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and <*9> apostleship [5] to bring about the <*10> obedience of faith among <*11> all the Gentiles for His name's sake, 6among whom you also are the <*12> called of Jesus Christ; 7to all who are <*13> beloved of God in Rome, called as [6] <*14> saints: <*15> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1]Lit a called apostle; [2]Lit seed; [3]Or as a result of; [4]Or spirit; [5]Lit for obedience; [6]Or holy ones

<*1>1 Cor 1:1; 9:1; 2 Cor 1:1; <*2>Acts 9:15; 13:2; Gal 1:15; <*3>Mark 1:14; Rom 15:16; <*4>Titus 1:2; <*5>Luke 1:70; Rom 3:21; 16:26; <*6>Matt 1:1; <*7>John 1:14; Rom 4:1; 9:3, 5; 1 Cor 10:18; <*8>Matt 4:3; <*9>Acts 1:25; Gal 1:16; <*10>Acts 6:7; Rom 16:26; <*11>Acts 9:15; <*12>Jude 1; Rev 17:14; <*13>Rom 5:5ff; 8:39; <*14>Acts 9:13; Rom 8:28ff; 1 Cor 1:2, 24; <*15>Num 6:25f; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2

INTERPRETATION PROCESS

1. Overview

- Whole work
- Passage's place in work
- Boundaries of text
- Issues for study

2. Textual analysis

- Paragraphs and words
- Historical, cultural issues
- Genre-specific issues

3. Theological analysis

- Biblical and smaller units
- Authorities

4. Application

- From text itself
- Comparing like situations
- Confirmation of the Spirit
- Doing it!

TOOLS

Linguistic

- Plain / literal meaning
- Manuscripts
- Translations
- Definitions
- Structure
- Other scriptures

Literary

- Context
- Genre
- Allegory
- Symbolism
- Typology

Historical

- Historical context
- Cultural context
- External writings

External Authority

- Rabbis
- Jesus
- Church leaders, scholars
- Denomination
- Doctrine / 'rule of faith'
- Outside scholars, leaders

Revelation

- Holy Spirit
- Mystery
- Apocalypsis
- Existential response

New Living Translation: Greetings from Paul. 1 This letter is from Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. 2 This Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. 3 It is the Good News about his Son, Jesus, who came as a man, born into King David's royal family line. 4 And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit.[1] 5 Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

6 You are among those who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7 dear friends in Rome. God loves you dearly, and he has called you to be his very own people. May grace and peace be yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Or the Spirit of holiness.

Matthew Henry Bible Commentary: In this chapter we may observe, I. The preface and introduction to the whole epistle, to v. 16. II. A description of the deplorable condition of the Gentile world, which begins the proof of the doctrine of justification by faith, here laid down at v. 17. The first is according to the then usual formality of a letter, but intermixed with very excellent and savoury expressions. Verses 1-7. In this paragraph we have, I. The person who writes the epistle described (v. 1): Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ; this is his title of honour, which he glories in, not as the Jewish teachers, Rabbi, Rabbi; but a servant, a more immediate attendant, a steward in the house... Separated to the gospel of God. The Pharisees had their name from separation, because they separated themselves to the study of the law, and might be called *aphoµrismenoi eis ton nomon*; such a one Paul had formerly been; but now he had changed his studies, was *aphoµrismenos eis to Euangelion*, a gospel Pharisee, separated by the counsel of God (Gal. 1:15).

Douglas J. Moo: Paul wanted the Christians in first-century Rome to understand this message of grace--the "Good News" of Jesus Christ. He wrote to them because he was planning to visit(1) and wanted to introduce himself to them. But Paul also knew about a problem in the Church at Rome. The Christians there were fighting over some of the requirements in the Law of Moses. The Jewish Christians thought that these requirements should be obeyed, while the Gentile Christians dismissed them as irrelevant.

Paul's Letter to the Romans reminds us that everyone--whether Jew or Gentile--stands before the Lord God only because of grace... After introducing the letter and its theme, Paul paints the dark backdrop against which we can truly appreciate the shining light of the Gospel. All people stand condemned under God's wrath,...and are slaves to sin. Paul presents Jesus Christ as the One who has redeemed, or liberated, us from our captivity to sin. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ." We must accept the gift that God offers us in Jesus Christ. In the Greek language, in which Paul wrote, the word "gift" is closely related to the word "grace." The gift that God gives us in Jesus Christ is entirely a matter of grace.... This power of grace in the lives of Christians is the theme of Romans 5-8.... Some people are surprised when they read the Letter to the Romans and come to chapters 9-11, where Paul suddenly writes about God's plan for Israel. But Paul, remember, is trying to help Jewish and Gentile Christians understand how they can be united in one Church of Jesus Christ. Here Paul shows that God is pursuing a plan to bring both Gentiles and Jews to salvation. As believers, we are secure in God's grace. But we don't yet always live as God's people. From the moment of our conversion, we begin a life-long process of living out God's grace in an obedient lifestyle. The key is the renewing of the mind.(23) God wants to reprogram our minds so that they no longer reflect the world's values, but God's. But we need to cooperate with God's work in our minds.

*Living in
Grace: The
Letter to the
Romans
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Decision
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