

Romans 1:2-7 by Wayne Barber

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Romans 1:2-7: The Good News of God! by Dr. Wayne Barber

We have been talking about the Good News of God. Let me read verse 1: "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God." The word "gospel" comes from two Greek words. The first word means good, and the second word means news or message, the good news of God. This is what we have been talking about. Paul is the deliverer of the good news of God. But we are going to look at a description of the Good News of God. I want to remind you, it is God's good news, not man's good news.

We have seen that Paul is the deliverer of it and now we are going to look at the description of the good news of God. Now notice, I didn't say a definition. The definition is found in 1Corinthians 15:3, 4 (notes) when it says that the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the fact that He came to die for our sin upon the cross. But we are not looking at a definition of the Gospel, we are looking at a description of it, something that gives us some tenets about why is it so good and what it involves.

There are three things I want us to look in Ro 1:2-7. First of all, there is the promise of God's good news. Look in Romans 1:2: "the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures." Paul wants them to see that this good news of God has been promised beforehand. It is in the Old Testament. It had already been announced in the Old Testament in the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15. There we find an everlasting covenant in which Abraham was promised a land, a nation and a seed. Galatians 3 says that seed is Jesus Christ, through whom all nations will be blessed. So the Apostle Paul wants them to realize God had announced the good news of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Now turn to Matthew 5:17-note. I want you to see what Jesus said in light of the prophets of the Old Testament and the prophecies

of Himself: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Now when we receive Christ in our hearts and we obey Him, we are in fact obeying His Laws, for His Word now becomes the standard in our life. But not only that, He came to fulfill what the prophets had said. You see, only God could have done that. Man could not fulfill what the prophets had said. The God-man could.

Look in Luke 24. We find here a beautiful picture of how so often we listen to what men say, but we are not quick to note what God says, what the prophets have said, what the Scriptures are telling us. This is on the day of resurrection and these are two disciples who should have been back in Jerusalem excited about the resurrection of Jesus, but they were not. They were going the opposite direction towards Emmaus, discouraged and defeated because they didn't understand what had taken place. They were walking down the road, going the opposite direction, discouraged, disgruntled and Jesus comes along beside them.

In Luke 24:25 Jesus calls them "foolish men." The word "foolish" there is significant. There are two words for a fool in the Scriptures. One means you don't have a mind, a saved mind. That is what a person is like who doesn't have Christ in His life. But then there is another word when you do have a mind, but you refuse to use it. That is the word that is used here. He is saying to these disciples, "Listen, you are not thinking. You are listening to what men have said."

Then he says they are "slow of heart." You find that word "slow" several times in the New Testament, and it appears to be an intentional slowness. I would rather listen to men than I would listen to what God's Word has to say. He said they have been foolish and slow "to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

Look at Lk 24:27: "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all of the Scriptures." He goes back into the Old Testament. The good news didn't begin when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The good news was announced beforehand by God through His prophets. If we would look to see what they had to say, it all pointed to Jesus Christ, the good news of God.

Look in John 5:39, 40 Jesus is talking to some of the religious folks there in verses 39-40: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life." He is saying, "I am the One who gives eternal life and the Scriptures bear witness of Me."

Look down in Jn 5:46: "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he [Moses] wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Jesus was saying, "I have already been announced. Why do you look at Me like I am some strange creature? The whole Old Testament pointed to My coming. I am the good news of God."

There are some foolish skeptics who think Jesus was a mere man, simply the son of Joseph, and He faked all the prophecies that are about Him in the Old Testament. Of course, most of these skeptics don't realize how many hundreds of prophecies there are in the Old Testament.

Have you ever been studying and a thought comes through your mind that all of this is just a myth, the Bible is not really written by the Holy Prophets of God, that it has all been made up by man and we are all just coming to church for no reason at all? It is just what man has come up with? Those thoughts have gone through my mind. It is just human nature to distrust anything that you cannot fully grasp or understand. The next time you have that thought, ask yourself, "What does God's Word say?" This Book is amazing. It is not like a piece of literature. It is the inspired Word of God. It is unbelievable what is in here.

I want to give you six things no man could have faked, only God could have fulfilled. These six make all the rest of them meaningful because you realize if He could fulfill these, then certainly He fulfilled the rest of them. No man can fake these. Oh yes, an intelligent man could have come in and done a few things, but not the ones I am about to share with you.

First of all, there is the issue concerning His birth. Can you imagine somebody trying to manipulate the place of His birth? Micah 5:2 says this, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Now you find me a mere man that could fake that prophecy right there.

Second, there is the issue concerning the time of His birth. Look in Daniel chapter 9. Daniel was very grieved for his people. The angel Gabriel came to him and gave him a revelation about his people. Daniel 9:25 (see notes) reads, "So you are to know and discerning that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks [or seven periods of seven. We know that it couldn't be weeks. It has to be years. That is 49 years.] and sixty-two weeks," which is a period of 434 years.

Add those together and you have a total of 483 years. Da 9:26 (notes) says, "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off." That adds up to the very day of His crucifixion. Daniel gave them a calendar, and if the Jews had looked at that, they would

have known that Jesus had to have been the Messiah. No man could fake that. He couldn't be the right age. He couldn't come on the scene at the right time. He couldn't fake the place of His birth. That is what the Word of God prophesied about Jesus. He said He came to fulfill it.

In Isaiah 7:14, we find the manner of His birth: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." How in the world can you plan the place of your birth? How in the world could you plan the fact that you were going to be born of a virgin with no human father?

Fourth, there is the issue concerning His betrayal. Psalm 41:9 says, "Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." In Zechariah 11:12 it even tells how much he was paid to betray Him, thirty pieces of silver. This was years before this ever came about! How could somebody plan for somebody else to betray Him!

Then fifth, concerning His death, look in Psalm 22:16b: "They pierced My hands and My feet." If you are faking the fact that you are the Messiah, you don't plan your death, just like you don't plan your birth.

Sixth and finally, concerning His burial. Isaiah 53:9: "His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth." Remember, He was in a rich man's borrowed tomb. The reason it was borrowed was He was only going to be there three days. He didn't need it for very long, so He just borrowed it.

Josh McDowell in his book, *"More Than a Carpenter"* said a statistician put all this together and calculated the odds that a man could fake the hundreds of prophecies we find in the Bible, particularly these I have mentioned to you. He said, "The odds would be equal to this. If you took 1017 silver dollars, it would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Mark one of them a special way and throw it out into the middle of the state from a plane. Then take a giant stick and stir up all those dollars all over the state. Now, take a man, blindfold him, turn him loose at the border of Texas and say, 'Go find that one silver dollar.' The chances of him finding that one silver dollar would be like a mere man fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament about Jesus Christ."

This is the inerrant Word of God and it prophesied the Good News through the prophets in the Old Testament. It announced that Jesus Christ was coming. There is nothing in this world that can touch this inerrant book when it comes to being God's Word. It is word for word. When God spoke it, He fulfilled it in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the Good News of God was promised beforehand.

Second, there is the premise of the gospel. I'm using the word "premise" to mean that which you build something on, what is it all founded on, what it rests on. What is the premise of the gospel, the good news, of God? Look Romans 1:1, 2, 3: "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel [good news] of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh."

The main premise of the good news of God concerns His Son, Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Son of God. There are two things about that premise that we rest upon. In verse 3, first of all, is His humiliation, the fact that He was "a descendant of David according to the flesh." What Paul says here is that Jesus was a man. He was flesh and blood like you and me. He was born of a woman, in the blood-line of David.

There are two genealogies of Jesus. One tracks Him through His stepfather, Joseph. The other one tracks Him through His mother. That is significant. Look over in Matthew 1:1: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Now Matthew says He is the son of David. Somehow He is in the line of David. That is exactly what Romans is talking about.

Drop down to Mt 1:6. Matthew starts with Abraham and works his way down to David. He is going to work his way all the way down to Jesus: "and to Jesse was born David the king." David had more than one son, but let's just see which son is significant when it comes to Jesus' earthly father, Joseph. It says, "And to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah." So we see that Solomon is the lineage we are tracking here. Jesus is from David through his son Solomon. Track it down to Mt 1:16: "and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." So, if you want to track Joseph's line, you have to go to Matthew 1 and track it up through Solomon.

Let's go to Luke 3:23, 24, 25ff and see Mary's line. A lot of scholars say, "You can't do this. They never tracked anybody except through their fathers." That is true. But would you admit with me that Jesus was a little unique? He didn't have an earthly father, so if you want to see the bloodline, you've got to go through His mother.

Now don't get confused. In Matthew 1 when we see Joseph, it tracks up through Solomon. It starts back at Abraham and works his way down. Luke does exactly the opposite. He starts with Jesus and works backward, so it could be a little confusing. Verse 23 says, "And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly the son of Joseph." Remember how the Pharisees said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter?" That is what they thought. We know better. But that is what they thought. Continuing we read, "being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli."

Now wait a minute. It said in verse 16 of Matthew 1 that Joseph was the son of Jacob. But in Luke 3:23 Joseph is the son of Eli. Is there an error in that Bible? You know, they weren't much different than we are today. One of the joys I have right now is I have another son. You know Stephen, and you know Stephanie, my daughter. But do you know I have another son? His name is Erik. He is my son-in-law, but I call him my son. Why? Because he is married to my daughter. That is the way it is now, and that is the way it was back then. Eli is Mary's father. Joseph is the son-in-law of Eli.

Now drop down to Lk 3:31. Luke is working backwards and you will see the lineage he is tracking is different from the lineage we saw in Matthew: "the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David." David had more than one son. If you track Solomon it comes down to Joseph.

On one side you have the legal line. In other words, if Joseph were going to be taxed, they would check who his children were, whether they were his natural children or not. It would be under his father, the legal line. But the regal line, the royal line, the bloodline is through Mary and both of them come all the way up to David.

What Paul is trying to show you is that Jesus was the natural born son of Mary, not natural in the sense of how we know natural, but he was the son of Mary. John 1:14 says He didn't come and look around for a body He could find and indwell it. He became flesh through the miraculous conception. He was born of a virgin. He was born a man, a human being, totally God and totally man. So the premise of the Good News of God is He came to this earth as a man. He was born a man, the son of man.

Then you hear Him called the Son of God. That is the other premise of the Gospel. He never ceased to be God but He had to become man. Look over to Philippians 2:6, 7, 8, 9 (notes). You have heard this quoted many times. Let's just make sure you understand it. If you are going to declare the good news of God, it has to start with how Jesus came to this earth. How did He get on this earth? Born of a virgin. He became a man: "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." Likeness of men. What is the difference? He had a body like ours, but there was a significant difference—it had no sin nature in it. He is God. He couldn't deny who He was. He came to be the God-man.

"He emptied Himself." What did He empty Himself of? First of all, His glory, His recognition. He hid Himself inside a body. On the Mount of Transfiguration He got revealed a little bit they got a little touch of who He really was.

He emptied Himself also of the right to use His power for His own benefit. He never used it for His own benefit. He was totally dependent upon His Father. He did that for our example. He became our substitute when He went to the cross.

So you see, He had to become a man. There could have been no sacrifice unless He had become a man. There had to be the perfect man, not an innocent man but a perfect man, the God-man. That is the only person who could have died for you and me. A lamb wouldn't do it. A bull wouldn't do it. A goat wouldn't do it. Through the Old Testament every year they had to do it again. But Hebrews says that He died once and for all for our sin! He is the sacrifice of God. He was announced and foreshadowed by all the Old Testament.

Php 2:8-note continues: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Good news, good news! "For the wages of sin is death." He took our death, died on the cross, and God the Father was satisfied. It could be no other way. Now, through Him, we can have eternal life.

In John 1:17 John the Baptist was standing there beside the river. He saw Jesus come walking down towards the Jordan River and he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world." That is the good news! It wasn't by accident that He went to the cross. It was by the original purpose of God. It was divinely human blood that was shed on the cross for your sin and for my sin. That is the good news. It was His humiliation. But it was also His exaltation.

Look in Romans 1:4. According to the flesh He is the seed of David. We find that in verse 3. But in verse 4 it says, "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." That Spirit of Holiness is the Hebrew way of saying the Holy Spirit.

Let me show you something here. He was declared. The word "declared" there is the word *horizo*. It doesn't mean that He became the Son of God because He resurrected. The word means to mark out definitely, to make it so there is not one single question a person could ask to prove without any shadow of a doubt who He has been all the time. He was declared the Son of God with power. He didn't *become* the Son of God when He resurrected, He was *declared*.

But there is another problem here: "who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." If you have a good translation on the side it will say, "by the dead ones." When it says "by the resurrection of the dead ones," all of us are included in it. It is the hint of a promise there. It was His resurrection, but in His resurrection were all the future bodily resurrections of the church. By the fact that He bodily resurrected, we will one day bodily resurrect.

The same thing is used in Acts 26:23. The same thing is used in 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 when it says that He was raised, not the first fruit, but the first fruits of those who will come later on. The whole picture here is that when He was raised from the dead, a declaration was made and it eliminated all the questions. This is who He is. This is who He has been. There can never be a question in a person's mind. He raised from the dead. In His resurrection is a promise of what is going to happen one day to every one of us called the church.

What is the premise of the Gospel? First of all, His humiliation. He was a man, born of the seed of David, born of a woman. But He was also God, preexistent before the foundation of the world. He erased all questions of that when He raised from the dead.

First of all, we saw the promise of the gospel. Secondly, we saw the premise of it. And finally we have the perimeter of it. What is the perimeter of God's good news? How far does it reach? Are there any limits? Is anybody shut out from being able to benefit from God's good news? Absolutely not.

Look in Romans 1:5-7: "through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; 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." Paul is finishing up greeting them and he is saying, "I have been given grace and apostleship. The assignment I have is to the Gentiles, to the Gentile world." Included in that Gentile world was Rome. Rome was the most pagan city of the day. He says, "To you who already have been recipients of this, you already know what I am talking about, but I have been given the message for the whole Gentile world."

Let me explain something to you. There are two groups of people in this world. There are the Jews, and there are the Gentiles. Period. Not red and yellow, black and white, all these kind of things. There are Jews and Gentiles. You may be a Jew and you have come to know Christ. Bless you! You knew of the promises and the covenants. The rest of us are Gentiles. Thank God He included the Gentiles. Thank the Lord or we wouldn't be where we are. There are two groups, Jews and Gentiles. Now watch this. The way for the Jew is the same way for the Gentile. Now it used to be different. For a person to be saved now it has to be through the Lord Jesus Christ, only through Him.

Look in Ephesians 2:11 (note): "Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hand—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father."

There is only one way and that is through Jesus Christ. He tore down the barrier of the dividing wall. Do you know what the dividing wall was? The dividing wall was in the Temple. It was a wall that would keep the Gentiles from going where all the worship would take place. The Jews could worship God. They had a certain way, the sacrificial system, but the Gentiles could not. They could go into the Court of the Gentiles, but that was as far as they could go. There was a sign on the dividing wall that said you can enter only if you are a Jew. If you are a foreigner, you do so under penalty of death. You see, they were kept away from worshiping God. They couldn't worship God. The Lord Jesus tore down the barrier of the dividing wall.

How did He do it? By putting to death the Law contained in ordinances. There are two parts to the Law. The first part is the moral part. He didn't do away with that. He wrote that on our hearts. Then there is the ceremonial Law. The ritual, the liturgy, all the things that go into the worship manner. He tore all that down. He says, "No longer do you worship Me by what church you go to. No longer do you worship Me when you do it the way you want to. You worship Me in Spirit and in Truth. The only way to the Father is through Me, Jesus, the Son." The only way to worship now is through Him. There is no barrier. There is no dividing wall. There is no keeping anybody out. If you want to come to Him and God is wooing you and bringing you to Himself, then all you do is repent and bow before Him and receive Jesus in your heart. That is the way you enter into the kingdom of God. That is the way in which you worship the Father. There is no religion that you have to join.

He didn't make the Gentile a Jew and He didn't make the Jew a Gentile. He made them both into new man in Jesus Christ.