

- Week 2 -

Chapter 1, Verses 7-17

This passage is formed around a series of present active declarations:

1. I thank my God (v 8)
2. I long to see you (v 11)
3. I do not want you to be unaware (v 13)
4. I am under obligation (v 14)
5. I am eager to preach (15)
6. I am not ashamed (16)

In verse 7, how does Paul describe the believers in Rome?

- What does it mean to be *loved* by God?
- Paul uses the word *called* again. It is the third time he has used it (1:1, 1:6) and he will use it one more time (8:28).
- The word *saint* has some odd connotations in the modern vocabulary. The Greek word is an adjective used as a noun to describe the attributes of people. They are “holy people.” What does it mean to be “called to be saints”?

Verses 8-10 are a prayer, with two components.

- THANKSGIVING – notice *why* Paul is thankful for the church in Rome.

Consider your own prayers of thanksgiving. What do you thank God for on a regular basis? Is it focused on God's provision to you or for God's ministry through you and others?

What practices could we put in place in our lives to ensure we are thankful for the right things?

- REQUEST – Paul explains to the Romans that he wants to visit with them, but he is waiting on God's will.

How should we take Paul's statement “For God is my witness” in verse 9? Why is he using this idiom?

Why do you think Paul wants to visit the Romans so desperately? (He will answer this question.)

According to verse 12, what does Paul mean by “some spiritual gift” in verse 11?

- Why does Paul want to “impart” this spiritual gift to the believers according to verse 11?

Paul begins the discussion of “the rest of the Gentiles” in verse 13. What does the word *Gentile* mean?

- The original Hebrew word – *goy* – just means “nation” and the Greek word is *ethnos*, literally “people” or “nation.”
- So, how did we get the idea that a Gentile was a non-Jew? It was very typical of Late Antiquity for people to think in us/them terminology. With this mentality in mind, the Latin translations of the Bible rendered *goy* and *ethnos* by the Latin *gentilis*, which means “tribe” of “family.”
- Does Paul use the term here in a sense of hostility or exclusion?

Verse 14 is the first of many cases where Paul uses financial terminology to describe a relationship. Here, he says he is “under obligation” (other translations render it as “indebted”). We might better render it as “I owe it to...”

- “Greeks” is a pretty straightforward term. It means, not surprisingly, “Greeks.” What about “barbarians?” What do you think of when you hear that word?
- Barbarian is an onomatopoeia – a word that sounds like what it means. Greeks and Romans both believed that people who did not speak Greek and all they did was babel (another onomatopoeia), “bar bar bar...”
- Why does Paul use the phrase “to the Greeks and to the barbarians”? How does it relate to “the wise and to the foolish”?

Why would Paul be ashamed of the gospel in verse 16?

- Paul was a Jew who came to faith in Jesus. This letter was written probably close to twenty years after his conversion. Could his attitude toward Judaism have changed?
- Why would people have still tried to shame him for teaching the gospel of Jesus?

Let’s take a moment to parse Paul’s explanation of what the gospel is. This is not a statement of the gospel’s message, but rather the function it serves.

1. The power of God for salvation
2. To everyone who believes
3. The revealed righteousness of God