

Upfront Information

Romans 1:1-7

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 of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God 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. ⁶And 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.

Romans has been called “the Constitution of Christianity.” Paul was the author of this rich, magnificent presentation of the Christian faith. To be sure, the Holy Spirit was the One who inspired the writing of this awesome letter. But Paul was the human vehicle or means by which this letter came to us. *What were his credentials for writing Romans?*

David Jeremiah has noted at least four qualifications for Paul to write this letter. In addition to Jeremiah’s conclusions, we will add two more reasons for why Paul authored this “constitution of our faith.”

First, Paul was an *apostle*. Apostle means “a sent one” or “someone sent with a commission.” Paul’s apostleship came from the Lord (see Acts 9:1-16). Christ chose Paul and sent him to communicate the gospel to Gentiles.

Second, Paul was given an *assignment*. He was called to bear witness to Christ and His power to save. Paul labored over Romans for the sake of Christ and so that others may know Him.

Third, Paul possessed *authority*. Paul was given his task by Jesus. His work as an apostle bore the authority of the Lord Jesus. By writing, speaking, preaching, planting churches and empowering others, Paul lived out the authority he was given.

Fourth, Paul knew his *audience*. Rome was a strategic city where much of the known world came for commerce, learning, government, ideas and the arts. Paul was educated and articulate. He could connect with this diverse, cosmopolitan audience better than most.

In addition to David Jeremiah’s four qualifications for Paul to write Romans, we add two final credentials to the list.

Fifth, Paul was *addressed* by the Holy Spirit. All Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul was captured and seized by the Holy Spirit to write this message of theology and faith that continues to change, compel, convict and capture human hearts.

Sixth, Paul was *anchored* in grace. By his own admission, Paul's life before Christ was violent, rebellious, arrogant and alienated from the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit. But he was changed by grace. His life was cleaned up and transformed. Paul could write a compelling book like Romans (rich in grace and redemption themes) because he had experienced a thorough transformation through Christ.

John Stott has written, *"Paul's letter to the Romans is a kind of Christian manifesto. To be sure, it is also a letter, whose contents were determined by the particular situations in which the apostle and the Romans found themselves at that time. Nevertheless, it remains a time-less manifesto, a manifesto of freedom through Jesus Christ. It is the fullest, plainest and grandest statement of the gospel in the New Testament."*

Applications...

1. An encounter with Scripture is an encounter with God's truth. *Ask for God to speak particularly and specifically to you through your year-long journey in Romans.*
2. God continues to raise up men and women who eagerly desire to serve the Kingdom. *Be prepared for God to raise you up to be His apostle, sent to a place and for a purpose of His choosing.*
3. In the places where you find scars, wounds, pain, bitterness and rebellion, ask God to pour out the balm that is His grace. *Begin asking God to bathe your life in His grace.*
4. Give thanks for the grace that God makes available to us. *Pray for God's grace to guide you to holiness.*

Paul had a passion for the city of Rome. Ask God to give you a passion for your street, your office, your neighborhood or our town. Ask God to use you to bring the gospel to places where you have a presence and influence.